



## *Adrian College*

December 31, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing a general reference letter for Morgan Pendleton. Morgan is a December 2015 graduate of Adrian College seeking a position in education, having already passed her MTTC exams. I have taught Morgan in two courses aimed at science students and have worked with her for three years in a cross-disciplinary educational outreach program called Track and Explore. It is extremely easy to recommend Ms. Pendleton for a teaching position because I have seen her demonstrate incredible ability and passion for teaching already, along with substantial subject matter knowledge. But perhaps most important are Morgan's personality traits and character – she is incredibly mature and professional in demeanor and both an effective leader and dedicated team member in collaborative work.

Most of Morgan's greatest strengths were best demonstrated in her work with Track and Explore and an associated semester-long applied science teaching course. In these two settings, Morgan time and again rose to serve as a real leader –but in a “servant-leader” model, where she would lead by example, not simply tell others what to do. It was amazing watching how effective she was in getting her colleagues to do precisely what needed to be done – without ever raising their ire. In these programs, Morgan took the lead in developing new lessons and tweaking many of our existing lesson plans, working to build the lessons from grade-appropriate state benchmarks. In addition to creatively designing lessons, she would come back after implementing them, lead discussions with colleagues, and lead the effort to alter the plans if there were any issues with implementation. These experiences will put Morgan well ahead of many other first year teachers, in that she has not only student-taught, but taken leadership roles already as a student. That will be incredibly valuable as Morgan moves into the classroom.

In addition to demonstrating considerable capacity for teaching and leading teaching teams, Morgan also shows an incredible passion for the job. In front of a class, she is always “on”, focusing on student needs. She is incredibly in tune with individual student needs, even when she has not had the opportunity to get to know her students well. She demonstrated this by picking up on individual behaviors, and quickly responding to that student's individual situation without disrupting her

lesson. In many ways, that ability reflects a maturity seldom seen in early career teachers. She is passionate about reaching each of those students – doing what it takes to take care of each student to the best of her ability. In all of my conversations with Morgan, from the very first class I taught her in, she knew she was headed to a career in education. She has not waivered from that decision, and has done all she can to gain as much experience as possible.

Morgan is an equally good student. In the Biology courses where I taught her, she took a broad interest in the diversity of the subject. She has learned, in detail, about everything from plant form and function to penguin ecology. Her Junior Seminar research paper focused on penguin feeding habits, with an interest in what may happen as climate changes over time. As part of that class, students were also asked to provide feedback to their classmates; Morgan did an admirable job providing effective, concise feedback to her colleagues. Ms. Pendleton's accomplishments within the Biology department were also strong enough to earn her membership in our Biology honor society, Beta, Beta Beta. As a result of her learning, I know she has substantially mastered the content she will be teaching, and I am also confident she will quickly pick up any additional content needed.

Whatever school or entity ends up hiring Ms. Pendleton will be gaining a strong teacher and a great staff member – one of the absolute best, indeed. While you may find an applicant with a slightly higher GPA, or one with more coursework in a given area, you will not find a more dedicated, effective, mature teacher. In the end, that ability to actually teach, that dedication to doing so, and the wisdom and maturity to work in a diversity of settings is what makes for a great staff member. You would get exactly that with Morgan Pendleton.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey K Lake". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey K Lake  
Assistant Professor of Biology