



Santiam Canyon School District 129J

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Brian D. Gander, D.Ed., Interim Superintendent
N/A, Business Manager
Alexis Winn, Business/Office Clerk
Nichole Cooper, Administrative Secretary

April 20, 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been asked to write a letter on behalf of Dr. Brian Gander. I can readily do so. I have known Dr. Gander since July of 2012. He was hired to be the interim superintendent / principal for the Santiam Canyon School District. The need for an interim superintendent was brought on by a number of horrendous circumstances, just one of which was the unexpected "retirement"/ resignation of our former superintendent. Our district is a small one. We were told in April of 2012 that we were facing a financial shortfall to the degree that our elementary school would have to close and a reconfiguration of the two remaining campuses would be the result. Also in July, our district clerk was hired by a larger, more lucrative district. I mention these things as a way of describing the district's problems in order to better help you understand the situation Dr. Gander willingly took on. I have worked for the district since 1985. I have seen the district in times of both feast and famine so to speak, however it has only been since the April 2012 announcement that I have known our district to suffer from a crisis of faith. There is an abiding, divisive distrusting atmosphere like none before within the community, amongst staff and a staunch lack of faith in our leadership at every level.

Dr. Gander knowingly rose to the challenge of all of the above. He did so with a committed professionalism and a willingness to work the long hours necessary to try and heal our district. I have served on committees with Brian and I believe in his dedication to education. He puts children's best interest at the forefront in any decision.

He is knowledgeable regarding the budget process and management protocols in general. He was instrumental in developing a Leadership Team at Santiam Elementary. He participates in all committees that deal with developing a vision for our students and community. He has been supportive of after school activities such as sports and children's theatre. He was a driving force behind keeping FFA in the Jr. / Sr. High. He worked with the Hearts to Arts group to bring the ETHOS music program to our school.

I have enjoyed my time with Dr. Gander. We have not always agreed on procedures but we have always gotten along. We both use humor to diffuse frustration. I appreciate his willingness to listen and his easy laugh. I have felt supported both personally and professionally. I sincerely feel that it is a loss to our district that Brian will not be with us next year. I think he understands what needs to be done, is willing to make the tough decisions and take the resulting heat without complaint. I also believe, unfortunately, that he is another casualty in the canyon's current pain filled distrusting atmosphere.

I wish Dr. Gander nothing but the best. If you feel the need for any further affirmation of my support for him, please feel free to call or write to me.

Sincerely,

Judy Hugenberger
Kindergarten Teacher
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