



Winchester High School
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February 27, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Matthew Chernick's application to the "Making Holocaust and Genocide Education Relevant Through Inquiry and Classroom Application" NEH Institute. Matthew is completing his third year of teaching at McCall Middle School, where he started as a long-term substitute in an ELA classroom and is currently working as a 6th grade Ancient Civilizations teacher (with his second year spent as a 6th grade Ancient Civilizations teacher and 7th grade World Geography & Cultures teacher). Matthew has made an immediate impression on the students and staff of McCall with his exuberant classroom presence and collegial approach to teaching. As his supervisor, it is his consistent desire to grow as an educator that has stood out to me. I am positive that Matthew will contribute as much, if not more, than he takes away from this experience, which is why it would be in the institute's best interest to welcome Matthew to the cohort this summer.

Ever since Matthew joined the Social Studies department he has distinguished himself as a hard working teacher who is always looking to create the most dynamic learning experience possible for his students. He came highly recommended by the school's principal and ELA Director after his first year, as they both believed that he had a lot to offer the students of the school but did not have a full-time position to offer him for the following school year. The ELA department's loss was the Social Studies department's and, more importantly, the McCall students' gain. Matthew is driven to create hands-on lessons that allow his students to engage with the material, knowing it will stick with them if they are empowered to give the learning meaning. As a department colleague, Matthew takes a very collaborative approach to the profession, openly sharing ideas and lessons during curriculum and department meetings. Whenever he and I have conferences before and after observed lessons he is very specific in what he would like me to look for and openly seeks feedback on how to refine and revise his lessons and approach. It is this openness and active engagement in his professional growth that gives me the confidence that Matthew will capitalize on the opportunities available to him through this institute.

Matthew Chernick is the kind of educator NEH wants in their institutes – he is driven, he is interested, he is interesting and he brings a growth mindset that motivates him to get the most from any opportunity that offers both personal and professional growth. While the content of the institute may fall outside of the direct curriculum that Matthew is responsible for, his ability and desire to make connections between his content and other topics and his interest in exploring the wide range of strategies and ideas associated with making difficult topics accessible and manageable to his students make him a perfect candidate for the institute. In addition, Matthew's myriad interests, as well as his advising responsibilities for both the Student Council and Multicultural Club, provide him additional outlets through which to apply his learning. Because of his flexibility and his deep foundation of content knowledge, there may also come a time where the content of this institute sits squarely at the center of a course that Matthew could find himself teaching. In the end, I selfishly would also like



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Matthew to be able to attend this institute because I know that he will bring so much back to share with his colleagues in the department, which create the potential to influence dozens more classrooms and hundreds of additional students. Please accept Matthew Chernick to the “Making Holocaust and Genocide Education Relevant Through Inquiry and Classroom Application” NEH Institute with my highest recommendation. His blend of curiosity, professionalism and collegiality will elevate the discourse and experience for all involved. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any additional questions or considerations.

Sincerely,
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