Careers in Sports High School

**at Mott Haven Bronx Campus**

**Johanny Garcia, Principal**

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October 4, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my honor to write this letter of recommendation in support of Waniel Santiago’s application for your graduate program. I have had the privilege of mentoring Mr. Santiago for the past four years during his time as a Special Education Teacher at Careers in Sports High School, and I can unequivocally say that he embodies the qualities of an outstanding educator and a dedicated community leader.

Mr. Santiago came to us highly recommended by colleagues at the NYC Men Teach pathway program, and from the moment of his interview, it was clear that he would be an asset to our learning community. During his interview, he impressed us by walking through his unique approach to student engagement, using his knowledge of the history of martial arts as a bridge between Asia and Africa. His ability to connect content to culturally rich, interdisciplinary themes has been a hallmark of his teaching practice, and we knew then that his depth and breadth of knowledge would be invaluable to our students.

Over the past four years, I have been consistently impressed with Mr. Santiago's deep commitment to his students. He not only excels in the classroom, providing differentiated learning experiences for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), but he also dedicates countless hours outside of his scheduled teaching time to support students one-on-one. Whether during his lunch breaks or prep periods, Mr. Santiago has repeatedly volunteered his time to help students prepare for presentations, exams, and standardized tests. His colleagues regularly turn to him for assistance with students who are struggling, knowing that he has both the expertise and the heart to reach those who need extra support.

One particular instance stands out in my mind: a student who was at risk of failing her English 8 class due to personal family challenges. Without hesitation, Mr. Santiago took it upon himself to mentor her, ensuring that she would graduate. Not only did she successfully complete the course, but her final presentation was so powerful that it moved teachers and students alike to tears. In her acknowledgment slide, she gave heartfelt thanks to Mr. Santiago for his unwavering support—a testament to the profound impact he has on his students.

In addition to his classroom responsibilities, Mr. Santiago has served as the coach and facilitator of our school's Boxing Club, where he inspires students to push themselves physically and mentally. His leadership and commitment to fostering determination, courage, and integrity in his students is evident every Friday afternoon, as students eagerly flock to his classroom to participate in his training sessions. He has created a safe and empowering space where students feel both challenged and supported to become their best selves.

It is without hesitation that I highly recommend Mr. Santiago for your graduate program. His dedication, compassion, and exceptional teaching practices have already enriched our school community, and I am confident that he will bring the same level of excellence to your academic institution. He exemplifies everything that a teacher should be, and I am certain that he will continue to grow and thrive in your program.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at Loniceeversley@gmail.com or (914)720-6341.

Sincerely,

Lonice J. Eversley

Lonice J. Eversley, Master Teacher

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