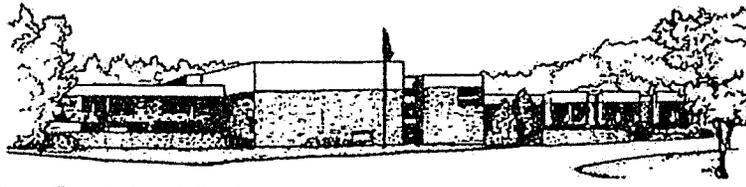


Michael C. Francia
Superintendent
1273 Route 9N
Clintonville, NY 12924
(518) 834-2845
(518) 834-2843 (fax)



Theodore Sill
School Business Executive
1273 Route 9N
Clintonville, NY 12924
(518) 834-2867
(518) 834-9188 (fax)

AuSable Valley Central School District

April 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to recommend Derrick Hopkins, an exceptional educator whose dedication, versatility, and positive spirit make a lasting impact on his students and colleagues.

Derrick consistently puts students' needs first, creating a supportive and engaging learning environment where all students feel valued and capable. His wide range of certifications speaks to his flexibility and willingness to teach wherever he is needed, always stepping up with a positive attitude and readiness to contribute.

What truly sets Derrick apart is his ability to build strong, trusting relationships with both students and colleagues. He is deeply involved in school-wide initiatives and plays an active role on multiple committees. Notably, Derrick has been instrumental in launching and supporting our PBIS program at the middle school level, an initiative that has already made a noticeable impact thanks in large part to his leadership and dedication.

Derrick is also a valuable member of our 8th grade team, regularly offering thoughtful input in team meetings and collaborating effectively with others. His sense of humor and approachable personality make him a favorite among both staff and students, contributing to a positive and uplifting school environment.

I am confident that Derrick would be an asset to any school community. He brings a rare combination of professionalism, adaptability, and heart, and I know he will go above and beyond when faced with any challenge. I strongly recommend him without reservation.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Francia". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Michael Francia
Superintendent of Schools



AUSABLE VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL-HIGH SCHOOL

1490 Route 9N
Clintonville, New York 12924
(518) 834-2800 or (518) 647-5100
Fax: (518) 834-6016



Tammy Casey
High School Principal

Jennifer Mousseau
Middle School Principal

4/14/2025

Dear Selection Committee,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of recommendation for Mr. Derrick Hopkins, who has served as a teacher at AuSable Valley Middle-High School. As his direct supervisor and building principal, I have had the privilege of observing Mr. Hopkins's growth as an 8th grade math teacher over the past two years and the positive impact he has made on our students, staff, and school culture.

Mr. Hopkins is an integral member of our 8th grade team. He consistently brings energy, innovation, and dedication to his classroom and beyond. His ability to think outside the box has allowed him to design engaging, creative lessons that not only deepen student understanding of the NYS Next Generation Mathematics Learning Standards but also build critical thinking and problem-solving skills. He meets students where they are and goes above and beyond to support their academic and personal growth.

Beyond his classroom responsibilities, Mr. Hopkins has been a strong advocate and supporter of school-wide initiatives, including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Positivity Project (P2). His contributions have helped strengthen our school's climate and culture. His commitment to ensuring that students remain connected to their academics, feel positively supported at school, and are developing social-emotional skills speaks volumes about his character and dedication.

Mr. Hopkins is a team player who is always willing to lend a helping hand to colleagues. He is proactive in finding solutions, sharing resources, and supporting staff needs. He created a spreadsheet system that allows teachers to easily sign up to cover classes during different periods, which has greatly improved internal coverage. Additionally, he took the initiative to redesign our building-wide hall pass system, making it more efficient—another change that has significantly supported our secretaries and improved overall organization.

In every aspect of his role, Mr. Hopkins demonstrates professionalism, compassion, and a genuine passion for education. He would be a tremendous asset to any school community, and I give him my highest recommendation without reservation. Please feel free to contact me directly at (518) 834-2800 or mousseau.jennifer@avcsk12.org should you require any further information.

Educationally yours,

Jennifer S. Mousseau
Middle School Principal

Heather L. Gottlob
AuSable Valley High School
1490 Route 9N
Clintonville NY 12924
518-569-5325 (cell)

April 15, 2025

Dear Committee:

It is with such pleasure that I highly recommend Mr. Derrick Hopkins as a candidate for the position available in your esteemed district.

I have known Mr. Hopkins in many facets, beginning in 2021 when he joined AuSable Valley Central School, where I have been an English teacher for the past 23 years. Mr. Hopkins brought with him a wealth of educational experience, including teaching 20 years at Willsboro Central School District, where he primarily taught Reading, Science and ELA/Math Intervention for grades 4-6. Now in his fourth year at AuSable Valley Middle-High School, Derrick has added even more to his educational accolades, teaching English 11 for three years (and successfully leading a class of struggling learners to pass the ELA Regents - *bravo!*) English 8 Intervention for two years, and Math 8 for two years, as well.

