

Santa Cruz City Schools Credit Recovery Program
ARK/Independent Studies High School

Use your mind well. ❖ Do the right thing. ❖ Work hard.

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January 7, 2018

To whom it may concern:

It is an honor and a pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Bobby Peltz. I have known Bobby for over six years. In 2011-12, Bobby was a guest teacher in my English classroom at Costanoa Continuation High School (CHS). He taught a units designed to engage students' critical thinking and writing skills. Bobby is an extremely talented and committed teacher. His acute sense of empathy and a driving need to move students beyond resistance and fear of change caused him to connect with students who have had very little trust in the public education system. His excellent interpersonal skills combined with his understanding of how students learn caused him to be a highly effective teacher at CHS.

A majority of CHS students are considered underserved, low achieving, and *at-risk*. Our school population is comprised of 68% Latino students, 22% white students, and 10% other. Over 78% of students are considered economically disadvantaged. A number of our students live with adult guardians who are not their biological parents or are in foster care. Some live in shelters or on the street. Many arrive at school hungry, tired, and angry. A majority suffer from untreated depression which has proven to be a difficult challenge in terms of student engagement with academic work. The average reading level for grades 10 through 12 is the seventh grade. However, despite the obstacles facing our students, our primary job is to awake their interest in their education so that they graduate with a high school diploma and want to continue their education after high school.

Bobby took an impressive approach to working with CHS' student population. At first, he observed students to assess who they were and how they were functioning in the classroom. He had the insight to see that many of the students were "shut down" by the academic requirements. When Bobby started to formally teach, many students were skeptical. On his first day of teaching, several students were reluctant to work with him. By the second class, his sensitivity and warmth soon won them over. He was able to gain their trust in a stunningly short period of time, so that they not only completed their daily academic assignments, but participated with genuine interest and enthusiasm. Bobby's approach allowed all students in the class to experience success as part of their daily classroom routine at CHS. His insights, guidance, and commitment provided access to his curriculum for every student.

Bobby's standards-based curriculum was extremely impressive. He deftly interwove the use of technology with direct teaching. He presented the vocabulary strand of his units so that he was constantly having students "spiral" back to the terms as they progressed through their lessons. The terms that he introduced at the beginning of the lesson were the concepts that the students needed to employ in order to write effective poetry. Additionally, Bobby's in-class transitions

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were seamless such that students did not have opportunities to go off task. Bobby has excellent classroom management skills.

Bobby was an excellent colleague. He and I met weekly to discuss his curriculum and how it affected students' academic engagement. A key element that stood out from our conversations was the fact that he clearly understood the learning challenges of the students he was working with - both emotionally and academically. His teaching knowledge combined with his deep understanding of how teenagers learn allowed for highly constructive discussions. His input was insightful and valuable. He listened and contributed to discussions in equal measure. This was in large part because his primary goal was to teach.

Bobby is a compassionate person with natural teaching talents and a drive to discover what works for each student. He is bright, energetic, resourceful, and empathetic in terms of students' personal needs and their academic achievement. These traits make him an excellent teacher. To any teaching team he joins, he will prove to be a highly valued member.

Please feel free to contact me, as I would be pleased to assist in any way to facilitate Bobby's career goals.

Sincerely,



Lisa Storer

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