

May 30, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been my distinct privilege to work for Dr. Jerrod Wheeler for the past five years at Espy Elementary School in the Nixa R-II School District. In my twenty years of teaching, I have been blessed to work for wonderful people. Dr. Wheeler is no exception. Through his leadership and vision, Espy has been awarded a Gold Star School of Missouri and is in the running for a national Blue Ribbon School award.

There are numerous reasons for our school's success. All of them are to be attributed to Dr. Wheeler. Because of his rapport and support of his teachers, there is a sense of empowerment to do our absolute best for our students. Dr. Wheeler has offered and encouraged us to attend professional development seminars, become technologically advanced and literate, and is responsible for the advanced achievement of our students on the MAP tests in third and fourth grade.

Dr. Wheeler has provided many opportunities for the staff to improve their teaching potential. This is true of beginning teachers as well as veteran teachers. As a team, we at Espy realize the importance of life-long learning as we understand more about how the brain works and how technology is such a huge part of our students' everyday lives. Dr. Jerrod Wheeler has been the driving force behind making our good teachers great.

Because of the vision of Dr. Wheeler, every classroom in first through fourth grades is equipped with a SMART board. This has opened many new avenues of learning for our students. SMART boards are also going to be installed in special area classes as well as special education classrooms. It was the vision of Dr. Wheeler to provide state of the art tools to reach the children of today. Our classrooms also use Elmo projectors on a regular basis. I, personally, had never heard of one until Dr. Wheeler showed me how to use it and explained the benefits of having one in my classroom. I don't know now how I lived without it! How powerful to put student work right on the screen! Through Dr. Wheeler's progressiveness, I am a much more effective teacher today.

Our school is very grateful for Dr. Wheeler's ability to motivate our students. The MAP scores at Espy are unparalleled in our district due to Dr. Wheeler's leadership. He has tied the tests into a school-wide theme each year. We begin the kick-off by highlighting MAP words of the week, words of wisdom and brain strategies that students will be able to utilize while taking the tests. There is one special day right before testing begins, when the staff and students dress up according to the theme to celebrate all of their hard work and preparation throughout the year. When the day of testing comes, it is amazing to see how excited the students are to begin! This plays a pivotal role in our students' impressive scores.

Dr. Wheeler has encouraged students to strive for perfect attendance each year he has been at Espy. By forming an Attendance Committee and motivating/rewarding students for great attendance, our school has led the district in attendance for the last five years.

All of these are wonderful attributes of an administrator; however, I think the highest compliment I can give Jerrod Wheeler is that he is child-centered. While all of the aforementioned things are valuable and significant, it would mean nothing if he didn't have a heart for children. Our students (and parents) love him and it is reciprocated. When it comes to the bottom line, the thing I appreciate about Dr. Wheeler the most is that he never forgets the reason we come to work every day.

I can appreciate that if you have a doctorate, you are motivated to move on to bigger and better things. While I wish Dr. Wheeler all the best, his absence in our building will be felt every day.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Price*

Lisa Price

Classroom Teacher