May 14, 2013

Letter of Recommendation for Mike Cogliandro

Mike Cogliandro began working at Brookwood School as a Computer Support Specialist in the Fall of 2011. It wasn't long before I realized that this "bright stone" I had hired was actually a diamond! I soon elevated Mike's status to System Administrator to more accurately reflect his skills and the role he played for our school.

Mike's Apple computer skills are second to none! I pride myself into thinking that I was an expert with Macs and all things related to Macs. After hiring Mike, I realized how much I didn't know as I learned from him. His deep and thorough understanding of Apple hardware and software is remarkable! Coupled with his Internet skills and superb problem-solving skills, I have yet to see a problem he cannot resolve. Our "repair budget" for Apple computers dropped from about $6000 to several hundred dollars just for parts in part because Mike is capable of doing just about any repair.

And lest you think that he is only a Mac expert I can say without equivocation that he has excellent skills working on our Windows computers as well. Mike is a born "tinker." He encouraged me to purchase a Linux laptop and Chromebook for the department so we could explore possible options with these inexpensive tools. He was clearly far more comfortable with them than I and it didn't' take long before he was teaching me how to use these tools.

Mike has many wonderful qualities that any school will admire and desire in its technology staff. Those skills include his integrity, honesty, ability to communicate, and handle difficult conversations well (i.e. when an employee is upset because her hard drive failed and she hadn't backed it up.) For me, the most critical skill on which I depend is his reliability to get jobs done in a timely manner, independently, and to the satisfaction of all effected. Mike is that and more. I have never had to ask a second time to find out when he will complete a project or solve a problem. In fact, a running joke between us is that I have begun to call him "Radar" after the MASH TV character. I cannot count the number of times I have stopped him to ask him to deal with a computer or Internet related problem only to find that it was already done! I also learned early on in his career here that he has excellent skills to research and investigate "bigger" questions that we needed to explore. E.g. Alternative content filters, POE switches, and Open Directory vs. Active Directory questions. Mike assiduously pursues these investigations and thoroughly familiarizes himself with the possible solutions before helping me make the best decision to meet our needs. I find his input invaluable and have come to rely on him for so many things. And, true to his nickname, he will often show me the research to the question before I have even asked him. "I knew you would ask me anyway, so I looked up…"

Mike is also a fast learner. During his time here he has helped us with our OS X servers, email server, content filter, anti-spam filter, SonicWall firewalls, back up software and more. And while I may not be able to call him an expert with all these devices, I can say that his problem-solving skills and tenacity to figure it out have been outstanding.

If it isn't already obvious, I value Mike tremendously in our department and am terribly sad to lose him. And he is loved by the entire community. I routinely hear from teachers and administrators that he is very patient with them as he explains how to do something , solve their particular computer-related problems or offer technology-related advice. And though he is not a teacher by training, he is a "born teacher." The students have enjoyed working with him as well and love the fact that he can laugh with them or amaze them with some of his technology tricks and tips. He also has a small cadre of students who idolize his tech skills after he taught an after-school class on computer trouble-shooting and disassembled a computer for the students to explore and understand.

It should be obvious by now how highly I value Mike in many different ways at Brookwood School. I don't deliver platitudes in recommendations. Quite simply, Mike is an amazing asset to Brookwood and will be sorely missed. He will equally be a tremendous asset to any school lucky enough to hire him.

If you would like to discuss his candidacy further, please don't hesitate to call me at Brookwood School or contact me via email.

Sincerely,

Doug Fodeman
Director of Technology
Brookwood School
1 Brookwood Road
Manchester, MA 01944

DFodeman@Brookwood.edu
978-526-4500 x6233