



JEWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT #8

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BRIAN D. GANDER, DED.
SUPERINTENDENT

JENNIFER BLANCHARD,
SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR

December 12, 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It is a privilege, but also with sadness, that I write this letter of recommendation for Brian Gander. Dr. Gander was hired in 2009 to right a district that had seen its share of poor choices. We needed an experienced educator to help us re-shape the culture of our district. Brian has worked as our Superintendent, Principal (K-12), Director of Special Education and Human Resources, and our Chief Budget Officer. While wearing each of these hats Brian has done an excellent job moving our district forward.

Brian is an excellent leader; he was central in developing our district vision, mission, and guiding beliefs. He has led the board to use these documents to inform our goal setting, budgeting and instructional program decisions. Brian has worked with our board to assure we are trained on how to be effective leaders. He has encouraged us to grow, we have had sessions on conducting meetings in an efficient / productive way, conducting superintendent evaluations and following policy guidelines. Our board meetings are still not as easy as we would like, but they run smoother and we get things done. Brian has been instrumental in developing a strong leadership team made up of the Board and Superintendent. He keeps us informed and helps us manage difficult decisions through discussions, data and constant focus on our mission.

Brian filled an immediate need in his abilities to get on top of the curriculum and student evaluation needs of our district. His leadership in the use of data driven decision-making has carried us a long ways. We have finalized a complete make over of our K-8 instruction program, implemented a rigorous advanced placement program in our high school, and are finalizing our district assessment practices. Brian has held countless informational meetings with the community and taken groups on tours of other districts to educate our community of possible approaches. We could not have completed these challenging tasks without his strong leadership of our staff, our board, and our community.

Brian has shown tireless leadership with our board and our budget committee to develop budgets that are in the best interest of learning, but not wasteful of district resources. I worked with Brian as we rewrote the teachers' contract to make it current with contracts around our county. As a leadership team we worked closely with both classified and certified contracts to remove language that was costly and unfavorable to Jewell School. This was a huge step for our district and Brian did a great job. Most of all he has helped our district develop effective operational practices in human resources. He has effectively managed a complete re-write of all our job descriptions and staff handbook and has made sure that our human resources practices are in alignment with our policy and current practices around the county. Brian has taken on some hard issues with our teachers and classified associations; issues we as a board felt needed to be addressed, and he has handled them well and moved our district to a more sustainable management position.

I would hate to see Brian go, he is a person of integrity, passion, humility and a tireless leader. Brian has put in place the foundation for moving our district towards excellence, something he has always pushed for in Jewell. I understand his desire for increased responsibility and maybe a few less hats, and wish him the best.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Blanchard, Chair
Jewell School Board