Math: strong

04/02/03

Exit Performance Description

[redacted]

[redacted]'s experience during her internship was at [redacted] High School, a suburban high school in mid-Michigan. The enrollment is approximately [redacted] 9th – 12th grade students. Over 90% of the student body is Caucasian. Despite this similarity, there exists an extensive socio-economic diversity among students. A large percentage of [redacted] High School students go on to further their education at universities or community colleges.

[redacted]'s experience is even unique among Michigan State interns. She had the opportunity to be a long-term substitute for 8 weeks during my maternity leave. At that time [redacted] taught three Integrated 2 classes, which are comparable to the traditional Geometry course. She also taught two Integrated 1A classes. Integrated 1A is a yearlong course that covers the material found in the first half of Integrated 1. First semester, [redacted] also co-taught and co-planned a Pre-Algebra course with me. This is the first math course we offer at our high school. In our Integrated 1A and Pre-Algebra courses, many of these students have been identified as being "at risk" or are identified as having special needs. Additionally, these students have not had much success in school, let alone in a math class. These students provide many challenges with their academic past, but also bring a variety of experiences that makes for a rich learning environment.

[redacted]'s commitments to her students' learning and extensive knowledge of mathematics allow her to be very successful. Even before the school year began, I was impressed with [redacted]'s eagerness to learn everything about our school, the students, and how to get the year started. Despite [redacted]'s atypical situation and increased responsibility, she excelled in our classroom as a teacher and a colleague.

Knowing subject matters and how to teach them:

[redacted]'s deep understanding of mathematics allowed her to develop creative, insightful and worthwhile activities for her students. Her decisions about how to proceed with lessons and create assessments demonstrate the thoughtfulness with which she plans. Despite her high level of mathematics understanding, she thought about where misconceptions or misunderstandings for her students might be. She was genuinely concerned with meeting her students' learning needs. In order to do this; she assessed students' prior knowledge, progress, misconceptions, and understanding of topics in many ways. [redacted] was consistently innovative when creating activities, traditional assessments and performance assessments.

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Working with students:
[redacted] was genuinely concerned about her students' success in math and in life. She took responsibility for their learning in her class while understanding the places that math takes in her students' lives. [redacted]'s relationship with her students was friendly while still maintaining a professional distance. Our second semester began as [redacted] began her long-term substituting. This semester brought seventy new students to our five classes. [redacted] had learned the names of all these new students and begun developing positive relationships with them within the first week. She greeted students at the door and spoke to them individually about mathematics and other important events they've shared. [redacted]'s patience, sympathy, and sense of humor allowed her to make excellent progress with many students. Students enrolled in our classes offer several challenges in addition to struggling with learning mathematics. Developing strategies for building a relationship with these disconnected students while keeping them involved and engaged in class proved to be one of [redacted]'s biggest challenges and biggest accomplishment.

Creating and managing a classroom learning community:
[redacted]'s classes were truly learning communities. Students spoke openly and honestly about their mathematical ideas, questions, and confusions. [redacted] valued students' ideas and knew there was much to be learned from her students especially their incorrect answers. She phrased questions and responded to comments in a non-threatening way that probed for student understanding. Students treated [redacted] and each other with respect, even in the midst of intense mathematical disagreements. Students knew they would be treated fairly and with respect. [redacted]'s consistency in maintaining classroom routines helped ensure students' best use of class time. [redacted] also remained flexible when extenuating circumstances arose.

Working and learning in a school and profession:
[redacted] worked with many professionals in the school in a constant effort to improve her teaching. She sought out other math teachers, other teachers outside her department, administrators, counselors, social workers, technology support staff, and media specialist. Additionally, [redacted] worked at girls' basketball games and attended many extracurricular activities throughout the year in support of her students. Chaperoning the winter dance and attending staff and professional development meetings showed her dedication to our profession. [redacted] was also directly involved with starting and maintaining an Integrated 2 planning team. All teachers of Integrated 2 would meet weekly to discuss the direction of the course, specific lessons, share ideas, and develop activities for students. [redacted]'s participation and contributions were well received and provided evidence of her creativity and concern for student success. Furthermore, [redacted] assisted me during our Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences and handled the Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences on her own. Our principal and other staff members made several positive comments about [redacted]'s professional conduct and demeanor during the conferences. [redacted] was very articulate regarding a student's progress while remaining positive.