

To Whom It May Concern:

As the former Senior Executive Director of Arts Education for the Los Angeles Unified School District and CEO of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington DC during my extensive 30 year education career, I have encountered certain educators whose work so deeply embodies an institution's purpose, an intellectual and artistic leader whose commitment and passion is so deeply rooted that her presence makes a powerful statement to all. Those individuals are not easily forgotten. Dr. Desi Cameron is one such educator, and I am honored to write this recommendation, without any reservation, as she continues her educational journey and pursuits.

When I first met Dr. Cameron, her pursuit as a lifelong learner, her appreciation for cultural richness and diversity, and her broad, yet deep, artistic skillset were evident. At that time, she had been the performing arts director at the Westside Neighborhood School since 2011. Desirous to bring her professional skillset to a series of teacher professional developments I was providing to enhance urban student curriculum, Dr. Cameron volunteered her services to my district's efforts, even though her school and educational system were on the opposite side of town. So engaged and enlightened were my teachers with her work to aid students in using their bodies and voices to communicate ideas and stories truthfully on stage that they requested this "outsider" for more enrichment. I soon discovered that Dr. Cameron regularly found ways to broaden her own professional horizons and thus, she was able to bring to her students the layers of richness and complexity they deserved in their educational experience. I was no longer surprised as to why she had won the Eddy Award for Teacher of the Year.

When Desi transitioned to higher education as an Adjunct Professor and Lecturer in higher education, first at Pepperdine and then UCLA, she invited me to participate with her class, where she taught Social and Emotional Learning and the Arts for undergraduate students in the Visual and Performing Arts Education (VAPAE) program. I was able to witness firsthand the positive relationship she established while teaching these upper-class students, providing them with the necessary skillsets they'd need to go into the artistic workforce, all while nurturing their emotional sensibilities and building their cognitive and critical thinking capacities. The way she effortlessly moved around the classroom, interacting with each group with the specific direction they needed, made it evident that her prestigious Harvard, NYU, USF, and University of Miami training in arts and education was well heeded.

Dr. Cameron's impressive work ethic, team player attitude, commitment to detail, organization, creativity, collaboration, and expansive subject knowledge are all qualities that set her above most others. Having directly worked with her and witnessed firsthand her impactful work with students, I can confirm that she goes far beyond what it takes to create an exemplary learning environment for all students. She is most certainly an

exemplary leader in character, vision, and action. Desi Cameron, I cannot wait to see what she accomplishes next.

Sincerely,

Rory Pullens, Chief Learning Officer

Soapbox Edu

Rory@soapbox.us

310-993-6822