



May 17, 2018

To the Human Resources Department:

I am very pleased to recommend Tess Liebersohn for a position as a school counselor with your district. I have known Tess since the summer of 2017, as the internship site placement coordinator and internship course instructor at PennGSE. I came to PennGSE in 2008 after two decades as a psychologist in Boston, developing programs to build capacity in public schools and community organizations to meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of urban children, youth and families. Based on my experiences, Tess is one of the strongest students and talented counselors I have taught, and one you will be pleased to have working in your schools.

I have supervised Tess over the past year as the faculty member charged with internship placements in our 2<sup>nd</sup> year counseling master's program. In that role, I am responsible for matching students to placements in mental health and/or school sites, and serving throughout the year as the programmatic liaison for the on-site supervisors as well as the students. I also teach the two-course internship sequence (EDUC 717/718) for all 2<sup>nd</sup> year students working in counseling internships in schools and mental health agencies. So I worked with Tess to select sites that matched her needs and interests in school and mental health counseling, and then have seen her weekly throughout the year in an academic learning context as she has gone through her internship.

Tess selected a highly challenging, underresourced Philadelphia elementary school for her practicum site last year, and this year conducted her internship at a more selective high performing Philadelphia high school. As a result, she has had experience with a wide array of students and families, and with two distinct school settings with very different approaches to school counseling programming. In both settings, Tess has had the opportunity to work with staff, students and families, in crisis situations and ongoing engagement, working in close partnership with her supervising counselor. Her internship supervisor has consistently rated her work extremely highly, and especially valued her ability to work effectively with challenging students that have strained the adults in the system. Tess has been persistent in reaching out both to families and to outside agencies for needed services, and in communicating within the school with teachers and other staff working with her students. Tess has really become a valued member of the counseling team there, well beyond a typical intern.

In class discussions and case presentations, Tess demonstrates a high level of skill in terms of her ability to conceptualize student concerns and develop interventions to

respond to them. She has worked with very challenging students with quite serious mental health needs this year and has been very effective in engaging them in their own self-care. Tess is very thoughtful, analytic, and curious, as well as extremely reflective. She is quick to offer an opinion – and just as quick to then ask others for their opinions, and to weigh all of the input and even reconsider her own stance. She appreciates a lively debate and a thoughtful team of colleagues to push her growth and learning. She values and respects diverse human beings, experiences, cultures, and perspectives, and works to integrate this sensitivity into her practice and her personal interactions. Finally, and very importantly, Tess has a sharp sense of humor that she uses to great advantage to disarm others and break down barriers.

I hope you will give strong consideration to Tess's application. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely,

Caroline L. Watts, EdD  
Senior Lecturer  
University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education  
3700 Walnut Street Room 301  
Philadelphia, PA 19017  
[wattsca@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:wattsca@gse.upenn.edu)  
215-746-4584