

April 2, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

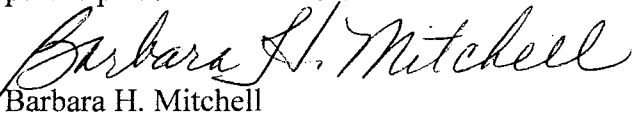
This is to recommend Jeremy Neldon for a teaching position in your school district. Jeremy did his Master of Arts in Teaching student teaching in a fifth grade class in my building and then was hired to teach Extended Learning for gifted/talented elementary students in a nearby school. We have been peers in that program for 5 years. As a teacher-trainer throughout the state of Alaska, I have had the opportunity to mentor and train numerous educators during the past 22 years. Jeremy belongs in the group that I would create if I could gather teachers for my "ideal school."

Jeremy has consistently sought and has taken advantage of every training and inservice opportunity provided in a district known for its progressive approach to education. Nationally known educational speakers love to visit Alaska, so we are able to receive training in programs resulting from the best of the latest research. Jeremy has demonstrated a wise approach to the abundance of new information, listening with an open mind, conferring with and coaching his peers, and discerning what will work best with his students, without abandoning what he has already mastered. He tirelessly advocates for students, both individually and through his work at the district level for the Extended Learning program. He keeps current on the research and pilots new methods of identification and new teaching models, such as Storyline and robotics, continually searching for equitable ways of meeting the needs of all students in our district.

He has taken a particular interest in Multiple Intelligences, due in part to his own outstanding skills in the performing arts, and he has combined exemplary MI strategies with well-chosen materials to create in-depth learning opportunities for students that are engaging, motivating and challenging. When the materials aren't available commercially, Jeremy's creativity kicks in and he writes his own. The result is a personal touch that fires up the students' imaginations.

There are teachers who can do these things at a small level, individually in their own rooms, but it is rare to see one who can reach out and work so skillfully and enthusiastically with other staff members the way Jeremy does, resulting in projects that benefit students throughout his building. His school's production of *Tides* and the *Tempest* integrated graphic design, Native Studies, literature, dance and drama. He co-produced another school-wide project, *The Quilt Project*, bringing in community experts to help him teach geometry, the history of arts and crafts, elements of design and sewing to create quilts from each classroom, auctioned off to provide more funds for the school's art program. His energy and expertise, his willingness to make things happen, as well as to participate in every level of the work involved in a large project have earned him the trust, respect and admiration of his school, the community and the Extended Learning teachers throughout our district.

I recommend Jeremy to you with the highest personal and professional endorsements. I would be delighted to offer further information by phone (907-463-1999), should that be desired. The hole Jeremy leaves here in Juneau will be the exact puzzle piece that will most benefit the new school that is fortunate enough to hire him.

  
Barbara H. Mitchell  
1996 Alaska Teacher-of-the-Year, 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-Up  
Extended Learning, Gastineau Elementary  
Juneau, Alaska 99801