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Eastern Washington University

RE: Teaching Program

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jake Sutherby. I grew up in a small town of 3500 people on the western side of Washington State. I graduated from a small school where I played three sports a year throughout high school and participated in forestry. My small, tight-knit community was a great environment to try new things and get exposure to sports and activities I may not have done at a larger school. Going to a small school, everyone stepped up and played sports to make sure there was a team, even if you were not the best athlete. This is one thing I loved about my small school: everyone got a chance to play, grow, and improve. My experience with PE in high school was great. Our PE teacher was an ex-college basketball player who had a ton of knowledge. I learned a lot from my PE teacher in high school. I was glad I had the opportunity to do strength training all four years of high school.

            After high school, I took my motivation from high school sports and weightlifting and joined the Marine Corps. During my four years in the Marine Corps, I learned much about physical fitness and overall health. Much of the training we did in the Marines focused on physical fitness. During my time in the military, I grew as an individual and gained valuable knowledge. After the military, I went to college and got my bachelor's degree in health and social science. I took many health, PE, and exercise science classes during my undergraduate degree. When my son turned six, I got talked into coaching his youth football team, and this was my first time working with kids. I ended up coaching youth football for the next five years. Coaching youth football guided me towards wanting to be a teacher. I liked working with kids and helping them feel confident and successful.

            My first master's degree was in special education, and I have been teaching it for three years. During that time, I continued to coach football and track and field. I always knew my passion was health and PE, so I ultimately decided to pursue this program, and it was a great decision. I have been teaching high school health at my school for most of this year, and I will have the opportunity to teach PE in the next trimester.  I will coach track again this year and continue to improve my skills as a teacher and coach. I plan on completing this program in June and continuing to teach health and PE at my current school district. Later on in my career I would like to pursue a degree in administration to possibly become a vice principal and athletic director.

            During this program, I have had to research state standards, and we have learned about specific teaching strategies and methods that we need to know as health and PE teachers. Looking back at past assignments and aligning them with specific competencies allowed me to brainstorm and reflect on specific areas of health and PE. I learned a lot this quarter, which has motivated me even more to improve and be a better teacher. I enjoyed learning about the Washington State health and PE standards. They helped me build my overall content knowledge and provided me with data that I can use when creating new lesson plans for my health and PE classes. One area that I have struggled with is classroom management. After going through most of this program and taking this class, I have gained some confidence in that area. Many of the assignments and competencies I reflected on and researched helped me gain valuable knowledge and has guided me on the right direction to improved classroom management.

            I have gained so much knowledge from this program so far. It is all relevant to helping me as a teacher in the future. Deep diving into the Washington Health PE standard was the most helpful area. The standards helped me better understand the overall methodology and expectations of health and PE in the state. I plan on using everything I learned to create fun and exciting lessons for my students that keep them engaged and learning. My biggest thing is keeping kids excited and engaged daily. Once you lose enthusiasm, getting it back with many students is often challenging. With kids getting more instant gratification nowadays with cell phones, tablets, and video games, motivating them to do things like PE can be challenging. I want to be able to do that as a teacher. I want to be the one they are excited to see every day and excited to see what the next lesson is in class.