

January 14, 2019



OVERLAND PRAIRIE CAMPUS

Overland High School
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Aurora, CO 80012
720.747.3700

Prairie Middle School
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OVERLAND-PRAIRIE CAMPUS: A SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS CAMPUS

To Whom It May Concern:

This is, possibly, the most difficult letter of recommendation I have ever had to compose. While it will be a pleasure to list the excellent qualities Ms. Hannah Smith possesses as an orchestra teacher, writing this letter means that I will be losing a truly exceptional department member, innovative PLC leader, dedicated educator, and friend. As teachers like Ms. Smith are rare, it is honest to admit that Overland's loss can only be Texas' gain.

I have known Ms. Smith for five years in my role as the Fine Arts Department Coordinator at Overland High School. In that time, we have worked on many curricular, creative, and directorial projects together, each of which has greatly benefited from the expertise of this highly-capable educator. Ms. Smith currently directs three curricular string ensembles, the pit orchestra for our yearly musical, and teaches several sections of Class Piano and AP Music Theory. Outstandingly dedicated, she volunteers her extra time after school and on weekends to her students, offering free lessons to those who would be otherwise unable to afford such tutelage. Finally, Ms. Smith is also a member of the Colorado Board of the American String Teachers Association, where she works to collaborate on the future of orchestral education.

Ms. Smith came to Overland five years ago and is our first orchestra teacher. She took a small, struggling program of a mere couple dozen students and has grown it from one to three ensembles in that short period. Her high expectations, excellent pedagogy, and tireless determination have inspired her students—now over 200 of them. Her students are a fixture in Colorado All-State Orchestra and more than ever before are choosing to continue their education by pursuing and being accepted to collegiate music programs. Ms. Smith is a professional who is prepared to take the next step in her own career and—if her tenacity in the classroom is any indication—will excel in a high-achieving orchestra program in Texas.

In closing, I can only reiterate the fact that your school will be hard-pressed to gain to more dedicated, well-rounded, or collaborative teacher than Ms. Smith. Please do not hesitate to email me concerning any questions pertaining to Hannah Smith's candidature.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Abigail F. Cate
Fine Department Coordinator
Director of Vocal Jazz and Musical Theatre Studies
Overland High School
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Cherry Creek Schools