



## Canyon Crest Academy

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11 June 2014

Re: Recommendation for Nathan Richards

To whom it may concern;

My name is Rachel Edwards, and I am a fine arts teacher at Canyon Crest Academy; I've taught here for nearly 7 years now. I've had the pleasure of working with Nathan for the past semester here at CCA. Nathan was hired on the fly after one of our tenured teachers resigned mid-year; he was hired one day and had to be ready to teach 2 days later! Not to mention that he was teaching two very different classes, one being a newly piloted class that he basically had to create a new curriculum for. Nathan took the challenge head on, and dove right in. Every day, he had a smile and a positive attitude.

The two classes that Nathan taught at CCA were our beginning Digital Imaging class and the new Creative design class. Nathan taught the Imaging class directly after I taught the same class in the same room, and I often sat in to get some work done on the computer. Thus, I was privileged to observe his interactions with the students, his lessons, and his overall demeanor. He was always the utmost professional, but infused his website and lessons with distinct personal humor. He had complete control over his class at all times and yet there was enough leniency for his students to feel at home and for there to be an atmosphere of artistic comfort and support. Many times, he actually did the assigned project right alongside the kids so that they could see the process and watch their teacher create – a valuable experience for them.

The Creative Design class was quite a beast to take on; the previous teacher had left the curriculum very open-ended, and Nathan had to come in and immediately design a standards-based curriculum of projects, critiques, and authentic critical thinking/problem solving-based learning. Projects were varied with units on textile/product design, craft, sewing, building, and typography, to name a few. Students quickly grew excited for what the next unit was going to be! The true testament to all that Nathan did came at the end of the semester Student Art Show where I saw the amazing, complex creations that came out of that Design class.

It was easy working side by side with Nathan; he was always good-natured, helpful, and on top of what needed to be done next. I truly felt like I had a partner in teaching Imaging, whom I could bounce ideas off of, reflect on each unit with, and find ways to make each project better. He truly cares about each student and their learning, and never one time did I see him sit down in his chair during class – he was constantly circulating, making sure students were working and offering help/advice. His input and advice were welcome and invaluable to them as well as to myself, and we will truly miss him in our department. We wish our numbers were high enough to keep him on, but we know that whoever hires him will be most lucky indeed.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you!

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