

YORK COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

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March 1, 2022

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to write this letter on behalf of Andrew “AJ” Kepka. In my position as art teacher at York Community High School, I worked with AJ for nine weeks during his first student teaching placement from August to October 2021. As his cooperating teacher, I had ample opportunity to both observe AJ in the classroom as well as work with him in planning for his experience teaching art. AJ taught 4 different classes at York: Digital Art and Design, Animation Techniques, two sections of Clay Sculpture, and a co-taught class called Art Survey. AJ jumped in quickly with my Clay Sculpture classes, and by mid-quarter, he took over all five of my classes: from attendance and classroom management, to all grading and assessments.

AJ worked to build and maintain a strong rapport with students in the classroom setting. Early on in his placement, he made a point to circulate the classroom daily, conducting individual conversations with students of all abilities and levels. He cultivated and maintained a stable and caring classroom environment, and was consistent in his ability to manage behavior issues that arose. AJ is comfortable with every group of students, including classes with great diversity, such as our Art Survey class, a class designed to foster relationships between special education multi-needs students and general education students.

In teaching art, AJ was able to conduct research and make learning relevant to students. He created sophisticated presentations and resources designed to facilitate learning, and implemented targeted demonstrations to meet students’ needs. Even in classes where he has little experience in the media, he is able to keep one step ahead of the class: he learns by doing. AJ provided ongoing, specific feedback and assistance to students throughout the lessons. His teaching was sound, and students found the projects to be of personal interest.

Outside of the classroom, AJ participated in several division and department team meetings, as well as larger staff meetings and inservices. I was particularly impressed with AJ’s engagement during departmental meetings: he settled in quickly and participated easily with the group, asking informed questions and offering insight into department issues. AJ also attended a cross-country meet to show support for students in one of our classes.

I am confident that Andrew “AJ” Kepka would make a great addition to any school staff. AJ will be a strong teacher at any level and a valuable asset to your school community. In addition to his visual art certification, he is certified in drama/theatre arts as well.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at aantonson@elmhurst205.org or at 847-902-5302.

Sincerely,
April Antonson
Art Teacher - York Community High School