



*A Century of Excellence*

## **Gresham High School**

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John R. Koch, Principal



*An International Baccalaureate  
World School*

December 2, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of support for Ashley Weeg as a part of the OSAA hardship process. My name is Dr. Re'nice Siefer, and I am Ashley's Counselor at Gresham High School. I have known Ashley approximately two and a half years.

During her Freshman year, I work with Ashley and her mother on revising her 504 plan in order to help her with the transition to high school. Ashley has received services over the years for severe anxiety and Attention Deficit Disorder. She struggled with various aspects of academic work, became overwhelmed easily and had difficulty reading social cues from peers. Each of these things in combination made success at school a constant struggle.

Over the course of that year, and in the fall of her Sophomore year, it became clear that she needed infinitely more support services than the 504 accommodations would account for. Ashley experienced early trauma and has seen therapists, physicians, social workers and counselors to gradually work through fear, depression and anxiety. She was found eligible at the end of her 10<sup>th</sup> grade for special education services. This allowed for her to modify academics, social situations, and receive more intense support for these issues. Slowly, I have witnessed Ashley move toward healthfulness. She has tremendous support from her adoptive parents and outside providers. She is learning social skills and strategies that help her manage intense emotions when dealing with peers. She is becoming an excellent self-advocate. She is finding her way through our system and experiencing small, but significant successes!

Ashley has one clear passion at our high school, her participation and social connection to Choir. The Choir Director Janine Kirstein has been committed to let Ashley participate in Choir performances fully knowing the impact it has on Ashley. Ashley feels a sense pride and positive self-concept by performing in Choir class. She states that at times, this was the single biggest motivating factor to keep her active in academics at school.

Ashley's grades, like her course work, are modified for her diploma. She is gradually improving her skills, but this is a work in process. I am aware that OSAA creates clear standards for activities tied to academic success. I also know that once in great while, exceptions can be made for hardship students struggling with a unique set of circumstances. My hope is that I have conveyed the challenges Ashley faced from birth until this day. I am in support of Ashley being granted a hardship in order for her to continue performing with her choir.

Thank you,

Dr. Re'nice Siefer  
Counselor