

June 28, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Madison DeVries. Madison completed her student teaching at Elk Plain in two disciplines, English Languages Arts and Theater. By participating in both disciplines, Madison taught all of our elementary students, grades K-5, in theater, all of our 8th grade students in ELA and some of our 6th and 7th grade students either taking Advanced Acting or Technical Theater as elective classes.



When Madison joined us in early spring, we were just transitioning to a hybrid model for delivering instruction. As a specialist for grades K-5, she saw all the students over Zoom for the remainder of the year. She quickly learned many techniques to keep students engaged and focused while learning remotely, including using a video for acting warm up so she could observe the students participating, asking questions to be answered in the chat, using a thumbs up signal that students could use either physically or as an emoji, and using breakout rooms, particularly with older students.

By mid-March, our Middle School students went from attending 100% remote to coming to school two days a week, attending Zoom classes and completing work on Canvas and Edgenuity the other three days. Madison learned to connect with students, whether in person or remote, and kept the various Canvas and Edgenuity pages current, successfully tracking student progress on all platforms. In one lesson I observed, Madison presented material to students using a PowerPoint presentation. Throughout the lesson, she referenced material available to the students on their Canvas page, and adeptly navigated back to Canvas to show students how to find the material, then returned to the presentation. All students were engaged in the lesson and when Madison needed to redirect a couple of students she did so with minimal interruption, sensitive to student dignity and individual needs.

In her short time with us, Madison quickly developed relationships with many of her students. As I observed her throughout the spring, I would see her chatting with students informally as they moved from elective to Core classes. She learned their names, and talked with them about their lives and interests. Students enjoyed participating in Madison's classes as she fostered predictability, consistency, and structure in a positive learning environment.

Madison brings energy, enthusiasm and a deep care and commitment for teaching children of all ages. As with all teachers new to the profession, Madison will continue to add to her repertoire of strategies for engagement of students in their learning. She begins, however, with a solid foundation of skills both in her disciplines and in teaching pedagogy. She will be an asset to any school, and I recommend her without reservation. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide you with any further information.

Sincerely,
Julie Rains Kangas
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