

The Selection Panel for The NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence,

I am writing this letter of endorsement in support of Adam Clinch's candidacy for the NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence. Adam and I were hired at our current school the same year and have taught similar classes for most of our careers. While working closely with Adam, I have seen firsthand his creativity, innovation, and expertise.

Obviously one of the most difficult aspects of teaching high school mathematics is addressing the disparity between different students' abilities and needs. Adam uses a variety of strategies in his lessons to meet students' individual needs. Adam has created and implemented several investigations on various topics through the Desmos Activity Builder, has utilized these activities successfully in his classes, and has even presented various activities to our colleagues to encourage their use in all courses. Adam has also written guided note packets for each unit, giving students a framework to help them organize their thoughts, questions, and work as they tackle a new concept. Students who struggle to take effective notes find these very helpful, and many students learn note-taking strategies they can apply to their other coursework as well.

A big part of successful differentiation is providing an avenue for students to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Adam has broken down each of his classes into individual learning targets. By quizzing on every learning target prior to the test and grading each quiz based on learning target, he provides the necessary information for his students to take ownership of their strengths and weaknesses. Adam encourages his students to find their own mathematical voice and to take ownership of their learning through personal whiteboards. Students use these individual whiteboards to complete in-class checks for understanding, giving Adam multiple daily formative assessments to guide his instruction, and to highlight and support his students' efforts.

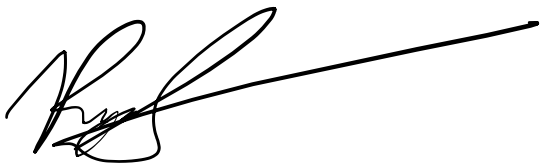
To encourage open thinking rather than simple memorization, Adam has developed several investigations on various topics. Examples include a bungee-jumping Barbie lab to teach linear regression, a rocketry lab demonstrating the use of quadratics for falling body calculations, a zombie apocalypse simulation to teach exponential growth, a computer coding unit in his Tech Math course, and a flipped classroom for his dual-credit statistics courses. These lessons and activities are the highlight of a student's year, and we often hear students talking years later about how much they enjoyed these lessons years later.

In addition to being an expert in his field, Adam Clinch is also a driven professional. He continually seeks new ways to better himself, and then to share out what he learns to our department and school staff. Adam introduced a Math Colloquium where members of the math department took turns once a month presenting a cool topic, lesson, article, or question to the rest of our department, fostering our own professional curiosity in an engaging way. Several years ago Adam and I co-hosted a professional development opportunity, where we gave our colleagues the necessary tools to successfully develop content-rich and effective websites years before a global pandemic necessitated this skill.

When teaching factoring to our freshmen students, Adam and I had numerous discussions about our disdain for the myriad of methods taught by most textbooks because of their limited applicability. Adam continued exploring this idea and came up with a method that can factor all factorable quadratics, negating the need for multiple methods. Adam's method is great for a couple of reasons: it employs a visual component that demonstrates geometrically why it works, and it is applicable to all factorable quadratics so that students can spend their time learning and understanding one method rather than trying to manage three or four methods they learned through rote memorization only. Adam shared this idea with our department and helped to encourage its use in many of our algebra courses. After doing some research and realizing that this was not a method discussed online to any extent, Adam authored an article detailing the method and his success using it with students. This article was later published in the national publication *Mathematics Teacher* as a featured article.

Adam is an excellent educator who strives to be the best he can be for his students, his colleagues, and our school, and district. He pushes himself, his students, and the rest of our department to continue to be curious, to continue to develop as individuals, and to meaningfully engage with our mathematics content.

It is completely without reservation that I recommend Adam Clinch for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Swenson', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

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