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To Whom It May Concern:

I consider it a privilege to write this letter of recommendation for Dr. Jerrod Wheeler. Dr. Wheeler served as my superintendent during his tenure at West Platte R-II. In one short year, I was able to experience first-hand Dr. Wheeler's quest for continual systematic improvement, vision of academic excellence, and infallible support of building leadership. These qualities, I believe, are paramount to the success of any school leader.

I must first tell you a little about myself. Last year, I became a first-time head high school principal. As you probably know, this can be one of the toughest and most demanding jobs in a school district. Because of the constant support from Dr. Wheeler, I consider my first year in this position to be highly successful. I never felt any less than total support from my first day on the job. It was very clear to me that Dr. Wheeler would champion those three critical qualities of systematic improvement, academic excellence, and support of building leadership. In one year, I saw the results of Dr. Wheeler's attention to these qualities.

Dr. Wheeler's commitment to improve our school system was very apparent. In two short years at West Platte, Dr. Wheeler improved both academic programming as well as student and staff resources tremendously. He led a major technology integration initiative in West Platte. Under Dr. Wheeler's leadership, the district gained wireless technology infrastructure as well as SMART technology in each classroom. At the conclusion of the 2013-2014 school year, each of my students was equipped with an interactive tablet. These initiatives helped improve all areas of teaching and learning. These systematic improvements will impact generations of West Platte students as we prepare our learners to be college and career ready.

When it comes to academic excellence, a district must have a clear vision for student success. This vision comes from taking an often-times difficult look at the current reality. West Platte students have a storied history of academic success. That being said, our district always needs to develop and refine a vision for academic excellence. From the time I started my tenure as principal, Dr. Wheeler laid out a clear plan and benchmarks to reach new heights in student achievement. Dr. Wheeler led the challenge to bring back an agriculture education program in our school district. With the vast agribusiness resources available to our students, Dr. Wheeler recognized the importance and value of this program in Weston. We are now in our second year of offering a full agriculture program and FFA chapter to our students. Dr. Wheeler also led and supported the implementation of a K-12 Spanish program. Our students will be in front of the increasing need to be educated in a foreign language. The combination of Dr. Wheeler's vision for academic excellence and progressive planning has helped our student success.

Finally, I'd like to speak Dr. Wheeler's support of his building leaders. I could not have asked for a more supportive, compassionate, and guiding leader as a first-year principal. While the improvements he made to our academic programming will positively affect many students for years to come, Dr. Wheeler's candidness, honesty, and support of me has left the largest impact on me personally. I could write extensively about situations in which he knowingly took the brunt of criticism in order to protect principals and teachers to let us focus on our goals and responsibilities. He challenged my thinking when I needed to be challenged, and stepped in and supported me unconditionally when I needed support the most. All of this was in the name of school improvement and student success. I am not sure you could ask for more. Like all leaders, Dr. Wheeler is not perfect nor is he without fault. That being said, you will not find a more sincere leader and student-focused administrator. He'll make the tough calls. I've seen that on several occasions. What is not always apparent is his loyalty and support. I could not have been the leader I am today without the support Dr. Wheeler gave me during my first year as an administrator.

I wish you the best of luck as you select a leader who will help you guide your staff and students to many successes. Without a doubt, Jerrod Wheeler is the type of leader that will help your district accomplish these goals. I have a *Hamlet* quote taped to my desk that reads, "The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscious of the king." In context, this quote is talking about the true heart of a leader. When times get very trying and tough, the true essence of a leader is revealed. As I observed times become very trying for Dr. Wheeler, I also saw his relentless commitment to students and his selfless leadership style. When he had the most convenient excuses to give up and focus on himself, I watched as he gave everything he had to support those around him. Through all of this, he kept the success of his students as his first priority. This is exactly the type of leader you need for your school district.

Sincerely,

Logan W. Lightfoot

Dr. Logan Lightfoot

Principal, West Platte Junior/Senior High School