



**Richard Machesky, Ed.D.**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

1333 Hamman Rd.  
Troy, Michigan 48085  
tdiponio@troy.k12.mi.us

**Tammy DiPonio, Ed.D.**  
**Principal, Costello Elementary**  
[tdiponio@troy.k12.mi.us](mailto:tdiponio@troy.k12.mi.us)  
**248-823-3700**

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure and confidence that I write this letter of recommendation for an administrative position for Grayson McKinney. Grayson joined the Costello team in 2012 as a fourth grade teacher, and quickly made an impression at Costello. Not only were his credentials impressive, but when he was in front of students teaching a lesson, it was clear that Grayson was a top notch educator. Though we do not accept parent requests for class placements at our school, I receive numerous requests from parents every year pleading to have their child placed in Mr. McKinney's class. In my 17 years as an administrator, I have mentored many quality teachers into the role of principal. In my opinion, Grayson far exceeds any of the other aspirants.

Sound communication is a critical attribute of all successful administrators. Grayson's sharp and witty sense of humor makes him approachable to students as well as adults. His style of communication is clear and to the point. Whether written or oral, Grayson weaves his sense of humor into his communication. Electronic documents, presentations, Weebly webpages, even e-mails, are all well communicated and professional. Grayson does not put his name on anything unless it is of the very highest quality. Teachers would comment admirably about a project that he did stating, "Well of course it looks like that, Grayson did it!"

As an administrator, one must be able to successfully manage multiple tasks through prioritizing. In his time at our school, he has taken on every leadership opportunity that was available. In addition to being nominated for Teacher of the Year (two years in a row), some of Grayson's leadership roles included being the building technology chairperson, member of the school improvement team, Student Council chairperson, service squad leader, member of the school-wide PBIS committee, building writing goal team member, leader of the student broadcast crew, and Grayson also led multiple parent technology evenings. Students, staff, and parents have all benefited from Grayson's leadership and initiatives.

Grayson was also on the district curriculum team for math and the district technology committee. Whenever a technology project came up, the staff always went to Grayson for assistance. Grayson wrote a grant for student broadcast equipment which he recently accepted from the Troy Foundation for Educational Excellence. He is currently working on a Cultures of Thinking presentation for the Oakland County administrators conference this June. He managed all of these obligations gracefully while attending school to earn his Educational Specialist

degree and being a very involved family man to his wife and two young sons. I recall having conversations with Grayson about being careful not to take on too much. However, Grayson never appeared to be overwhelmed and was always asking for more opportunities to support and lead others.

One of Grayson's greatest strengths and passions might be his belief in creating and leading educators to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century practices within their classrooms. His willingness to support these efforts was evident when he hosted numerous building and district teachers in his classroom. Room 14 became a learning lab for other teachers. Grayson hosted numerous visitors from the building, the district, and from around Oakland County into his classroom to learn from his pedagogical practices. His innovative instructional methods capture students' thinking and enhance their understanding of the content. He helps bring others along who may be skeptical or unsure of these practices by providing professional development and individual planning support for teachers.

After interviewing Grayson, you will wonder if he is for real. I recall doing this myself. Let me assure you that you that Grayson is genuinely as good as his paperwork and interview will reveal him to be. I can say with full confidence that Grayson is ready to take on the incredible responsibility of leading a building. I would encourage you to contact me so that I can share even more about this outstanding candidate.

Educationally Yours,

Tammy DiPonio