



March 22, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am happy to write this letter of reference for Mr. John Gaylord, currently the elementary school principal at Seoul Foreign School. I have known John for four years and worked closely with him in my role as Head of School. John and I have had biweekly meetings during most of those years to collaborate in problem solving and planning for the future needs of the Seoul Foreign Elementary School.

As I reflect on John as a person and a school leader, many important characteristics come to mind. Firstly, John is passionate about his work as our elementary school leader. He has high expectations and standards for both his students and the faculty with whom he works. He is constantly in classes, observing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning happening in classrooms. When he observes or becomes aware of a problem, he immediately begins a plan to address it. We have worked closely together in reflecting on the effective approach to some of these problems, and I have again been impressed by John's focus and commitment to viable solutions.

John connects well with his faculty and enjoys strong relationships with them. For example, I have been struck by the comments made by John's faculty members. In one of his end-of-year reviews, one wrote, "I think John Gaylord really has the best interest of the students at heart. He has a great relationship with the students and they can easily approach him at time. As far as I know, he is supportive of the staff as well, which is very important to me. I feel the work environment is positive at the Elementary School." Another teacher wrote, "John is a fantastic principal. I feel like he really has the best interest of the teachers and students at heart, and makes decisions/recommendations accordingly. He is an advocate for us and for our needs and is visible and present in the ES. He supports open and honest communication." Finally, a teacher wrote, "I love working for John Gaylord! He is a great principal! The children absolutely love him!!"

John is a very hard worker and can be counted on to meet deadlines and project goals without fail. He knows what it takes to prepare faculty meetings, weekly parent letters and parent meetings, all the while handling a myriad of other daily details.

John is also committed to best practice in the classroom and demonstrating the progress of his students by tracking their standardized test scores and comparing these scores with benchmarks from schools around the Globe. He has done an excellent job in providing leadership in this area. Since he came to Seoul Foreign School, our elementary school scores have improved dramatically in every measure we track. This improvement is largely the result of John's leadership and vision to provide the very best program for our students and challenging our teachers to use best practices in their work with our students.



John also communicates well with parents; he is visible at all extra-curricular events, sends out a weekly newsletter and plans monthly parent chats to inform parents on various curricular topics.

Additionally, I appreciate his work with the other principals on master scheduling, and the sharing of facilities and personnel. John is a team player and positive contributor on school-wide initiatives related to Strategic Planning. He has taken on a leadership role for one of our task forces and participated as a member on many others. His experience with WASC accreditation processes and his commitment to continuous improvement have facilitated on-going work on WASC action plans.

He has also been the MAP test coordinator for elementary and middle schools. I've appreciated the opportunity to recruit new faculty with John. He is thorough with pre-screening, paperwork, reference checks, and interviews. As a result, we have hired many excellent teachers at SFS."

Finally, I find John to be a person who is committed to our school's mission and lives that mission. He cares deeply for both the students and his faculty, doing his best to meet their needs whenever possible. I know his faculty trust him and confide in him as they try and address their personal and professional challenges. I have seen John give assistance to his teachers in an effort to support them and aid them in their professional development.

I am pleased to give Mr. Gaylord my strong recommendation; he will add a great deal of value to any school in which he serves.

Sincerely,

John Engstrom

Head of School