



CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Joyce D. Kenner  
Principal

March 30, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Melissa McBride. Melissa was first a student of mine ten years ago, and recently completed her student teaching with me in March. Melissa was one of the best student teachers I have ever had in my twenty years of teaching. She is organized, communicates beautifully with students and staff, facilitates high level work both technically and conceptually from our sculpture students, and works hard every day. She has great classroom management, maturity, and prompt grade return with extensive, detailed feedback for each student. Melissa was outstanding at leading the class in discussions as well as breaking the class up into smaller groups to discuss artwork through questions she created.

Melissa knew every student's name within a few days. In both lessons Melissa taught to our classes, she first introduced the project by engaging the students in dialogue about artwork through a PowerPoint presentation. She showed contemporary artists, many of whom were new to me as well as my students, and whose work was innovative either conceptually, technically or both. This made the student inquiry meaningful, focused, and at a high level of critical analysis of what they were seeing. For example, the first project Melissa taught was assemblage sculpture. One of the artists shown was Brian Jungen, who used old gasoline containers that have been sewn with floral designs. The students commented about the poignant juxtaposing. The students' artwork was also sophisticated in concept and technique. They made work about a range of topics: over-testing in schools, dreams, gender equality, and they transformed materials beyond their intended use. For example, coke cans became a hat, a liter bottle became a cactus, and a globe became the music from a saxophone.

Melissa's second project will become a huge tile mural in our school and a permanent public art piece. Melissa had all of the sculpture students make 5" x 5" sculptural tiles on various themes in which they each felt invested. She facilitated a brainstorm session with the class on various issues that make up our school community and our interests, since we are celebrating the school's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The tiles will be grouped and displayed by theme: athletics, school pride, food, transportation, Chicago landmarks and more.

She also is a great colleague. She often offered help with departmental tasks. For example, after we had two pottery wheels delivered, she helped envision how the classroom should be rearranged to better accommodate them and helped me move all of the student work, move shelves, clean the old caked dirt under the units, and put back all of the old artwork, tools, and supplies. Also, during her short stay with us, she hung several exhibitions, both in the halls of the school as well as our gallery.

Melissa is professional, energetic, open, communicative teacher and a great colleague. She is willing to put in extra time before and after school and take risks in trying new things and learning from the experience. She is great at self-reflection and quick to implement changes to improve instruction. She will make any school happy to have her on their faculty. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the number below.

Sincerely,

Lisa Wax

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