

September 15, 2014

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter on behalf of our middle school principal Mr. John Harris. I have known Mr. Harris for the past 11 years, and during this time he has impressed me not only as a person but also as an incredible teacher, musician, administrator and leader.

Mr. Harris has an amazing reputation among parents, students, colleagues, the community and his peers. No matter what role he plays, he does it to the best of his ability and is fully engaged in helping whoever needs him. The last few years he has played the role of our principal and director of creative activities. We could not have asked for a better advocate for our program. Being a musician himself, he is fully aware of what it takes to build a strong music program. His question to us is always "how can I help?" Even before he became an administrator, he was always willing to help. My first year here he hosted the Black history program and also sang while accompanying himself on the piano. (Yes, he's THAT good!) He was also willing to do a cameo appearance for one of our high school musicals and when he saw we had some needs for the set, he went out and found what we needed without us even asking.

When the new theatre was built in our school, larger demands were expected of the music program. Mr. Harris was there every step of the way and it didn't matter if the task was labor intensive. He has come down to help tear down risers and set up for concerts numerous times, taken trips with us to help load set pieces and props for our musicals, worked behind the scenes to chaperone students during performances, attended show choir competitions during the school day and has attended almost every music boosters meeting without fail. Aside from music activities, you will also see him outside playing kickball with the students after lunch. This is just another example of how fully engaged he is in every aspect. His hours are long and extend into the evenings and weekends. However, his enthusiasm and love for what he does every day never seems to waiver.

The past few years we have had a lot of new ideas we wanted to try to continue building our music department. Mr. Harris has always been willing to entertain those ideas and is supportive as long as what we are doing is good for the students. Not only is he an advocate for students, but he is also an advocate for his staff, which is why he is so well respected and appreciated among all of them. If we request something to help enrich the experience in our classrooms, he is our advocate in making sure we have what we need.

I can think of no other person more deserving of this award. It has been an absolute joy to teach under such an amazing administrator who truly makes a difference. Our music department has flourished because of his support and his willingness to work alongside us to make wonderful things happen each and every day. I hope you will seriously consider his nomination. He has my most respectful and highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

Julie Baker-Anderson

Vocal Music Director
Wahoo High School