



The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn  
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Principal

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to write this letter of recommendation for Steve Bliss. I worked with Steve from 2013-2015 in my role as an elementary school principal, and he was invaluable in fostering my growth as an administrator, leading our three-district school system, and supporting the Administrative Cabinet as we navigated many changes in the academic arena.

The indelible marks of Steve Bliss' tenure with the Dover-Sherborn Schools are unparalleled communication, responsiveness, collaboration, and leadership. Knowing when he hired me that I was a relatively new administrator, Steve ensured there was a supportive network within the building and he was always available to answer my questions and provide advice, no matter the scale. He readily provided information typically given by Human Resource Directors, Business Managers, and Legal Counsel, with unmatched acuity and attention to detail. I cannot say enough about the positive impact this had on me and the overall functioning of our schools.

In his first year as Superintendent, Steve launched the three districts' new Professional Growth & Evaluation System (PG&ES). He guided us through the rollout and allowed us to gear messaging toward our own staff while providing absolute clarity within the PG&ES document itself. In the spirit of continual growth and refinement, we had many conversations about the challenges and successes of the new system and problem-solved together. In my case, several difficult personnel situations arose, and he worked through each one with sensitivity and care.

Steve negotiated a new three-year educator contract over many weekends with the union. It is notable that his relationship with union members remained strong throughout the negotiation process, and that with his legal acumen he added protections for both parties. That document is testament to the unrivaled time and attention Steve gives to his work, and to the strong base he establishes for decisions that are sound and fair.

Instructionally, Steve led multiple groups through significant curriculum revisions and development, incorporating wellness into physical education and a continuum of instruction into music and fine arts. It is due in large part to this work that some of the hallmarks of our schools are our arts programs and wellness initiatives. This was no small feat, as Steve was working across three distinct districts and building collaborative teams. Having established norms and expectations for collaboration and growth, these departments continue to grow instructionally at a rapid pace.

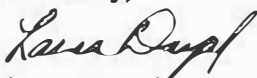
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Steve also instituted an instructional methodology across all three districts that led to greater adherence to the Common Core State Standards and more targeted instruction for students. In 2013-2014, District Professional Development focused on Understanding by Design (UbD), an approach in which educators start with the essential understandings and work backwards to design lessons. This has been critical in helping teachers refine units to make them more integrated and meaningful for students.

Having been a building-based administrator in the past, Steve is always drawn back to the students. I recall a Saturday when he met with an Eagle Scout to discuss a project to clear a pathway through the woods for safe passage if we needed to conduct an emergency evacuation of the school. The student had struggled academically, and Steve could not have shown more encouragement as the student described his plans. It is these kinds of personal encounters with students, teachers, and administrators that make Steve special.

I would be more than happy to elaborate on the impact Steve has had on the Dover-Sherborn School Districts. Please feel free to get in touch using my email or cell phone, below.

Sincerely,



Laura Dayal  
Principal, Chickering School