

1 November 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing, from a parent's perspective, in support of Ashley Richardson as a teaching candidate for your school. My husband and I are the parents of six-year old boy-girl twins. Over the past five years, we have hired several well-qualified university students to take care of our kids on a part-time basis, 10-15 hours per week. Our children are also students at the UT Lab School in Austin, where our exposure to highly qualified teachers in emergent and early childhood education is considerable. We have known and worked with Ashley Richardson for 3+ years.

Ms. Richardson has many of the core qualities important for effective teaching: patience and good listening skills, a strong sense of empathy and the ability to help children develop empathy, creativity in teaching, a "can-do" attitude, the ability to communicate ideas clearly and maintain effective control of multiple children.

Ashley Richardson's value, however, extends beyond these core qualities. I believe it is the following characteristics that distinguish Ms. Richardson for any of the best programs in emergent or early childhood education. She has a natural ability to connect with kids in a meaningful authentic way, and the emotional maturity to guide them well. She has an inquiring mind, consistently demanding excellence of herself in an academic arena. Her own love of learning and high-performance standards will serve her students very well – helping her high-achieving students especially feel secure, understood and properly challenged at school.

Of particular value, is Ms. Richardson's unusual ability to relate equally to boys and girls of the same developmental age. Her ability to do this with equal effectiveness and mutuality fosters a deep level of trust with boys and girls. I believe it enables Ms. Richardson to draw out much more from her students – they feel better understood as individuals, respected and so they want to learn more. This is a powerful quality in a teacher.

Lastly, I would like to touch on Ms. Richardson's ability to connect with parents. She is effective in this arena as well. The core qualities I enumerated above also apply here. I think you will find that she has an easy manner with parents, and empathy for the parent perspective that is beyond her own age. I can imagine that she would create a classroom ethos of strong student-family relationships.

I encourage the top-ranked schools to consider Ashley Richardson for a full-time faculty position. Not only will she enrich the student experience and relate well with parents, she will be an outstanding asset to your district.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with further question.

Sincerely,

Lauren Austin, principal
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marketing advisors to the building design industry