



ANACORTES HIGH SCHOOL

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To Whom It May Concern re: Jim Burwell

I have had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Jim Burwell since September 1998, when he joined the Anacortes High School teaching faculty. Since that time, I have worked closely with Jim, and I believe I can speak both accurately and favorably about his qualities as a teacher.

Jim taught primarily three subject areas in his five years at Anacortes High School: Social Studies, Debate, and English. In each, Jim demonstrated impressive curriculum organization, diversity and appropriate assessments, defensible grading practices, and solid instruction skill. He communicated very well with parents and coordinated effectively with other staff members. He worked hard toward implementing innovative approaches in instruction and was constantly searching for new and better ways to lead the instruction of students. Jim made a practice of keeping abreast of the latest research concerning standards-based teaching and assessment, and has done an outstanding job in shaping his curriculum to meet individual student needs and learning styles. As well, the use of technology has played a significant role in his development of a student-driven, project-based curriculum. Jim was selected as a Teacher Leadership Project representative from the AHS faculty for the 1999-2000 school year. As such, he gained valuable skills in the usage of technology in instruction and subsequently ran very technology-inclusive classes.

Jim worked tirelessly as a debate teacher, taking students to a large number of tournaments and garnering many team and individual honors. Under his direction, the program flourished, grew, and established itself as one of the Washington's finer programs.

Jim made a tremendous number of contributions to the overall school environment in addition to his instructional and co-curricular assignments. He was a member of our School Improvement and School Community Councils. He was involved in district curriculum committees, especially the new Social Studies curriculum development committee. Perhaps most significantly, he served as an advisor for a new club, Teens Appreciating Diversity (TAD). TAD took the lead on several school activities that broke down barriers between student groups in the school. The activities were well-received and effective. Jim's leadership and guidance proved invaluable to the atmosphere in the school.

Obviously, I am very impressed with Jim Burwell. He has proven himself a very fine teacher who possesses good judgment and motivation. Although I was disappointed to see him offer his resignation in favor of personal and professional development, I understand and support his decision. I would happily hire him again. I fully recommend him for future positions in education he may see fit to pursue.

If I may offer further perspectives about Jim Burwell, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Keith C. Rittel