



DR. COREY W. REYNOLDS
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Columbus Elementary School

MR. MICHAEL GALLAND, PRINCIPAL

OLIVINE ROBERTS ED.D.
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

MS. FRANCIS CRUZ, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

May 1, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to offer a heartfelt and confident recommendation for Ms. Tammy Penton as I know she is excited to be considered for a new position within your District. It was an incredible privilege and joy to work alongside and supervise Ms. Penton for the last eight years. As the principal of a large (800+ students) elementary school, I came to rely on Ms. Penton for numerous leadership responsibilities within our school. But most importantly, I have come to admire Ms. Penton deeply for her unwavering commitment to meeting each child 'where they are' and inspiring them with a genuine, loving spirit.

To begin, Ms. Penton is an exceptional teacher. At first glance, colleagues would note that Ms. Penton is one of a handful of math and STEM specialists in our upper grades. This is true, but she is much more. Each September, Ms. Penton begins her steady approach to building connections with every child in her care. Bit by bit, they learn that her devotion is bottomless and forgiving; bit by bit, students return her trust and respect; and by mid-October, Ms. Penton's classroom exemplifies joyful, efficient teaching and learning. Upon such mutually supportive relationships Ms. Penton is **then** able to proficiently lead math, science, writing, reading, phonics, and history learning. She is well-known for connecting science and mathematics, but her precise observations of young readers is equally commendable. An experienced classroom leader and pedagogue, she still continues to learn and push herself to improve every year.

Ms. Penton is also a master when it comes to partnering and collaborating with teachers and support staff. It is hard to capture how joyful her relationships with her colleagues really are, but I should at least attempt to list them in this letter of recommendation: Ms. Penton is our lead girls basketball coach, having created a program for 3rd to 5th grade girls that aims to inspire student athletes to be great in all areas of their lives. Each year, her former players (middle and high school young women) return nearly every practice session to model, scrimmage, and support the younger girls. Ms. Penton has created a community of basketball girls intentionally designed to move forward together through adolescence. Ms. Penton is also the lead 5th grade teacher, planning and organizing perhaps a dozen fundraising events each year, two significant trips, graduation, and more. She supports our school based Leadership Team, representing her grade level well but also holding the 'good' of our entire school in her thinking and suggestions. And for eight years, Ms. Penton has taught in all our after school programs, staying an extra two hours after school each day and leading one hour of academic tutoring and then crafting creative club activities for students in the second hour. And both before and during the difficult period of the pandemic, Ms. Penton was one of a tight group of teacher-leaders who partnered with me to lead community problem-solving and sharing circles -- for teachers and staff -- as we together kept our school community compassionate and responsive to the tensions, stressors, and trauma of those years. Ms. Penton paid for her own training in restorative practices and circles and then taught the rest of us how to compassionately engage.



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As I end, I am struggling to fully capture just how much Ms. Penton takes on and completes each school year. She leads and participates in basically **everything** we do in our community-minded school. And she can pull off so much, so joyfully and with so much energy, stay present and engaged, whether teaching or leading groups of teachers or athletes, **because** she is meticulously prepared and profoundly devoted. Her discipline and work ethic are as much at the core of her success as her teaching abilities, passion for coaching, and open-hearted personality. Ms. Penton will inspire and impact any organization lucky enough to have her as a colleague and leader. Ms. Penton is a rare educator who intentionally blends her faith, expertise, and devotion to serving families and children within her teaching practices. I never question her ability to passionately impact colleagues, families, and children, for I have gratefully watched and admired her as she has accomplished so much at Columbus for the last eight years.

Respectfully,

Michael Galland

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