



INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL of TIANJIN

天津开发区国际学校天津分校

20 November 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very pleased to introduce Mr. Steve Hickey and to have the opportunity to say a few words of praise while recommending him to prospective employers. I hired Steve and have known him in my role as Director at the International School of Tianjin since August 2003 at which time he joined the school as a secondary Art teacher and as the Secondary Arts Subject Chair.

IST is a Nursery through Grade 12 non-profit day school servicing the children of the culturally diverse expatriate community living in Tianjin. The school is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Council of International Schools (CIS) and is authorized to deliver the three International Baccalaureate programmes (Diploma, Middle, and Primary Years Programs) and as such its curriculum is truly international and rigorous, with a requirement that educators be highly motivated, highly skilled, life-long learners, committed to internationalism and the development of responsible global citizens. Steve is just such an educator.

Steve has taught Grade 6-10 IB-MYP Art and Grade 11 and 12 IB Diploma Art throughout his eight years at the school, as well as Grade 5 Art in his first year. In addition to his teaching load and a wide range of other commitments, Steve has always taken on the daily task of being a homeroom teacher. Steve has a natural affinity for the needs of secondary school aged students and is regarded by our entire community as a model teacher for whom the needs of the student always come first.

Steve is a consummate professional educator who has won the admiration and respect of all members of our school community. From the moment of his arrival Steve has impressed with his total commitment to providing the best possible education for his students. He is fully committed to the values and beliefs of the IST school philosophy, which embraces the intent of International Baccalaureate philosophy and the associated programmes, and he has worked tirelessly to develop the MYP and DP curricula and translate them into best daily classroom

practice, not only in his own classroom but also in those of his colleagues.

IST was authorized for the MYP and DP just prior to Steve's first year as a member of faculty and the school's implementation of both programmes was still very much in its infancy with an enormous amount of work required for the further development and consolidation of the programmes. Steve came to IST with a strong understanding of curriculum and embraced the challenge of putting into place the documentation and classroom practices necessary to ensure that the school fully delivered on the promise of the programmes. Steve is now, after eight years experience working with both MYP and PD, a highly regarded practitioner and professional leader within the China region and beyond. Grade 10 MYP moderation reports and DP examination results both point clearly to his deep understanding of the programmes and how best to support student learning within them.

High quality curricula and instruction aside, the truest measure of an Art teacher is the popularity of his subject and the quality and volume of art that students produce. Within a few short weeks of his arrival at IST, the school had come to life with an incredible array of high quality artworks, the continuous flow and quality of which has never ceased to amaze our community. Steve was the first IST faculty member to teach IB Diploma Art and his Diploma results have consistently stood as a firm testament to the quality of the programme he has provided for his students. Steve's students routinely gain sixes and sevens in their DP examinations and he has also had at least one student placed on the IB OCC as an exemplary example.

The MYP in particular is a curriculum framework based upon interdisciplinary learning and Steve has consistently demonstrated effective collaboration and differentiated instruction. Steve willingly shares ideas, resources and strategies and is always prepared to assist others in better supporting student learning. Students also appreciate Steve's warm personality and ability to inspire and motivate them to become more successful learners. Although it has yet to be finalized I have little doubt that the collective sighs and disappointment that will accompany the announcement that Steve (and his equally talented and popular spouse, Theresa) will be leaving the school will invariably rate as a significantly more powerful statement about Steve's reputation and impact on student learning than can possibly be communicated in this reference.

Steve is intelligent and articulate and he can always be relied upon to contribute constructively and passionately to discussions about learning and how to move the school forward in best meeting the learning needs of our students. He is well-read, thoughtful, and fully committed to self improvement and life-long learning and during his time at IST he has undergone significant professional development in MYP, DP, and other workshops related to teaching and learning

in general. Although Steve has yet to complete a Masters degree he has done significantly more in terms of taking practical action to impact learning where it counts – in the classroom and in the hands of his colleagues. Steve has a particular interest and talent in the use of information technology and in particular those technologies associated with Apple. Steve is an Apple Distinguished Educator and he almost single handedly guided our school towards its decision to commit to the use of Apple technologies. He has succeeded, primarily based upon his willingness to give of his own time to work with individual teachers in an honest effort to minimize their anxiety about technology and to gently expose us all to the possibilities that such technologies offer in today's classrooms.

Steve's contributions towards the development of our school are really far to numerous to address individually; however, in testifying to the magnitude of his efforts I feel that the following examples of his contribution should be acknowledged:

Chair of CIS/WASC Governance Committee

IB-MYP 'Human Ingenuity' Leader

IB-MYP Personal Project Supervisor

Grade 11 Week Without Walls Coordinator

Set designer, maker and producer of numerous secondary productions

Committee member on a host of voluntary committees, including school schedule, IT, graduation, staff appraisal, salary and benefits, and student leadership

Staff representative to the IST Board of Governors

Chair of Teacher Council

Coordinator of ACAMIS China-wide Arts and Cultural Education Committee

I find it extremely difficult to imagine our school without Steve and any reference written for him cannot possibly overlook the incredible contribution that he has made to the overall development of our school and to the evolution of the education programmes offered. The school has experienced enormous growth during Steve's eight years with major changes in community demographics, facilities, teaching faculty, and educational programmes, and at all times Steve has been a positive and productive contributor to the change process.

Suffice it is to say, that any organization fortunate enough to employ Steve Hickey, and his equally talented spouse Theresa, will have gained a consummate professional educator who impresses as a person who seeks to promote the positive social and educational development of individual students in his care. Steve's ability to work independently and as a member of a team, his commitment to his students, parents and the broader organization and community, and his very real strengths as a practitioner are assets difficult to refuse.

Steve Hickey truly embodies the history, character, and philosophy of our school. I will very much miss Steve should he ultimately choose to leave IST this year and strongly testify to his character and skills as a professional educator. I recommend his services to you without hesitation and with my strongest possible endorsement.

Sincerely,

Steve Moody
Deputy Director

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