

1 Richard Nixon Place, Apt. 3  
Brighton, MA 02135

February 9, 2009

Ms. Rochelle Hudson  
Assistant Superintendent  
Springfield Public School District  
26 Barnes Street  
Springfield, MA 02765

Dear Ms. Hudson:

I was excited to see the opening you listed for a fourth grade teacher. The Springfield Public School District has great appeal to me because of its commitment to promoting equity among its students and closing the achievement gaps in all areas, including gender, socio-economic levels, race, ethnicities, and learning capabilities. Having a community of equity does not mean that everyone is treated equally; but rather that each person is treated fairly and with respect. Through creating this type of community, each student is able to reach his or her fullest potential, which will lead to a closing of the achievement gap among the students.

My teaching experiences have allowed me to work with students from a variety of backgrounds. In my student teaching at the Brosnan School in Waltham, I worked with a group of students who were very diverse both culturally and linguistically. In our class, five out of the twenty students were English Language Learners. I worked one on one with a student who entered our classroom in September speaking only Turkish. Throughout the semester, we worked intensively to improve his English communication skills through computer assisted instruction, reading activities, and explicit phonics instruction. Because I consider myself a lifelong learner, I was constantly reflecting on my work with this student. I was consistently collecting data, reviewing his progress and finding ways to increase it. I used current research and information obtained from my peers at the school to determine how I could best help him. By the end of my work with him, his receptive and expressive language skills had greatly improved.

In my current position at Barack Obama Elementary, I am working with a group of students who have very diverse learning styles and needs. The classroom that I work in is an integrated classroom, with one third of the students receiving special education services. Our aim is that each student in the class should be given the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential with as much time spent in the general education setting as possible. Through my experience in this classroom, I have gained the ability to modify my lessons and provide accommodations for all of my students, including those not receiving special education services, to further enhance their educational experience. An example of this is in the Earth Science unit that I have developed, which focuses on Processes that Change the Earth. This unit is comprised of lessons in a variety of formats, from hands-on lessons to teacher-led lessons, and from discussion-based lessons to student-taught lessons. The final lesson is a presentation made by the students in which they use Powerpoint and iMovie to teach their peers about a specific geologic event. This puts the teaching component into the hands of the students, allowing them to become experts in their topic and to help others learn about it.

I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you regarding any open positions in the elementary grades, both in the general education program and in the special education program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sal Vitale