

# East Penn School District

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March 9, 2016

Lower Macungie Middle School  
6299 Lower Macungie Road  
Macungie, PA 18062  
(610) 395-8593

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Ms. Nicole Markes as a possible candidate for a teaching position in your school district.

Ms. Markes has spent seven weeks teaching Pre-Algebra to seventh grade students at Lower Macungie Middle School in the East Penn School District. In my observations of Ms. Markes' performance in the classroom, I have found her to be articulate in her lesson delivery and effective in her ability to motivate middle level learners.

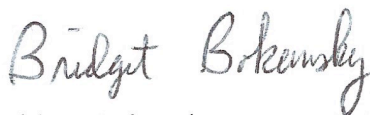
The classes Ms. Markes taught were heterogeneously grouped and Ms. Markes has consistently demonstrated that she can develop activities that address the many learning styles of students in the classroom. Teaching strategies such as the use of hands-on activities and cooperative learning were prevalent in her lessons and resulted in student mastery of content. Ms. Markes also gained an in-depth knowledge of the PA Common Core Standards for Mathematics. Ms. Markes was goal oriented in all of her lesson planning and she maximized the use of the instructional assistant with whom she worked. She established a caring rapport with all of the students.

Ms. Markes made efficient use of instructional resources to maximize student success in the classroom. Ms. Markes was able to incorporate creative SMART Board activities into most lessons and she utilized a student smart phone activity to review previously taught content. Ms. Markes also had to manage distance learning in which three fifth grade students from two elementary schools virtually participated in Pre-Algebra. Ms. Markes had to adjust her lesson activities to meet the needs of these virtual learners and she had to coordinate materials for class with the participating elementary schools. This situation is one of many that demonstrate Ms. Markes' creativity, flexibility, and confidence in the classroom.

Ms. Markes attended team meetings and participated in parent/teacher conferences. She demonstrated professionalism in all aspects of her student teaching placement. Ms. Markes is a team player and she handled every situation with confidence.

It is without reservation that I recommend Ms. Nicole Markes for a teaching position, as she would be a wonderful addition to any school district.

Sincerely,



Bridget Bokansky  
Mathematics Teacher  
Lower Macungie Middle School



July 18, 2017

To whom it may concern,

Nicole Markes has asked me to write a letter of recommendation on her behalf. I am more than happy to do so, for Nicole's performance with Lehigh Valley Summerbridge (LVS) was outstanding in every way.

I came to know Nicole in my capacity as Director for Lehigh Valley Summerbridge when she joined our staff as a Lead Teacher in the summer of 2014. She continued as Lead Teacher (Administrative Committee) for two additional summers, 2015 and 2016. LVS is a comprehensive summer and after school program that serves middle school students with limited educational opportunities. Our summer staff is comprised entirely of college students who are drawn from a large national pool. Teachers are chosen based on an evaluation of an extensive application and on reviews of their grades, commitment to public service, and desire to work with kids. Clearly qualified on the aforementioned criteria, Nicole was a superb teacher who was admired and liked by her students and colleagues.

Even though she was a first year teacher, Nicole was chosen to be a Lead Teacher in 2014 (continued in 2015 and 2016). Her colleagues looked to her for guidance and leadership. The students viewed Nicole as a role model and gave her the utmost respect. Nicole was a meticulous planner; she ensured that every detail was addressed in her lessons. She always kept her students focused on the material presented to them.

What set Nicole apart from her peers was her desire to go above and beyond expectations. She never hesitated to assume extra responsibilities, and would always ask, "What else can I do to help?" Her positive and helpful attitude did not go unnoticed among the administration and her colleagues. This year, while having aged out of our program, Nicole came back to offer her wisdom and advice to our new teachers, and stepped up to fill a need as a substitute teacher.

Again, Nicole would be a considerable asset to your school, both as a teacher and a leader. I *strongly* recommend Nicole as an effective teacher. Please contact me if I can be of any additional assistance.

