

October 28, 2011
San Jose, Costa Rica

To whom it may concern,

It is with tremendous pleasure that I write this letter of introduction/reference for Jim Burwell. I hold the position of Coordinator of Educational Technology at Country Day School in Costa Rica. Working with Jim has been a real pleasure. I have learned as much from him as he has from me.

As technology coordinator, I was hard pressed at first to stretch Jim's horizons because he was already pushing the envelope with his students with regard to using cutting edge technology (web 2.0 tools). His technological mindset is exactly what I would like to see from all of our teachers, open and ready to deploy. He chooses technologies that engage students and that promote enthusiastic, meaningful student interaction. His accomplishments in this area are too numerous to name, but his work with technologies like Ning (social media), Wikispaces, and Glogster set him apart from his peers. When presented with new technologies or ideas, Jim inevitably finds the best way to utilize the new tools for the benefit of student learning and his own professional growth.

In fact, while rolling out a school wide, digital portfolio initiative, I asked Jim to lead the training for the entire high school division due to his clear grasp of the concepts and the action steps needed for implementation. Jim exceeded expectations and masterfully guided his division through, what was for many, a paradigm shifting transition. Jim prepared diligently, took extra time to test everything with me in advance, and used his classes to beta test our objectives, demonstrating that he is a team player in the truest sense of the term. He willingly seeks leadership responsibilities whenever an opportunity presents itself and is the "go-to" teacher in the High School division when teachers have questions about the 'what and how' of using tech wisely.

I have enjoyed numerous conversations with Jim and his love for teaching and learning cannot be ignored. While co-teaching with him in his classroom, I observed that his rapport with his students is relaxed and respectful, while being crystal clear that the performance expectations are rigorous. The students enjoy his classes, his teaching style, and the creative ways that he provides for them to present their learning.

I've seen how Jim presents literature and classics to his students in innovative and 'current' contexts, making the selections lively and enticing even for reluctant literature students. I see him frequently working with students on a one on one basis providing support, guidance, and sharing his love for the classics with yet another generation.

I must say I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Jim and will miss bouncing ideas around with him next year. Jim would undoubtedly be a positive addition to any school staff in any capacity. He is a consummate professional that will adapt and thrive under any circumstances. He will be missed here at Country Day School. Do not hesitate to contact me for any reason to discuss Jim's qualifications in greater detail.

Best regards,



Joshua Knudson
Country Day School, Costa Rica
Coordinator for Educational Technology
joshua_knudson@cds.ed.cr
2289-0919 *2275