



Recommendation for **Neal McIntyre**

I am writing this letter of reference and support on behalf of Neal McIntyre, who I have known as a colleague for five years until I moved on from Kimball Union Academy (KUA) this year. My point of reference is as the director of college advising at Kimball Union where Neal is a member of the Science and Environmental Science Departments and Co-Chair of the Curriculum Development Committee, among the other countless roles he has served as a member in this independent boarding school community for the last nine years. He is ready for new challenges in school leadership beyond his classroom as his career at KUA clearly indicates.

Over the past five years, no one in the science department has written as many college recommendations as Neal. In fact, no one is even close. As much as his writing brings the student alive and assesses his or her strengths and weakness with keen insight, his writing reveals much about Neal as a person and as an educator. He is at once inspired and inspiring, fair and firm. The clarity with which he establishes expectations for his students in all aspects of the class affords them the structure and support necessary for healthy risk-taking. Whether it is through labs and field work, participation in seminar discussions, or extra help sessions after Sunday brunch in the Dining Commons, students learn how and why to reach beyond their grasp. Neal is aware of each student's reach and understands how to meet that student at the appropriate level. He can look at a student eye to eye because he has already worked elbow to elbow with him or her.

No example of Neal's effectiveness as an educator is more compelling than his work with one of my academic advisees over the course of three years. She has needed help, received guidance, and flourished in all academic areas because of the manner in which Neal reached her during her ninth, eleventh, and twelfth grade years. Whether by virtue of his unofficial role as the Academy's "guru" in making technology accessible and meaningful in the classroom, his relentless belief that his students can and will be successful, or his untapped insight and knowledge into how reach the wide spectrum of learners and learning profiled at KUA, the confidence and independence she developed as a student is easily traced back to her experience working with and for Neal. He not only empowers adolescents to become more adept critical thinkers, skilled analytic writers, and creative problem solvers, they emerge from their experience in his classes as both independent and interdependent learners and, most importantly, better people. I would want to see the name "Mr. McIntyre" on my own children's course schedules each fall.

Neal takes his chosen profession of education as seriously as anyone with whom I've worked in over twenty years at independent secondary schools. Neal's aptitude for inspiring his colleagues is particularly noteworthy. About four years ago he recognized an opportunity for both personal growth and professional development existing in and among our faculty colleagues. He is resolute in his belief that by sharing experiences with each other true collaboration, connection, and collegiality amongst peers takes root, and conversely that in a vacuum (which insular boarding communities can be at times) where such relationships are absent the creative energies of the whole are fractured. He created the Faculty Roundtable Discussion Series, which meets in the evenings for approximately two hours every few weeks, in an effort to facilitate more time for faculty members to interact in an uninterrupted space of time, free of students and other professional obligations, thus fostering meaningful exchange between colleagues. His selection of the word "roundtable" in the title aptly conveys the expectation of and invitation for equal sharing of information, which in turn fosters the collegial, spirited dialogue that has come to define these anticipated gatherings. Neal should take great pride for his integral role in helping the faculty by designing and leading a forum in which open and free exchange of ideas is prized. Neal is the "host" in as much as there needs to be one. The air is relaxed, the discussions often feel effortless, and everyone walks away feeling refreshed and recharged. It goes a long way toward keeping us engaged in the school year and in-touch with our talented colleagues with whom we may otherwise not get to share ideas.

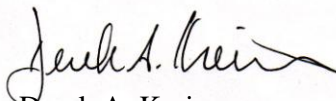
Too, having Neal's dexterous and astute mind contributing to (and now co-chairing) KUA's Curriculum Development Committee is invaluable. In this committee, on which I served as one of the co-chairs, the charge is to examine what we teach and how we teach it with a critical eye toward improving our pedagogy and refining our practices. His thoughtful approach to the entire mission has been paramount to the success of the Committee and to the various outcomes that have resulted from it, including: a new daily schedule, the introduction of a service learning component in our curriculum, a restructuring of the social curriculum of our boarding school, and the formulation of an external assessment device in the College Work Readiness Assessment through the Council for the Aid to Education. Neal delights in the exchange of ideas and identifying ways to move forward people, practices, and programs.

In his capacity as a varsity coach, Neal has enlisted my help and shared his expertise as we worked together to find appropriate college matches for our aspiring student-athletes. He is tireless in following a prospective student's admission to Kimball Union as well as that same student's search for a college after KUA. At both ends, he remains steadfast in his belief that the match is more important than the name. Neal's success as a USSA-certified Varsity Alpine Ski coach and as a Varsity Rugby coach reflects his innate drive for excellence. After a half-dozen or so league and New England championships between the teams, countless college players and scores of young women and men have learned how to achieve victory with grace and accept defeat with class. Neal has set the bar for coaching in our community for years now. Looking forward, he will be the standard to which other coaches will aspire for years to come.

Neal takes his duty of *in loco parentis* to heart, having served as a Head of House for both girls' and boys' dorms in our residential program. Though he is friendly with the students, he is not their friend; a distinction most students respect and prefer. Instead, his primary objective is to help adolescents develop into young adults. A teacher to his core, Neal views residential life as another venue for educating, one in which students develop a greater awareness of others, the value of community, and the necessity of direct and respectful communication.

Neal is highly regarded by his teaching colleagues as well, not just the students he mentors. His unflappable good nature makes him one of those people you hope has a seat open next to him at meals. He is not all-consumed by work and is quick to initiate or engage in conversations that are as broad as they are deep, which is to say "very". Though I've not been involved in department meetings, from faculty meetings and various weekend initiatives and obligations, I know Neal to be eager to step forward and volunteer his time and efforts to anything that stands to benefit the students, his colleagues, or the Academy in general.

Modest and understated, Neal "walks the talk" of a school's mission and vision, and does so in a way that inspires others to follow his example. He does so not for the accolades and recognition, but rather his words and his actions reveal his desire to do what is right. The authenticity of the model he sets is why he is so well-respected and deeply appreciated within the Kimball Union Academy community. It is why Neal McIntyre will be such an effective and important participant in any school's leadership team fortunate enough to count him its own.



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