



December 23, 2013

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to recommend Liz Davis. She is one of the most innovative teachers, thoughtful administrators, and generous collaborators I have had the pleasure to work with. Liz and I overlapped for years at Belmont Hill School, where she was the Director of Academic Technology and an English teacher in the Middle School, and where I chaired the History Department and was the Director of Global Education. I have since moved on from Belmont Hill to take on the Assistant Head role at Greens Farms Academy, but am honored to write on her behalf and would welcome a phone call to answer any questions you may have.

By happy accident, Liz and I shared a classroom for one period per day, and I often stayed while she worked with her seventh-grade boys (our entry point at Belmont Hill) in English. Her demeanor in the classroom was exactly what you would want from a Middle School teacher: firm *and* warm, organized *and* open to good tangents. Her boys leaned in even while they were working through niceties of grammar, were comfortable asking questions and sharing impressions of the literature, and were eager to show what they knew. And Liz spent a great deal of time working with students individually outside of class on their writing, reading, and organization. Those are all things you would expect from an excellent, experienced teacher like Liz.

But she went far beyond that, embracing the challenges of 21st century learning. For example, Liz cared deeply that students in her English class read for pleasure and sensed that boys, in particular, were in danger of losing good reading habits as they entered their teen years. She challenged her boys to create and populate a blog reviewing recent reads and sharing their reviews with the world. The resulting site, <http://www.bhpress.org/books4boys>, not only encouraged her students to read more, but also engaged them in a real-world, meaningful project. That, more than anything else, typifies Liz's approach to teaching: she looks for those opportunities where we can tap into students' desires to solve authentic problems and do meaningful work, learning important skills, values, and content in the process. She did that when she revamped and taught the school's Digital Video class. She did that when she proposed and taught the school's Digital Journalism class. And she helped many teachers around the school do the same.

I was one of those teachers. For years, I taught a senior elective called International Affairs, in which boys read the *New York Times* daily and engaged in a variety of projects involving current events. In her role as Director of Academic Technology, Liz invited teachers to pilot iPads in the classroom, and I volunteered my boys for the pilot. They each received iPads for a semester. With Liz's encouragement and guidance, my boys used iPads for every aspect of the course: reading

and annotation, notetaking, research, writing, presentation, and all manner of collaboration. More to the point, Liz helped the boys and me create a blog of our own, in which we shared with the school community and the world our assessment of how well the iPads worked for different tasks: <http://www.bhpress.org/ipadsinclass>. To a person, the boys were prouder of that blog than they were of any other aspect of the course.

That collaborative, empowering approach to leadership in academic technology served us very well at Belmont Hill. I can offer one more example, this one in the world of mathematics. The geometry classes had, for years, done a project involving pencil-and-paper design and technical drawing. Looking for a globally-focused update to this project, I approached Liz and the math department. With Liz's help, we settled on a project using Google Sketchup, in which students designed a shelter/research facility suited to conditions of the Tibetan Plateau. She encouraged the teachers, many of whom were new to the technology, to learn alongside their students and relinquish some control over the process. The project was a great success, and with some tweaks, has become a mainstay of the curriculum.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Liz is a school person in the best way. When the school needed a director for several theatrical productions, she stepped up. When we needed an assistant crew coach in the Middle School, she volunteered. When we needed somebody to organize the holiday assembly, Liz was there. She and her family were regulars at our school picnics, games, concerts, and shows. And she was a great friend and colleague to me and many others as we all navigated the culture together. I am honored to give her my highest recommendation. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Kolovos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Kolovos
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