



Anacortes High School

"Nationally Recognized for Excellence in Education"

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To Whom It May Concern,

When you walk into Jim Burwell's classroom, every facet of it attests to his creativity and his curiosity as an educator. There are stacks of student projects – delicately crafted broadsides which reflect the poetry and visual arts of the Heian Period, posters which exhibit the intricate variety of Islamic patterns and calligraphy. The room has that welcome jumble which predicates engaged minds; there are piles of books on Japanese art, rolled maps, tapes/cassettes, art supplies. The expectations and mood are clearly set just by the room. This is a place where students engage; there is no resigned sense of passivity here. The students study, assimilate and create. It is this very ability that makes Jim Burwell an ideal candidate for the China Summer Institute. He is intellectually curious, committed to engendering this passion in his students and able to create lessons which engage all learners.

Jim's has been involved in Asian studies since he first was hired at Anacortes High School. The history department has just created a new course, Pac-rim, which had gotten off to a rocky start. When Jim inherited the program, he clarified the expectations, guidelines and the course's goals. Students were aware of their geographic and cultural connections to these countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. Two years ago, Jim's teaching focus changed to World History, but his curiosity in Asian history remained. Now rather than covering current issues, Jim teaches his students about the power of these ancient cultures. His teaching approach is always hands-on so his students translate their understanding into such final projects as bound books and broadsides. Jim is quick to incorporate local experts in these projects: the art teacher helped with a calligraphy unity, a art historian presented a series of lectures on a Japanese dynasty. Through the district's Cultural Education Committee, Jim has hired an artist to teach traditional Japanese bookbinding.

Jim Burwell is intensely committed to furthering cultural understanding. He immerses himself in his study and has the creativity to translate this information in a meaningful way for all of his students. As a fellow traveler, Jim will be a boon to your group. He is an experienced traveler so he's sensitive to the needs of others, has the flexibility that is needed in traveling and is an astute observer. For all facets of this summer institute, Jim Burwell is the ideal candidate.

Sincerely,

Janet Clark