

**Jennifer Moore, PreK-12 Music**

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To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of my dear friend and respected colleague, Derrick Hopkins, in consideration for the position of 7<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher at AVCS.

I have worked with Derrick for over 15 years, initially through community theatre projects in the area. His ability to oversee *every* aspect of a large community-based production, taking responsibility for both the success and well-being of each participant, no matter what their contribution to the project was, opened a world of possibilities for me. Because he viewed this work through the lens of an educator, I found myself seeing the profession in a new light. It is no exaggeration to state that my passion for teaching in public school was ignited during those first rehearsals. Since then, Derrick and I have collaborated on over a dozen shows, with countless students and community members of all ages and levels of experience. Derrick fully understands the importance of building community through education, and I see this occur on a daily basis in his classroom here at Willsboro. The students feel that support and thrive because of it.

Derrick has many strengths that would benefit the students, staff, and community at AVCS. First, Derrick is a problem solver. He can approach any teaching scenario from multiple perspectives, finding *exactly* what an individual needs in order to reach new and lasting understanding. Students who pass through his classroom remember lessons *years* after the fact because he takes the time to understand how each individual needs to learn the material in order to be successful. Second, Derrick is not afraid of the messy business of education. True learning, as we've often discussed, needs to be internalized, needs a safe space for experimentation, and needs to be confidently shared with others. Derrick provides the space, the resources, the tools, and the time to move through the complex process of learning.

The transition from elementary to middle school is a significant change for students. Derrick would be the ideal teacher to support students socially and emotionally, and through an academic rigor that will help to build a foundation of confidence and competence needed to support students through their secondary school years.

The AuSable/Keeseville community is also home to Derrick and his growing family. As long as I have known him, he has referenced the quality education he received in his home district. He has served his community for years through his work in school theatre productions, the establishment of the Hometown Heroes banner campaign, and the founding of the Artistry Community Theatre. Serving his community as an educator would be a deeply meaningful way of continuing to give back to a community that has supported him all these years.

Lastly, as a colleague, Derrick is first to offer help with anything from computer technologies, cross-curricular learning opportunities, mentoring, organization, school concert support, and importantly- a sense of humor that will knock your socks off and help snap things back into perspective when the weight of our responsibilities in the classroom can feel overwhelming. I recommend Derrick for this position with the utmost confidence that both school and community would thrive with him on staff.

Most sincerely,

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