

To Whom it may concern,

I have known Zachary Hansel for a little over 20 years. We met during our undergraduate studies at Lake Forest College in our Japanese elective course. I convinced Zac to take courses in both calculus and computer programming as an art major, and to satisfy my core beliefs in their importance as an aspiring math teacher. We worked together for years as members of the Garrick Players theatre troop each taking turns supervising the other in matters of technical theatre and time on stage. In the 20 years since I can say we have been a steady thread, though not frequent because of distance, in each other's lives.

I share this to add emphasis to my joy when Zac called me to say he was going back to school to become a teacher. I teach both undergraduate and graduate students in a teacher training program at Northern Illinois University, where I am completing my doctorate. I have 17 years of experience teaching mathematics, special education and higher education. It has been an honor to see my friend choose this path, and share experiences in teaching.

I must admit I do not know his professional experience first hand, but write to share my knowledge of his character and passion. Zac's passion adds a fire to his work that can lift a room or wow an audience. The role modeling and values that are so needed in today's schools are the foundation of Mr. Hansel's character. As a colleague I would expect that he is the same supportive friend and ready collaborator that stood by me for four important years of our lives and more since.

If you are reading this letter I encourage to consider his inquiry and get to know this professional better.