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To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to support the application of Ms. Heidi Lothspeich for an administrative position in your district. I was the supervising principal for Heidi for six years, from 1999, to 2005 at Arrowhead Elementary. During that time she established and maintained the Contained Learning Center Program at Arrowhead for primary elementary special education students.

During the six years I worked with Heidi I observed several characteristics, which would serve her well in an administrative position. These characteristics were:; **leadership, creativity, ability to risk, team management and an understanding that relationships are important.**

Leadership – Heidi was passionate about establishing a community in which her special education students would be successful. To do this, she developed an in-service for our staff prior to the students arriving, she wrote newsletters to the parent community to help them understand the purpose of her program, and she developed close personal relationships with the parents of each student. She also worked closely, often one-on-one with the inclusion teachers for each of her students.

These tasks required her to put herself in a leadership position for staff, community and parents. She was successful and respected.

Creativity - Heidi was constantly creating ways for her students to “shine” in the elementary setting. She helped her students cook and serve Thanksgiving dinner to staff and parents, her students made and delivered special songs, flowers and art work to classrooms, libraries and the office and she developed, acquired funding and implemented a therapeutic horse riding program.

Her ability to think outside the box helped the community, staff and students enjoy and appreciate her students’ special abilities.

Risk-taking – In addition to creativity, working with special need students often requires an ability to take risks. Heidi would develop behavior plans, facilitate parent meetings and coordinate services for students. She would put her job on the line if it meant a better opportunity or program for her students.

Another example of her ability to take risks was her highly successful participation in the Fulbright Teacher Exchange program..

Team Management – The special education classroom with the addition of at least one and often four or five teaching assistants requires the teacher to manage the personalities and job assignments of several people. Heidi was skilled in using the strengths of her teaching assistants to help create a successful classroom environment. She participated in the hiring process for all of her teaching assistants and I counted on her judgment.

Building Relationships – Heidi is a people person. She seeks out opportunities to get to know her peers and is perceptive in providing appropriate support. She enthusiastically looks for ways to bring fun into the education community. Her ability to build positive relationships was seen at all levels, with her peers, her parents, our school community and the administrators.

The above characteristics are critical in the success of an administrator. Heidi's demonstrated ability in these areas will serve her well.

Sincerely,

Ann N Panush