



January 20, 2013

To: United States Department of Education:

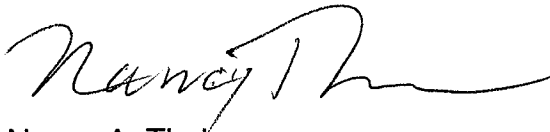
It gives me great pleasure to recommend Mr. Walt Sutterlin for the Teaching Ambassador Fellowship Program, as a Classroom Fellow for the U.S. Department of Education. With his extensive knowledge, respected leadership and impeccable communication skills, Walt is an outstanding candidate for this program. It has been my privilege to work with Walt for the past five years through Ingham Intermediate School District's collaborative county-wide efforts to improve student achievement utilizing a multi-tier system of support. As a Transformational/Instructional Coach, school-based leadership team member, and classroom teacher, Walt has been an integral part of the collaborative implementation of these school improvement efforts in his classroom, school, and district, as well as throughout Ingham County Schools. These enriching and varied experiences enable Walt to bring a highly-respected and unique perspective to the work of systems change that resonates with educators and families alike.

Walt truly stands out as an educational leader for his rare combination of brilliance, insight, and practicality, along with his ability to truly listen to people. In county-wide meetings and professional development, he is widely valued as a leader in combining his classroom expertise with his remarkable skill in evidence-based practices. It is to extraordinary to watch him command a group with his ability to listen to varying perspectives and find just the right insightful question that leads the group to resolution or enhanced understanding. He consistently presents innovative ideas, pertinent book reviews, important policy discussions and has extensive knowledge of educational and leadership research. Walt's exceptional ability to understand a big picture perspective on issues and policies is noteworthy, while also having the ability to see the practical details from a student's or classroom teacher's viewpoint. Highly respected by teachers, families and administrators alike, Walt's is an effective and authentic leader who brings a vision and passion to the work he does every day.

In addition to his strong technical expertise and leadership skills, Walt displays outstanding communication skills, interpersonal skills and organizational skills. He is exceptionally articulate in public speaking and is a skillful presenter and facilitator. Most importantly, his excellent writing skills on wide-ranging topics are perceptive as evidenced by the many types of writing that can be found on his thought-provoking blog. Walt straightforwardly conveys the connections between various ideas or disciplines and translates research into practice in a very approachable and engaging manner. In working with Walt, he consistently demonstrates a positive, personal and enthusiastic attitude that makes him a delight to work with. I am continually impressed with his energy, creativity and work ethic.

Having worked with many educators for over 25 years, I strongly believe that Walt is an exceptional educator who will make a strong and lasting contribution to the field of education as well as to the teachers and community that he serves. What sets Walt apart is his strong grasp of educational research and practices, his exceptional communication skills, his passionate commitment to education and his leadership that inspires others to greatness. It is with great enthusiasm that I highly recommend Mr. Walt Sutterlin for the Teaching Ambassador Fellowship Program with the United States Department of Education.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy A. Theis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nancy A. Theis
MTSS Coordinator
Ingham Intermediate School District
Mason, Michigan
ntheis@inghamisd.org