



# JEFFREY TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Website: [http:// www.iusd.org/jt](http://www.iusd.org/jt)

**Michael Georgino**  
Principal

**Katie Levensailor**  
Assistant Principal

March 27, 2024

Dear St. Mary's School Hiring Committee,

It is with the highest and utmost honor for me to recommend my friend and former colleague, Stephanie Butler, to be the Director of the Design Center of St. Mary's School. To be transparent, a recruiter reached out to me for the position, as I am a middle school engineering teacher who has experience with makerspaces. But upon further reflection and review about the position, I realized that Stephanie is the best candidate for this position for a number of significant reasons that I will gladly explain.

Having worked with her for 7 years and especially through the pandemic, I experienced firsthand her uncanny combination of artistic talent and technical acumen at Jeffrey Trail Middle School, a public school in the Irvine Unified School District. Not only was she firing up kilns for clay sculptures for her 7th and 8th Graders, but she was also teaching them how to code with electronic Makey Makeys to make real fruit become keyboards. Furthermore, Stephanie can sew, paint, 3D print, and work with chisels - all within the Makerspace that she designed. Speaking of design, Stephanie is an expert in Design Thinking as articulated by Stanford's d.school. She is also a community-builder: she connected even with the toughest students, and hosted art nights to relax us teachers. Finally, she, to this day, will always help and offer to help any of her colleagues no matter what she is doing. I never felt like she was ever too busy for me even though I know she was always busy changing the world through her amazing art, one student at a time. This is the kind of person who inspires kids (and fellow teachers) to go above and beyond their abilities and they return to express their loyalty to her. Her heart for the community is the same for her own family. She is a very supportive wife to her husband, and is the best mom for her boys, one of which recently graduated from Mater Dei, a school that Stephanie was deeply involved with.

Stephanie truly has the World-Sized Heart and World-Class Mind that embodies the mission of St. Mary's School. I have personally been in STEM district coordinator roles, connected with many K-12 STEM leaders throughout Southern California, and even visited many makerspaces throughout Orange County. But of all the talented people that I know of, Stephanie Butler is the perfect and seamless fit for the kind of expert that you need to be your Director of the Design Center. Stephanie would be the perfect expert to connect St. Mary's teachers in Design Thinking methodology, foster the creative design thinking-based environment for students, and coordinate the creation of the makerspaces in the new Design Center.

Therefore, it is sincerely with the highest honor that I recommend Stephanie Butler to become the Director of the Design Center for St. Mary's School.

Sincerely,

Viet Nguyen  
Engineering Teacher  
Jeffrey Trail Middle School

ESTABLISHED 1970



**JEFFREY TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL**



February 1, 2023

**Risk Taker, Educator, Innovator, Creator, Mentor** – these are the words that come to mind when I think of Stephanie Butler and her impact on our campus.

To Whom It May Concern,

I have come to know Ms. Butler well over the last seven years, not just as her supervisor, but as a colleague and friend. As an Art Educator she has all the traits that an educational institution would want in an instructor. Her lessons engage students and expand their knowledge and skills, she challenges individuals to complete projects they themselves did not recognize their capacity to do, her classroom is dynamic with students exploring their interests and imagination with smiles on their faces and determination in their eyes.

As a colleague and friend, I have come to know Stephanie as someone who is compassionate to others and always willing to lend a helping hand. She is not afraid to ask the tough questions, nor reflect on challenging situations. She is the type of person that everyone in your organization will know as she finds ways to inject her spirit and resourcefulness into projects and conversations that have a positive impact on everyone.

This year during our Choir performance, Ms. Butler organized an exhibit of her students' art in a main hallway of our campus. This not only created a platform for her students to display their work for the community, but offered a more robust experience for those in attendance and recognition of what our school has to offer. Two years ago I asked Ms. Butler to redesign our school Spirit Wear. In response she led a schoolwide effort to imagine and create a new look that was led and designed by students with her direction. In that process we continually met as Ms. Butler wanted to ensure that the design incorporated the themes and style that our school sought. Ultimately, her tutelage guided a student to create a unique logo and design that was embraced by our entire community.

Stephanie Butler has an innate ability to connect with people (of all ages) and give them the confidence to imagine and create. I highly recommend her for any position that extends her the opportunity to build upon the capacity of others. She is an exceptional educator, and individual.

Sincerely,

Michael Georgino  
Principal  
Jeffrey Trail Middle School



**JEFFREY TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL**

February 3, 2023

Dear Selection Committee,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Stephanie Butler. I have known Stephanie for 3 years as a teacher at Jeffrey Trail Middle School (JTMS), where I am the Assistant Principal. In my role, I directly supervise Stephanie and evaluate her performance as an educator. My experience with Stephanie is that she is a deeply passionate educator, well versed in the content of Art, both beginning and advanced, and Ceramics. Stephanie is creative and definitely thinks outside of the box when designing lessons for her students. Recently, I observed Stephanie teaching a lesson in which students were asked to modify sea creatures based on potential impacts of radioactive contamination from the Fukushima incident. Students had to implement skills across curriculums, work collaboratively, and implement problem solving skills to be successful. The outcome of these projects was a beautiful display in the hall, for all JTMS students to observe. In my observations, I see students engaged and fully invested in the content they are learning. A strength of Stephanie's is that she gives students voice and choice in their work, allowing them to extend their learning based on their skill level. The whole student is important to Stephanie, as evidenced by her regular communication with families and the community.

