

WESTON HIGH SCHOOL

444 WELLESLEY STREET
WESTON, MA 02493

13 April 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write in strong support of Anne Slotnick's application for a teaching position. Although my most recent work with Anne has been as a colleague and mentor teacher this year, I have known and worked with her since she was a freshman at Weston High ten years ago. She is a genuinely gifted teacher who in her time teaching in Weston has had a significant positive impact on our students as well as our theater and English programs.

Anne initially intended to simply do her student teaching at Weston High in the spring semester of 2010, but when a .3 Drama/English position opened up for the school year, I suggested to our department chair that we consider hiring Anne. I knew from my discussions with her that she would bring energy, experience and commitment to the position. Her interview impressed the department chair, principal and superintendent and she was hired immediately. We all knew we had found our candidate.

As Anne's mentor teacher and cooperating teacher, I have had a chance to observe her work in the classroom, in the rehearsal hall and in department meetings and workshops. She is both a source of strong ideas and a curious seeker after new methods and materials. Her collegial and collaborative spirit are evident in her work with her fellow drama and English teachers (both at the high school and middle school), and her work has led us, as teachers, to look at our own work differently.

In the classroom, Anne not only has command of the curriculum and strong classroom management skills, she also manages to work with a diverse population, help them meet the standards for the discipline and, remarkably, look completely relaxed and confident as she does so. Her first class at Weston High, Acting I, included a blind student with significant cognitive and physical limitations, a student with Downs Syndrome, a student with significant hearing loss, and a Brazilian exchange student with limited English, all mixed in a "mainstream" class. I cannot imagine a more challenging group with which to start a teaching career, but Anne responded with excitement, enthusiasm and creativity. Her classroom was energetic, clear, welcoming of all, and every student in the class grew significantly. This semester, Anne's work in Acting II and Speech is also exemplary. I have taught both classes in the past and I have learned new approaches from my observations and am energized to incorporate her ideas into my own teaching. In particular, the print and non-print resources she has brought to the Acting II class self-scripting unit have opened up that unit with approaches I'd never considered.

Outside the classroom, Anne was the assistant director of our scripted-through-improvisation original play *There Will Be No Journey* and our spring musical *Curtains*.

WESTON HIGH SCHOOL

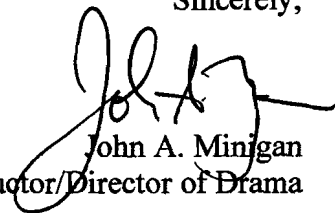
Her work in the *Journey* rehearsals grew from her own experience as an actor and participant in the experimental theater program when she was a student at Colgate. Her insights, leadership and vision were key factors in the success of our production, which was a state finalist in the 114-school Mass High School Drama Guild Festival. Along the way, she helped organize and host the preliminary and semi-final festival rounds we hosted at Weston High. Her work on *Curtains*, a large cast musical, included work on all aspects of the production, from rehearsing with actors to refining choreography, and helping with set building and design. She even handled those other “real” aspects of teaching, stepping in to provide information, guidance and safety when a member of the pit orchestra went into anaphylactic shock during a rehearsal. Anne’s level-headed approach in an emergency helped resolve the issue and get the student in question safely to the hospital for treatment. In that and every situation, I was impressed with (and jealous of) her calm and thoroughly professional approach.

Her impressive work in the classroom and rehearsal hall only become more remarkable when one realizes that Anne has also been a graduate student finishing her M.A. in Theater Education at Emerson while working here, and taking on the additional duty of running the ten-school Emerson College High School Theater Festival this winter. Her energy is seemingly limitless and her positive outlook has kept the rest of us moving forward all year.

Anne is fully prepared to be a teacher. She has the knowledge of curriculum, classroom management skills, joyful energy, desire to collaborate and intellectual strength the job requires. She is able to discuss both theater and literature at a very high level with the strongest students (I still use as an exemplar the final paper she wrote in my Shakespeare class during her senior year at Weston High), help struggling or disabled students succeed and keep the “mainstream” kid engaged, working and discovering. I wish that Weston had a full-time position available for her next year, and her departure will be a real loss for us. She has been a valued colleague and a teacher who has helped our students grow as actors, speakers and thinkers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John A. Minigan', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

John A. Minigan
English Instructor/Director of Drama