

Dear Central Academy Staff,

I felt the need to write this letter because of the wonderful experience I had while I was a Student Intern [teacher] at your school. I thought you should hear the impact you and your philosophy have on someone new to the building. From my first day, I was treated like part of the staff. I have been truly inspired by what I have seen, felt, and learned in my short time at Central.

The Central staff is an amazing group of people. You are both compassionate and hard working. Although each of you has different personalities and teaching styles, you all compliment one another. Each of you has one true goal in mind: doing what is best for your students. At Central, “your students,” means something different than what it means at the other schools I’ve experienced, because you all consider every child who attends this school to be one of “your students.” The planning and extra time you all put in is admirable, and even more incredible is the fact that you do it because you want to be the best you can be for the kids.

On my first day when I saw all of the teachers standing at their doors, greeting students as they arrived, I realized that Central was more than just a school. Every teacher greeted all of the students -- even those not in your classes. As I got the chance to watch my cooperating teacher, I realized she and the rest of you have a natural ability to connect with the students and tap into each individual’s needs. I don’t want to describe your relationship and attitude towards the students as caring, because it is not a strong enough word. The genuine love you show for the students, school, community, and each other is something that really touched me. I learned quickly that you are more than a school; you are a family.

The philosophy of this school is something that I learned about in classes, but had never actually had the opportunity to see in practice. To be perfectly honest, I didn’t know that any school like this existed. A whole school that gives students voice, opportunity, and responsibility, while educating them seemed too good to be true. But the way that the students learn through their own experiences, choices, and real-life connections is remarkable! I saw it work first hand and was astounded by it. I consistently found myself thinking, “Wow!” and “Yes!” and most of all, “How do they do it?”

The students in this school really believe in what they are a part of, and have uncommon confidence and maturity. The language that the students use, and the ideas they explore are beyond those of any other students their age that I have met. The key factor in this is that the students are the ones who choose to dig deeper and take chances. What you are doing works, and completely inspires me. This school is about more than technical skills, it really connects students lives with their education. This is something I never had in traditional schooling. Your students have rights to choose and explore, while you instill motivation and help them set the highest level of expectations.

My experience at Central was unforgettable. It motivated me to want to be more than a teacher by its culturally accepted definition. I am leaving with great ideas and a renewed passion. I have always had a love for children and a heart for teaching, but the knowledge, experience, and ideas I have gained here will make me so much more of a contributor when I get a job in the future.

Thank you so much for everything! I wish those who don’t believe or understand your methods would just come and watch! You are all true role models, and exactly what I aspire to be.

Sincerely,
Nicole Igarashi