Stephanie is dedicated to professional growth. She collaborates with other art teachers in the district and acts as a teaching mentor to continue to develop her skills as an effective teacher. Stephanie regularly applies for grants and connects with outside agencies to get resources for her students and classroom.

Beyond her dedication to art instruction, Stephanie is a professional artist. She has several publications, owns her own art studio, and has art on display throughout the county. Stephanie has expressed to me her passion to continue to grow and to have new experiences. I wholeheartedly support her in her new endeavors. If you have any questions about Stephanie or her qualifications for your position, please feel free to contact me [katherinelevensailor@iusd.org](mailto:katherinelevensailor@iusd.org).

Sincerely,

Katie Levensailor, Ed.D.

Assistant Principal

Jeffrey Trail Middle School

[katherinelevensailor@iusd.org](mailto:katherinelevensailor@iusd.org)



February 6, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure and honor that I write this letter of recommendation for Mrs. Stephanie Butler. I have known Stephanie for 10 years as an Art teacher and Electives Department Chair at Jeffrey Trail Middle School. I have always been impressed with her professionalism and rapport with her students. Stephanie always maintains a very positive class environment through management techniques and motivating ideas.

Stephanie shows a dedication and motivation far greater than other individuals. She shows a willingness and excitement towards learning new ideas and new components to her program and is willing to try different teaching methods to fit the group she was working with.

Stephanie is very conscientious about her planning and makes sure her lessons are age appropriate. She always takes into consideration, "What is best for the students," and develops an appropriate style with educational expectations that are fair and yet challenging.

As an Art teacher Stephanie is very helpful and motivating towards all of her students. Stephanie is always willing to give extra time and go the extra mile for the benefit of her students. She makes sure that her lessons are aligned with the standards that have been set by the state and yet makes them interesting.

Over the 3 years I was principal at Jeffrey Trail, I watched Stephanie become one of the most valuable and important teachers a school could employ. She always worked above and beyond to develop an art program that helped students understand and excel in Art and helped encourage collaboration among her department members and across our district as our Department Chair.

It is without a doubt that I recommend to any program that is looking for a highly motivated professional that can motivate others and will bring a new and refreshing approach to their curriculum that they consider hiring Stephanie Butler.

Sincerely,

**Scott E. Bowman**

Scott Bowman

Retired Principal

Jeffrey Trail Middle School

SBC Founder

February 21, 2023

Amanda Lelliott  
Teacher Librarian  
Jeffrey Trail Middle School

Dear Search Committee,

I am writing to recommend Stephanie Butler to your excellent organization. I have been fortunate enough to work with Stephanie here at Jeffrey Trail Middle School since our inception, and she has been a creative force on our staff for the past ten years. She inspires her students each day to strive beyond the boundaries of what they think they can to so that they can reach their artistic and creative potentials. In addition, she collaborates with other departments to create truly cross-curricular projects that engage students. For one memorable project, she invited students to research the consequences of the Fukushima nuclear reactor meltdown and imagine how it might impact sea life. Then the students constructed life-size mutated sea animals from a variety of media, which were installed in the hallway outside the library. What took it to the astounding was the inclusion of motion-activated black lights that made the creatures glow with eerie, portentous light. And each day, all students across campus got to walk through this incredible installation.

Besides her mastery of her curriculum, Stephanie is a wonderful colleague who is supportive and helpful in every possible way. She always has a helping hand and a listening ear to lend, and if she tells you she will do something, you can bet it will be done without delay. During the tumultuous times of the pandemic, she let me use the pottery wheels on the art patio after hours and taught me how to throw as a form of therapy. (I am now three semesters deep into a pottery certificate program, and she'll still fire my pieces for me and won't take a dime!) She has often offered art as a way for staff to express themselves and decompress, and her studio is always welcoming!

You will be doing your students a favor by bringing Stephanie onto your faculty team. She is a brilliant educator, a compassionate colleague, and a truly inspirational artist in her own right. She will strive for excellence in everything she does, as she has for the entire time I've been lucky to know her. I'm honored to provide this reference. Thank you for reading and for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Lelliott', with a stylized, flowing script.

Amanda Lelliott

Amberleigh Adoff

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

14 April, 2023

To Whome It May Concern;

I am pleased to recommend Stephanie Butler for the open position at your organization. I have enjoyed working with Stephanie as a colleague and fellow art educator in the Irvine Unified School District for 10 years. She has been an invaluable team member and innovative educator.

Stephanie is a passionate, knowledgeable, and hard-working individual and educational leader. She is an amazing collaborator and has always been a strong connector within our professional community. She is a role model for myself and other educators due to her drive to learn and improve her own practice and share her knowledge with others.

Stephanie's leadership skills helped her to establish a new school in Irvine and develop a new visual arts program. She designed an engaging and highly successful program through grant writing, fundraising, and building strong connections within the community. As a facilitator for the middle school visual arts team, Stephanie led us to develop a highly successful visual arts showcase. Her beautifully curated collection of student work, thoughtful reflective questions, and coaching helped the team to work together to provide a quality experience for many communities

throughout Irvine. She undoubtedly has made an impact on her educational community as well as the local community.

Stephanie shows initiative and expertise through her engaging workshops and thoughtful presentations both within IUSD and her professional organizations. She is a practicing artist, an innovative thinker, and a collaborative team player. I am confident she will be an asset to any organization, team, or program. Please don't hesitate to reach out for more information as I would be happy to elaborate on my experience working with Stephanie.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A Adoff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "A" being particularly large and stylized.

Amberleigh Adoff

A solid black rectangular redaction bar covering a line of text, likely a phone number or email address.