



Grayslake Community  
High School District 127

Lake Street Campus

400 North Lake Street, Grayslake, Illinois 60030

January 6, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Daniel Lazar is my colleague at Grayslake Community High School. During the last three school years, I have come to know Dan well as a dedicated scholar. As the Social Studies Department Chairperson, my classroom observations confirm my impression of him as a talented teacher. He remains intent on motivating students to challenge themselves, thoughtfully shares lessons and resources with colleagues, and continually introduces innovations to curricula. Dan's research-driven curriculum and his enthusiasm for the social science disciplines make him a favorite teacher among students at our school who are willing to accept a challenge and explore new ideas. Clearly, it is Dan's own passion for learning that inspires his students.

Dan continually impresses me with his devotion to elevating the level of discourse in all of his preparations. Dan has taught Sociology, Family and Society, U.S. History—Honors, and World History during his tenure at GCHS. Managing difficult assignments has not deterred Dan from researching alternative sources for students to consider and methodologies to employ in the classroom. During a recent discussion on U.S. involvement in Iraq, I observed Dan facilitating an informed and sophisticated interaction among students with various viewpoints. Dan encouraged his students to research the issue; many cited various sources to support their claims and observations. Dan is adept at attaching relevance to historical issues. In a recent lesson, he asked students to compare and contrast the motivations for and reactions to the Alien & Sedition Acts and the USA Patriot Act. Dan's pedagogical approach focuses on inquiry as he effectively encourages students to question, to seek information, and to draw their own conclusions. In a recent Sociology class, Dan's students questioned the role of ability grouping in education today as part of his philosophy of education unit. Students in a mixed ability class researched the issue, presented findings to class, and facilitated class discussion. Clearly, Dan's professional experience has prepared him well for any teaching environment and any group of students.

As he completes his Master's Degree in Education, Dan continues to research proven methods and to design innovative methods of advancing student motivation and learning, while assisting colleagues in incorporating his ideas into their curricula. His thesis encourages an integration of labor history into the United States history survey course using historical inquiry methodology. Varied primary source materials and well-designed lessons advance the accessibility of the resources to both instructors and students. Throughout his career here, Dan's inquisitive nature and research skills have benefited students and colleagues alike. As a teacher in an international setting, Dan will embrace every new opportunity while relying on his proven research-based methodologies.

Daniel Lazar is an excellent teacher because he is a thoughtful student. He is a true scholar whose intellectual perspicacity is matched by his desire to foster an ardor for inquiry and a passion for learning in his students. His leadership in curriculum development has earned him the respect of fellow teachers. Dan's acceptance of a new teaching position will be a great loss to our school; his presence will certainly enrich the learning experience of students and the teaching environment for colleagues in his new position.

Sincerely,

Rita R. Fischer

Social Studies Department Chairperson

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