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To Whom It May Concern,

I am two days away from completing a mentoring experience as a cooperating teacher with Jess Pilya. Jess came to this experience so well-prepared. Her studio practice and study at OSU have provided her with well-developed skills as a studio artist and art teacher. Jess has consistently exhibited knowledge of and experience with specific artistic and material issues far beyond what I would anticipate at this stage of her career. This personal library of facts on hand allows her to help students problem-solve with more information and more options. Jess's strength as a studio artist continues to earn her credibility and respect with our students.

Jess has created well-researched and detailed lesson plans exhibiting a depth of content that have prepared her to clearly articulate goals and possibilities to our students and the ability to adjust and pivot when needed with confidence, positivity, and gusto. Jess has a multifaceted and mindful approach to her lesson planning. Her thoughtful planning and teaching set clear instructions and parameters while allowing for personal and authentic solutions to the artistic problems laid out in the lessons. Jess is reflective and critical about all aspects of her teaching; from planning and implementing lessons to the dynamics of her role as a teacher and the relationships she has built with her students. Her knowledge and experience are evident in every conversation that she has with each student. From idea development and trouble-shooting approaches to construction, to carrying out projects to completion with an emphasis on craftsmanship, design, conceptual idea, and growth, Jess assists students with confidence and individual consideration.

Jess is a people person! Her various jobs and life experiences, coupled with a genuine curiosity about and compassion for others, give her insights that she shares and uses to create wholehearted connections with those around her. She exhibits a great capacity in working with and understanding people with diverse personalities, abilities and backgrounds. This, coupled with an understanding of the many issues regarding classroom management, has worked for her to establish an atmosphere for learning where all are included and respected. Jess's work with our Adaptive Art Class has been a joy to observe. Each day she has assisted and created lessons that challenge and delight our Daily Living Skills students. Jess also worked closely with our Roots and Shoots Group, attending before-school meetings and after-school events like our clay workshop at Bristol Senior Living, where we engaged senior citizens in a lesson on sculpting birds from clay.

Jess has furthered her knowledge and experience in the realities of teaching. Jess has assigned and assessed each student via projects and rubrics entered on Schoology and Infinite Campus. She has maintained daily grades as well as attendance. She has worked through logistical and philosophical problems regarding assessment. She has been able to successfully assume all responsibilities of running a ceramics studio including assisting with loading, unloading, and firing our electric and raku kilns, recycling clay, and cleaning and maintenance of studio equipment and space.

Jess has consistently exhibited professionalism, an unrelenting drive for excellence, and a depth of knowledge that comes from expansive experiences in the studio and the classroom. In all that she does, she expresses her enthusiasm, commitment, and love for art. She is responsible, reliable, and full of creative energy. I would like to give Jess my highest recommendation. Jess's patient kindness, energy, resiliency, and confidence make her a superior candidate for any art teaching position.

Sincerely,

Julie Woodrow  
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