

April 18, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Chelsea McKinnon is currently our music specialist teacher at Riverbend Elementary. She teaches music to every student at Riverbend Elementary from grades Kindergarten to 5th grade. Actually, she is much more than ‘just a music teacher’. Chelsea carefully refines her craft by attending and presenting at regional music conferences, collaborating and providing leadership within our district’s music teacher cadre, traveling worldwide to build her own music experience, and innovating with student-centered experiences that build an inherent value for cultures and community. This is rare as she builds out hands-on experiences for all of our grades and our wide range of student ability.

I have known Chelsea for the last two years. From the day we hired her in the Spring for the next fall, she came and observed at our school to understand our existing culture and the existing music program. This was before her job actually started. She so valued being a member of our community that she took two days to observe ours. Our school had been in turmoil from four years of four different principals. Even this year, with yet another new principal, she has worked arduously to build a community. As our district has also gone through three Superintendents in as many years, she had to construct a program from nothing with little guidance from our district leadership. She did this immediately connecting with the other music teachers across the district.

Inspiring curiosity is what drives Chelsea’s teaching. As our 4th grade team was studying patterns in math, and watching many students struggle, Chelsea collaborated with us to create a dynamic drumming ensemble. Students went from struggling with repeating patterns in math to fully engaged drummers who could explain patterns they drummed. To better engage our community, Chelsea organized an evening presentation that had the highest community turn out in the last five years. Not only that, Chelsea engaged with the community in lighting blacklights to create a full theatrical experience. She unlocked the inner drive to learn, to experience learning

Overall, Chelsea is a gift to any school that gets to have her. She brings passion, enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work that is hard to find today. Without a doubt she is a great asset to any organization and will enhance the learning of all who have the privilege to know her.

With this I highly recommend Chelsea McKinnon as a primary music teacher.

Regards,

Eva La Mar
Intel Teach to the Future Senior Trainer, Apple Distinguished Educator,
National Science Teacher of the Year Award winner for 2002

