



# Pacific High School

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**Krista Nieraeth**  
*Principal / Athletic Director*

**Kari Engdahl**  
*Office Manager*

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Austin Brown, a Pacific High School student who has down – syndrome. Austin has been a student/athlete in our school district for the past four years. He has proven to be a very dedicated and valuable asset to our student body and the basketball team. Our students have embraced Austin and his uniqueness both in the classroom and on the court, and he has brought joy to our school every day he is at Pacific.

The impact that Austin has had while being a member of our basketball team has been unbelievable! The boys are excited to sit next to Austin on the bench during games, including him in huddles and in cheering the team on. Austin, in turn, provides the team with added energy. Watching Austin get into the game is also a joy. Usually, he gets in the last minute or two of a blowout game, providing his team and our fans a chance to see his excitement and love for the game.

The opportunity to coach Austin in the games and in practice has been one that I will never forget. Every time he walks in the court, he turns and gives me a big smile, reminding me that basketball is a game that is supposed to be fun. His love of playing basketball is infectious and brings smiles to the faces of all my players. His contribution to our team is immeasurable. Austin loves being with “his boys” and the boys love having Austin next to them, dressed in the purple and gold colors of Pacific.

Watching Austin play basketball for Pacific has revealed on Friday and Saturday nights the pride our community has for our school and our students, and even has revealed a tremendous level of sportsmanship other schools have. The encouragement that our fans give to Austin and our teams reminds me why I love small towns...the way the community supports our kids, win or lose. The opportunity to watch players from other schools demonstrate the epitome of empathy by allowing Austin multiple shots at scoring a basket which ultimately pilots both fan bases into a standing ovation, truly exemplifies that basketball more than just a game. It's a way to include all people, regardless of disability, and truly enhance the happiness in their lives.

As you consider this case, I hope that you understand the importance of basketball to Austin, our school, and our communities and grant him the hardship to continue to play basketball at Pacific for a 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Sincerely,

Ben Stallard  
PE/Health Teacher  
Head Boys Basketball/Track Coach