

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Dear Search Committee:

I am pleased to provide this letter to support the candidacy of Mrs. Jessica Duffy as a Certified School Media Specialist. I had the pleasure of working with Mrs. Duffy as a graduate student in two of my graduate courses: Curriculum and Resources (spring, 2012) and IST673 Technology in School Libraries, Theory, Practice & Assessment (fall, 2012). This letter will address both her academic and professional performance.

### **Academic Performance**

IST675 provides graduate students with inquiry-based learning experiences focused on the development and assessment of information literacy curriculum for elementary and secondary schools. The class format includes lecture, guest speakers as well as a variety of hands-on real-world teaching and learning experiences to provide students opportunities to develop lesson plans, design assessments, deliver instruction, and provide and receive constructive feedback. Mrs. Duffy provided her peers with carefully crafted lessons modeling inquiry-based learning in real-world practice. One of the assignments for the course was to write a review of Kincheloe's *Critical Constructivism Primer* (2005). I was so impressed with the quality of Mrs. Duffy's work that I invited her to teach a lesson on critical constructivism to the class, as many of her peers had struggled with the assignment. Her clear and concise explanations were well received by her classmates. Another of her exemplary lessons was a professional development workshop that highlighted the different ways that classroom teachers and school librarians could adapt instruction for specific special needs. Mrs. Duffy provided hands-on learning activities to help her peers learn how to use the resources and adaptive technologies available on the Adaptech Resource Network (see: <http://www.adaptech.org/en/research>).

IST673 is a capstone course for our School Library Media Program. One of the requirements of the course is the design of a multimedia project to enhance and support the information needs of a real world K-12 learning community. This is a problem-based inquiry-based project that connects K-12 students and in-service educators to pre-service graduate students at the university. Mrs. Duffy played a central role as the pre-service school librarian throughout all phases of the project. She collaborated with Schalmont ELA teacher, Mrs. Carol Walker and the school librarian, Ms. Linda Fasano. Mrs. Duffy designed, implemented and assessed a multidimensional project that focused on helping 6<sup>th</sup> graders use online databases, select suitable resources and appropriately cite sources. These are critical 21<sup>st</sup> century information literacy skills that all students will need as they move forward to college and/or careers.

Most notably, Mrs. Duffy designed and implemented formative and summative measures of assessment throughout her project, providing clear evidence of the impact her lessons had on students' learning. She used the results of formative assessment to provide "just in time learning" experiences to support students' understanding of concepts as they occurred in real-time in the classroom. Currently Mrs. Duffy is working with me on a research project to document the impact of reflective assessment and its impact on student learning outcomes for preservice educators. Mrs. Duffy is passionate about teaching and learning for students as well as educators.

### **Professional Performance**

Mrs. Duffy is an intellectually astute, self-motivated, and enthusiastic learner and *educator*. Her performance on all academic indicators (papers, projects, and presentations) placed her well above her peers, and her collaborative interactions and leadership abilities, as demonstrated through group projects, were equally outstanding. Mrs. Duffy fosters and encourages engagement and intellectual curiosity to all who work with her. She cares deeply about students and how they learn. She is one of the most self-motivated, conscientious



and creative students that I have ever had the pleasure to teach and learn from. She truly is an *information professional (teacher librarian)* who shares her knowledge and expertise generously and by doing so she motivates those around her (students and teachers alike) to expand their horizons and excel. Mrs. Duffy has a true gift as an educator in that she is just as comfortable when teaching a lesson for elementary, middle school and high school students, as she is in providing professional development training for her peers. She listens to what others have to say and values the contributions of her learning partners –she is *effective, passionate* and *professional*.

I promise you, and this is not something I normally write in recommendation letters, that Mrs. Duffy will be an incredible asset to your district. I have no doubt that she will be an important contributor to the fields of librarianship, information science, and K-12 education, and that she has the leadership qualities to help grow and nurture a collaborative, innovative and performance based learning community in your school and district. I give Mrs. Jessica Duffy my highest and strongest recommendation. If you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Most sincerely

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