

Collins Academy High School

Compassion. Perseverance, Pride.

1313 S. Sacramento, Chicago, IL 60623 Phone: 773-534-1840

April 24, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to endorse Sara Carroll as a classroom teacher and school leader. I have known her for nearly 9 years and have been impressed by her belief in students and her unyieldingly high expectations for students and adults. In nearly every way, she was **the strongest instructor** in our building when I was the Principal at Chicago Academy HS. I was her supervisor for 7 years as the Principal of Chicago Academy High School. Over the course of that time, she had become a driving force in the development of our school. She excels as a teacher and a leader of adults. She does all she can to ensure success for our students and our teachers.

In the classroom in which she works, she sets a very high level of expectation for every student. She has extremely clear routines, has an amazingly strict but fun and loving rapport with students, and includes rigor in every step of every lesson. She is skilled at differentiation, and, in particular, is adept at using data to determine student groupings and re-groupings on a weekly basis. Over the years, she has taught English and Reading at all four grade levels. Her classes are always well prepared and well run. She scores Distinguished on many of the Danielson Framework sub-components including Questioning Techniques, Managing Classroom Procedures, and Establishing an Environment of Respect and Rapport. She is an incredible teacher who uses technology, data, research, instinct, and her colleagues to push our students forward. Every year students improve their ACT scores significantly as a result of being in her class. They often increase two or more points in just one year with her.

Further, during my tenure, she became the Lead English Teacher at CAHS, a position she continues to hold. This means that she is the liaison from the administration to our English team. She needs to be skilled in the curriculum and assessment tools as well as personable to make her team successful. Over the years, she has personally been involved in building a systematic plan for grammar throughout our network of high schools, which we call ECRS. She has also been involved in building the data-driven instructional tools in reading. She has led our English team through much of this as well as through the creation of a Writing Manual, numerous lesson studies, and our Standards Based Grading development. Through collaboration with other teachers, and her vision for outstanding work for students, our English scores have skyrocketed, exceeding the average scores for all students in Illinois.

I endorse Sara wholeheartedly and without reservation. She exhibits an uncompromising belief in children that is so necessary in schools. At Chicago Academy, students and staff are guided by the four core values of Compassion, Commitment, Reflection and Integrity, which she wholeheartedly exhibits and encourages students and teachers to do the same. She brings these values into conversations with students and into her curriculum, having students write essays about the character in *A Raisin in the Sun* that has the most Compassion. Further, she holds herself and all others to an extremely high level of performance. It is for these reasons that I recommend her for graduate work. Please feel free to contact me at 773-534-1840 if you have other questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Erin A. Galfer

Erin A. Galfer, Principal, Collins Academy HS