Sincerely,

Jarred Weaver  
Director

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LVS@MORAVIANACADEMY.ORG WWW.LVSUMMERBRIDGE.ORG**



To Whom It May Concern,

I worked with Nicole Markes during the summers of 2014, 2015, and 2016 at Lehigh Valley Summerbridge. Summerbridge is a non-profit enrichment education program for economically disadvantaged and academically motivated middle school students in the Lehigh Valley. Summerbridge provides students with a demanding 6-week summer education program and year round tutoring. It is also the most rigorous independent teacher-training program in the Lehigh Valley. Our teachers experience an intensive week-long orientation, submit weekly lesson plans, are observed in the classroom, work in a team teaching setting, co-teach an elective, and run their own core subject classrooms.

As the summer program assistant, I work closely with new teachers in our program by critiquing their lesson plans and observing them in the classroom. In her three summers with our program, I critiqued Nicole's lesson plans and observed her in the classroom on a number of occasions. From the first time I observed her it was clear that Nicole was a natural teacher. During that first summer, teaching forensics, Nicole engaged the students with a variety of inquiry based learning activities that were differentiated for all of the learners in her classroom. She challenged her students to be detectives and taught them how to analyze fingerprints, hair samples, handwriting, impressions made by tools, tire tracks, and blood spatter. Using forensics as a vehicle, she taught students how to think critically and analytically, solve problems, and utilize the scientific method. In her next two summers, while teaching biology and astronomy respectively, Nicole continued to create well thought out and meaningful lesson plans, and she continued to grow as a leader, a colleague, and as a classroom teacher.

During Nicole's first summer, I got clear insight into the kind of person and teacher she is – dependable, responsible, dedicated, and eager to learn. Nicole demonstrated these qualities and her grace under pressure from day one that first summer, when we asked her to take on the role of team leader. During that summer, we uncharacteristically had only two returning teachers, leaving us with two openings for team leader positions. This position always goes to a veteran within our program due to their experience and due to the rigorous schedule of the program. After interviewing Nicole, we were so impressed that we offered her the role. Although she was undoubtedly overwhelmed with learning about the program logistics, writing weekly lesson plans, getting observed in her classroom, and organizing her entire team, she handled it all with aplomb. Her performance that summer both as a classroom teacher and as a team leader allowed us to rely on her during her next two summers with us.

Although no longer eligible to teach with our program due to her full time employment, Nicole has found ways to give back to Summerbridge. During our teacher orientation this summer, she presented technology she used this past school year in her own classroom and served as a member of a panel discussion on the job hunt and first year teaching. Nicole also volunteered to sub lessons teachers in our program going on interviews, and she took time to sit with our current forensics teacher and help her troubleshoot her unit plan. She will also be joining team Kutztown on their trip to campus to aide in the tour.



During her three summers with us, Nicole became one of our most effective and reliable teachers. She is the epitome of what I believe a great teacher is and should be. She is gracious and kind, hard working, and diligent. She is unafraid to ask questions but able to problem solve on her own. Nicole collaborates well with others and is easy to talk to. She plans meaningful and creative lessons that help students to connect directly with course content. Nicole sets clear expectations in her classroom, maintains order, and establishes clear and consistent routines in her room, including warm ups and wrap ups that bookend each class period. Nicole also takes great care to learn about her students and to adjust her teaching according to their varied classroom needs. She is a reflective teacher who utilizes feedback and is always looking to become better at her craft in order to better provide for her students.

Simply put, if I had children, I would want them in Nicole's classroom. I trust her as a teacher, as a colleague, and as a person. Nicole wants what is best for her students and will always work her hardest to make sure she can do that for them. Nicole celebrates her students for who they are, the activities they love, and the dreams they have. She is an outstanding educator who will only grow better with time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephanie Jane Palmieri  
Summer Program Assistant