

To Whom it May Concern,

It is an honor to write this letter of recommendation for Rebecca Klassen. I have known Becky since she began as the Spanish teacher at Henry Barnard School in 2016. I have had the pleasure of working with her as a substitute teacher at the school, as an HBS Parent Association board member, and as a parent with two children in her class.

The first day my children had her, they came home happy and excited about learning Spanish. They were singing songs and doing basic introductions with each other, unassisted on that first day. There was a light in their eyes as they talked about Señora Klassen and all they would do with her that year. During her time at HBS her bigger than life personality and commitment to make learning fun for her students have helped my children excel under her tutelage. Her colorful classroom, use of a variety of teaching tools, interactive lessons and excitement about the subject have made the Spanish program at HBS thrive.

Becky goes beyond teaching the students conversational Spanish. She introduces the Spanish culture from around the world. Children learn about Spanish artists, businesspeople, sports figures, politics and more. I will always remember grocery shopping with my then Kindergartner and as we went down the Spanish food aisle, she excitedly pointed out the cans of Goya and proceeded to tell me all about the brand, the family behind the brand and it's importance in our world. Anecdotes like this, are what make Becky such an amazing teacher. Her subject comes to life and the children go out into the world, with their newfound knowledge, able to apply it in real life.

One of my earliest interactions with Becky was when I approached her about the possibility of helping with a Parent Association fundraiser. She excitedly jumped on board and created a fun craft that children would be able to do that represented the Spanish culture. Her eagerness to always help, to expand her lessons outside of the classroom, and to encourage her students on their own exploration has been invaluable to the HBS community.

Becky brings that excitement from the classroom out into extracurricular activities that allow the children to continue to expand their knowledge of the Spanish speaking world. With the addition of Spanish lunch tables, students have the option to spend their lunch improving their spoken Spanish. These tables have been overwhelmingly popular with each grade eagerly awaiting their turn to sign up for one of the coveted spots. During Celebrate the Arts Night, fourth grade students transform into Spanish speaking artists, eager and ready to communicate with guests about their persona's accomplishments and contributions to the art world. The students are poised and confident in their representation as they have been fully prepared through their research with Señora Klassen.

She has also implemented a popular after school language club. First, to help expand the children's knowledge beyond the Spanish speaking world, she introduced French Club. Learning basic French, as well as exploring the French speaking world, culture and foods encouraged students to continue to develop their understanding of the world around them. Last year, with Portuguese Club, she brought together teacher associates, professors from RIC and student volunteers to allow the students to explore a third culture. With its rich history in Rhode Island and large population of Portuguese speaking individuals in the area, this was a dynamic club that introduced HBS students to a language that many wouldn't have had a chance to study until high school. This year, she is continuing to help students move beyond their own world, by introducing Multicultural Club. Once again, by using her own love of learning and ability to competently utilize the resources around her, she is introducing students in the

club to a wide world of languages, cultures, foods and art that exist. My own children have been members of each of these clubs and they come excited to tell us about all they learned. I have also seen their curiosity fostered as they continue to seek out new opportunities to learn about a new language or culture on their own.

Becky also seeks out optional community activities for students to participate in like the Rhode Island Foreign Language Poster Contest and the Providence Library Bilingual Young Author's Contest. In the BYA Contest, students are encouraged to write their own, original stories with illustrations and with her help translate them into Spanish. Every year that our students have entered, they have won numerous awards. Last year, my then fourth grader, decided to enter the contest. Throughout her school career, she has always needed prodding to expand her writing. However, Señora Klassen had made the idea so exciting to her that without prompting, my child sat down and spent hours developing, writing and editing her story. I've never seen my child write for that long without prompting and Becky made it happen. With a first-place win in her age group, my child's confidence in writing has soared. I know my child is only one student, but Becky has reached countless students like this and her lessons go well beyond the Spanish classroom.

Last, but certainly not least, under her direction and with the collaboration of her colleagues in other specialist areas, the parents and students have been treated to an all school celebration of Spanish culture with the Extravaganza de Español. Moving into its third year this year, the students work with their specialists' teachers to develop a colorful, exciting program to perform for parents and family members. Students development of Spanish language is heightened as they learn Spanish songs and additionally, in the 5th grade, perform entire short skits in Spanish. They explore the culture as they learn dances and how to play instruments. It is a school wide event that is eagerly anticipated each year and the time and effort to put it on is immense and truly appreciated.

I am so grateful that Becky has been teaching languages and cultures to my children in their formative years. The benefits and foundation they have received as her student will last a lifetime. She fosters a life-long love of learning in languages and as my oldest prepares to move on to middle school next year, instead of dreading taking a foreign language, she is excited about the prospect of all the options open to her. Señora Klassen goes above and beyond inside and outside the classroom. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and you can't help but be swept up in her excitement as she brings the multicultural world we live in to life. I highly recommend her for this position. She truly exemplifies what it means to be a great teacher, rooted in best practices.

Sincerely,

Kristin McBride