



**Burke High School** 12200 BURKE BOULEVARD OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68154-2399

To Whom it May Concern Regarding Keegan Long,

My name is Patrick Woodman, and I am in my twentieth year teaching in the Omaha Public School district. I have spent the last sixteen years teaching American History, World History, Psychology, and Economics at Burke High School. I was lucky to have been given the chance to be Keegan Long's mentor during the 2021-2022 school year when he was a new teacher. We shared a group of freshmen in an advisement class, so we spent a half an hour or more together collaborating each day. Keegan regularly impressed me with his work ethic, dedication to his profession, and ability to create positive relationships with students.

Keegan started teaching during the years that have become infamous for educators—the Covid-19 years. Keegan had to deal with mask wearing, social distancing, and remote learning while learning the basic skills necessary to be an impactful teacher. Keegan taught American Government and Introduction to Economics classes to seniors and sophomores, respectively. Both subjects were new and challenging for Keegan (especially Economics), and I was impressed by his desire to learn them inside and out. Keegan and I both taught Economics, and I shared all of my teaching materials with him at the beginning of the school year. Rather than just using all of my materials, Keegan came up with his own lessons and ideas on how to better teach this difficult subject. I was supposed to be his mentor, but I ended up stealing many of his ideas and lesson plans that I still use to this day.

During his time at Burke, Keegan was extremely dedicated to the profession of teaching. He was consumed by a desire to be better at all aspects of his job as an educator. Keegan struggled with second guessing himself and not thinking he was doing a good enough job. He was! If all teachers were as devoted to this level of self-improvement and soul searching as Keegan, we would live in a world with many more effective teachers. Keegan did a great job seeking the advice of other teachers and his curriculum specialist with the ultimate goal of improving his teaching. He researched and implemented innovative and engaging lessons, note taking methods, and activities. With all of these strengths, Keegan excelled the most at creating positive and lasting relationships.

In our advisement class, Keegan became an important mentor to one of our special education students named Sam. Keegan would regularly engage Sam in his interests and help him Google his favorite song from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory or Aladdin. Anytime I was in the hallway or other supervisory location with Keegan, multiple students would walk by and give Keegan a high five or an enthusiastic "what's up, Mr. Long!" Students appreciated that he treated them respectfully and that he was easy to talk to.

In addition to his students, Keegan was also an important person in my life during this particular school year. After the changes in education that came along with Covid-19, I was not in my right mind. I was ready to move on from education and find my second career. Meeting Keegan, being asked to be his mentor, and working closely with him and one other new teacher that year, revitalized me. I felt like I had a real purpose as an educator again, and I went on to be chosen as the parent/teacher organization's teacher of the year in May. I was Keegan's mentor, but he was my mentor as well, and I owe him a lot.

I look forward to hearing about all of Keegan's achievements in education or as an author, and I am very honored that I was given the opportunity to play a small role in his journey towards success.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Woodman".

Patrick Woodman