



"Knowledge is Power"

OCEAN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL
A California Distinguished School

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To Whom It May Concern:

A 1999 graduate of Ocean View High School, Sonia spent that past semester student teaching with us, receiving rave reviews from everybody in our English Language Arts Department. She is passionate about literature, knows her subject well, and quickly established a rapport with her students for which I must confess envy. When she got her assignment, one sophomore class and two sections of freshmen, the first thing she did was talk extensively with all the other teachers at those levels, seeking the benefit of their experience in developing lessons. Enormously creative and resourceful, Sonia built on what she learned from her colleagues to produce learning experiences for her kids that were meaningful, involving, and just plain fun.

Many student teachers struggle with control of the classroom, but Sonia found her footing the third week of her semester here. She had a minor epiphany, saying something like, "I think I'm being too nice to them," after spending 104 minutes with her 37 sophomores, who were a little too energetic to learn what she wanted them to that day. It was all smooth sailing from that time on. Since that day, the mood in her classes has been one of purpose, mutual respect, and humor, all with Ms. Duarte firmly in charge of the proceedings. I like that about Sonia – our BTSA program goes to great lengths to encourage new teachers to reflect thoughtfully on their practice, to modify it appropriately, and then to act. This young woman does just that, quite naturally and intuitively. She will be one of those rare teachers, utterly in love with her work, who constantly refines lessons and strategies for delivering them until they absolutely shine.

Our department is very excited about the prospect of Sonia's filling the shoes of a person who may soon be retiring from our school. We've spoken with our administrators in support of her and will lobby with all our might to have her join our staff. I hope we get to keep her, but if we don't, I know she'll be a star on the staff of some other, some luckier, high school.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Sloan
English Language Arts Coordinator