



February 15, 2021

Recommendation for Samuel Gonzalez

I write in enthusiastic support of Samuel Gonzalez for a doctoral program in Educational Leadership. I have known Samuel since September 2020, when he entered the master's program in Reading/Writing/ Literacy. From my contact with him—including his application and subsequent phone calls before he began the program—I have found him to be an extraordinary young man, bright, highly motivated and deeply committed to the education of diverse learners with a special interest in second language learners. The kind of work Samuel Gonzalez is superbly qualified for and intent on doing is desperately needed in the field of education, and I hope you will give his application serious attention.

Samuel's academic performance in his classes at Penn has been strong. As his course instructor for the initial fieldwork course for reading specialist candidates, I met with him frequently to discuss his work with early learners in the online setting. I was very impressed with his lively intelligence and his creativity in developing multimodal lessons that engaged students in sharing their ideas and furthering critical meaning-making practices in the classroom and beyond. He is extremely attentive to issues of culture, language and race and to the consequences of unexamined attitudes and practices that limit the life chances of students of color.

In addition, Samuel has had experience working with school leaders in urban and suburban settings to create school and classroom contexts that nurture community and promote high standards. He has developed leadership skills working in collaboration with colleagues designing curriculum, writing standards aligned units of study and working with families to build bridges between home and school. Whether he is asked to teach struggling readers, use diagnostic assessments, or teach others about the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, Samuel can be counted upon to do work of high quality.

In all aspects of Samuel's work at Penn, whether it is coursework, teaching in the field, or advocating for youth in the community, his approach to work is characterized by intelligence, a wealth of creativity, and deeply reflective thinking. Given the caliber of his work and his strong commitment to education, I can imagine no more fitting candidate for a doctoral program in Educational Leadership than Samuel Gonzalez. He will make a unique and distinguished contribution to the field of Educational Leadership especially to the lives of those less well served in the current system.

I recommend him without reservation, and with pleasure. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me by email at dwaff@upenn.edu.

Sincerely,

Diane R. Waff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane R. Waff".

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