

To Whom It May Concern,

June 2010

It is a pleasure to write a letter in support of Ms. Sarah Jayne Bleiweis's application to the art teacher position in your school. I have known Sarah Jayne for over a year as a graduate student in the MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) Art Education program at Tufts University affiliated with The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. I have grown to know Sarah Jayne's teaching style, personality and professionalism over the past year while I have served as her academic advisor and professor, and my regard for Sarah Jayne has only grown. I am confident that you will be impressed with her dedication to hold each of her students to high expectations and to help students navigate artistic expression combined with academic achievement. Her commitment to equity and excellence in multiracial, multilingual classrooms stands out in every aspect of her teaching.

This is most aptly demonstrated in the curriculum Sarah Jayne developed and implemented in her student teaching classroom in an elementary school in Revere, Massachusetts, which is an urban school filled with a diverse spectrum of learners. For example, in a 5th grade lesson that she titled: "Art for Positive Change" she guided students through the process of considering environmental problems they can effectively participate in solving. They studied the role of art in environmentalism and designed posters that were robust in meaning, and also aesthetically captivating. In another lesson for 3rd grade titled "Eric Carle Fish in the Sea," Sarah Jayne introduced students to the role of illustration in children's literature. They studied the work of Eric Carle and practiced his techniques in the art room. Eventually they created their own Fish in the Sea with compelling visual effects, including transparency overlays in the manner of Eric Carle. Both of these lessons illustrate Sarah Jayne's dedication to integrating other content area knowledge into art curriculum to make a vibrant and meaningful art experience. These also exhibit Sarah Jayne's understanding of thoughtful and deliberate curriculum design and how organizational structures can prevent classroom management issues from cropping up. When students are actively engaged, they can all focus within a respectful and productive classroom atmosphere. However, when students do need reminders, Sarah Jayne is firm-handed yet warm hearted to provide them with the boundaries necessary to maintain a learning environment with high expectations. Sarah Jayne is certain to bring this kind of robust meaning and rigorous skill building to the art program in your school.

In addition to Sarah Jayne's strong command of curriculum organization, she also utilizes her fluency in technology to support her students as well as to enhance her professional

communication. Her lesson plans and curriculum documents are beautifully designed to include examples from art history, samples of student work and images of children in the process of art-making. Her pedagogy is enlivened by her visually dynamic power point presentations that bring art historical images to life on the screen in the classroom, and help students analyze the step-by-step process through visually engaging media. She uses the smart board technology to highlight student knowledge to stimulate discussions. These skills serve her students well when scaffolding is needed for differentiated instruction.

Previous to joining our graduate program, Sarah Jayne embraced a number of artistic and educational professional endeavors that have shaped her teaching and informed the skills she can offer her students. She taught art in Bethlehem while developing a curriculum to address world cultures and diverse perspectives. She became bilingual in Arabic. She worked in various youth program venues, always seeking to support youth in their creative voice and artistic expression. She also taught at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. These unique professional experiences add to the constellation of skills and attributes that Sarah Jayne will contribute to your school.

In summary, Sarah Jayne has a huge heart and enjoys every moment of her work with children. She cultivates their success by applying multicultural perspectives to teaching art for social justice. Ms. Sarah Jayne Bleiweis will bring this dedication to your school community. I am confident that your school will benefit from her passionate dedication, her creative curriculum and her team-mindedness. She is an outstanding candidate for this art teacher position. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at patty.bode@tufts.edu, office phone: 617.369.3613 or cell: 413.519.3228.

Sincerely,



Patricia Bode
Director of Art Education