



Office of Assistant Superintendent - Elementary School Leadership
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May 13, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with extreme pleasure that I write to you on behalf of Mr. Art DeFilippo. I have known and followed his work over the past fifteen years, first as a principal colleague, then as a central office administrator supporting his work at Davidson Elementary School. Mr. DeFilippo is without a doubt one of the most intelligent, creative and hard working administrators that I have even known. As a result of his outstanding qualifications, strong interpersonal skills, and willingness to help, colleagues and staff alike greatly respected him.

As Principal of Davidson Elementary School, Mr. DeFilippo successfully turned the student achievement in a positive direction, while at the same time planning for and opening his school in a new facility. He was assigned to a school that was labeled "underperforming" by the state of Arizona and due to the strong academic progress made under his leadership, the school was relabeled, "performing" for four consecutive years. He was able to do this for two main reasons. First, he provided high quality professional development at Davidson. His work in this regard is perhaps the greatest contributor to improved student success at that school. Under his leadership, teachers clearly became more effective in their roles. Second, he instituted school wide programs that not only challenged students academically, they created a real sense of community. Examples of these programs include Read to Ride and a locally and nationally recognized attendance program which increased the daily student attendance rate from 78% to 97%.

Among his many qualifications, Art DeFilippo's work with the new school development earned the school the Green Leed School Award from the United States Department of Energy. He also was awarded a million dollar grant which provided for a community bird and butterfly garden and an exemplar playground for students with physical disabilities. He successfully and simultaneously managed district, state and federal grant budgets in excess of two million dollars.

His departure from Tucson Unified Schools to pursue new educational challenges in Seoul, Korea, was a great loss to our school district and the students it serves. Your consideration of him for any academic post, including a principal position, is an indication that you are looking for the very best. I highly recommend him highly and without reservation.

Sincerely,



Maggie Shafer
Assistant Superintendent
Tucson Unified School District

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