While Mr. Hopkins was hired at AuSable Valley Central School as an educator, his role in the district goes far beyond teaching “just” English and Math. He has brought culture into the building in a way few others can. One of the most memorable things he has accomplished for our community at large is bringing Dr. Vladimir Monk to our middle-high school as part of Holocaust remembrance. The experience was life-changing for every human in the auditorium that day. A local hero and survivor, Dr. Monk’s visit is still fondly remembered by the school community today.

Back to Mr. Hopkins’ time in the classroom, I have had the pleasure of observing his driven, student-based nature when I pop into his classroom to deliver a message or see a student briefly. Mr. Hopkins’ creates a welcoming atmosphere, a place where students feel comfortable and are able to rise to their best selves. Perhaps this is a result of not only Mr. Hopkins’ empathetic nature and “go with the flow” nature, but also his rich experience in the world of theatre. His love for the stage began at a young age and he has been able to transform this personal interest into something that has become part of both his “work life” and “personal life,” as well. In 2014, he was the Heart of the Art Award Winner for his theater program at Willsboro Central School, and established a not-for-profit, Artistry Community Theatre (ACT) Corporation, in 2017, whose recent productions have been performed at the Strand Center Theater in Plattsburgh, New York.

It is because of this kaleidoscope of knowledge, experience, passion and more that has made Mr. Hopkins such a unique and *inspiring* addition to our school community. Mr. Hopkins takes on leadership roles, advocates for students, and supports his colleagues unconditionally. His ability to connect with the school community, whether it is students, faculty, parents or community members, comes natural to him, a quality that our district has benefited from and will surely notice its absence when he is no longer with us. Mr. Hopkins brought something spectacular with him in 2021, something that I hope you will choose to gain and experience for yourself.

Mr. Hopkins' credentials are indeed remarkable for anyone in education. Certified in PreK-6, 7-8 English, 7-8 Math, and currently enrolled in 7-12 Special Education at SUNY Plattsburgh for Summer 2025, Mr. Hopkins continues to evolve and elevate as an educator; however, as I have previously mentioned, it isn't just a resume of professional skills that create a great teacher. A teacher who makes a difference is one like Mr. Hopkins, a human who is exceptional at being human.

I am sure it was overwhelming for Mr. Hopkins to adjust to life in a new school after spending two decades at Willsboro; however, he never seemed intimidated or unsure, rode the current of standards and social needs with perfect balance, and made himself part of our AVCS family. Mr. Hopkins will pack and bring all of this and more into his suitcase if she is given the opportunity to join your team. It is with utmost support of Mr. Hopkins' character, energy and amazing *humanness* that I recommend him without reservation.

If you have any further questions with regard to Mr. Hopkins' background or qualifications, please do not hesitate to contact me; it would be a pleasure to talk with you more about him.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather L. Gottlob

April 16, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of recommendation for Derrick Hopkins. I have had the pleasure of knowing Derrick for the better part of 30 years, and I can say with full confidence that he is one of the most dedicated, passionate, and versatile educators I have ever had the opportunity to work with.

Our connection began when Derrick directed his very first theatrical production—one in which I was fortunate to be a part as a senior at AuSable Valley. That production sparked what would become a lifelong passion for theatre on his part. Since then, Derrick has gone on to direct numerous plays and musicals, sharing his creativity and love for the arts with students and the community alike.

When Derrick first joined the AuSable Valley faculty, he worked as an ELA AIS teacher, where he made an immediate and lasting impact. Many of the students on my CSE caseload were struggling with English Language Arts, and Derrick's patient, skillful guidance helped them find their footing and experience real academic growth. His support played a vital role in their success during those years.

Over the last two years, Derrick has transitioned into the role of 8th grade math teacher. In my position as the 8th grade consultant teacher, I've had the privilege of pushing into his classroom and working side by side with him on a daily basis. Derrick is an exceptional collaborator—always open to feedback, deeply committed to inclusive teaching practices, and constantly striving to meet the diverse needs of his students. Our working relationship has been one of the most seamless and rewarding of my career, and I honestly can't imagine teaching math without him.

Derrick is the kind of teacher who brings both passion and precision to everything he does, whether it's staging a school musical or teaching algebraic equations. He is supportive, dependable, and beloved by both students and colleagues. Any school or program would be lucky to have him as part of their team.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like additional insight into Derrick's qualifications and character. I recommend him without reservation.

Sincerely,

Jaime Thwaits
Special Education Teacher/8th Grade Consultant Teacher
AuSable Valley Central School
thwaits.jaime@avcsk12.org