

Overland High School

Home of the Trailblazers

March 1, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

*Shari VanHaselen
Activities Director
12400 East Jewell Avenue
Aurora, Colorado 80012
720-747-3712*

It is with pleasure that I write a letter of recommendation for Hannah Smith. Hannah has been the Orchestra Director at Overland since the fall of 2014. I have been fortunate enough to work closely with Hannah in a variety of ways during these five years. I consider her a valued colleague and an asset to Overland.

To begin, Hannah is a dedicated staff member who is involved in very intentional work to increase student achievement. Hannah is dedicated to her students and to closing the achievement gap. Her work focuses on instructional strategies and classroom conditions, which are more likely to engage all students in the classroom. She truly believes that all students can achieve at a high level, and her instruction is reflective of this belief. Her classroom is focused on student learning, higher level thinking, and rigorous music for all students.

As the Orchestra Director, Hannah is in charge of conducting our String Orchestra, Pit Orchestra and all Orchestra, extracurricular activities. She took over a program that was struggling and has made vast improvements. She is able to run her growing program and maintain high standards for her students. Her students excel in all realms of performance and achieve at high levels musically. She has worked to build the music library and she has created a culture of respect where students take care of their instruments and are excited about their program. Hannah has brought rigor and professionalism to the program and her students are proud of their work and are dedicated to excellence.

In addition, Hannah's students have competed in several District and local competitions and festivals. All of her groups have received superior or excellent ratings. They are performing difficult music and are challenged to practice and be prepared. Hannah's classroom instruction is comprehensive and includes music theory, performance etiquette, skill and playing techniques, and music instruction. Her classroom is focused on improving student skill level and on creating superior, balanced ensembles. Watching Hannah conduct her ensembles is an example of passion and excellence in music.

Finally, Hannah is a professional in all that she does. She is prompt and detailed with her paperwork for her activities, and is responsible with her budgets. She is an active PLC leader and collaborates with the Performing Arts Department on many levels. Overland is a large and active high school that requires instrumental performances at many events. Hannah is always willing to have her groups play and has them prepared and excited to perform.

I am proud to be a colleague of Hannah's and highly recommend her for this position.

Sincerely,
Shari VanHaselen


Activities Director