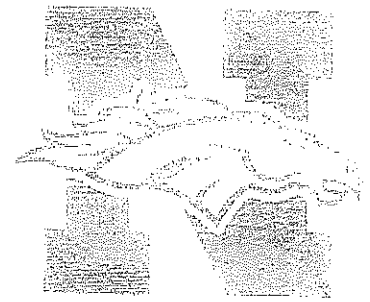


# Appendix J

Letters of Support

# Northgate High School

Excellence for, and from, all students



425 Castle Rock Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94598 - (925) 938-0900 - [www.northgatehighschool.org](http://www.northgatehighschool.org)

March 13, 2019

Board of Education  
Mt. Diablo Unified School District  
1936 Carlotta Way  
Concord, CA 94518

Dear Mt. Diablo Unified School District Board of Education:

Three years ago, I was asked to teach the ROP Careers in Teaching class at Northgate High School. This class is articulated with the Diablo Valley College course, Education 120. The students in this class learn about pedagogy, classroom management, lesson planning, learning styles, learning disabilities, as well as important current events and trends in education. Furthermore, beginning in October, they begin an internship at either Eagle Peak Montessori School or Walnut Creek Elementary School.

The ability to have students placed at Eagle Peak Montessori has been an incredible experience for both me and the Northgate high school students. The students who intern at Eagle Peak Montessori support their young students, either one-on-one or in small groups. Additionally, they learn about the Montessori method of instruction through first-hand experience and from working with their master teacher. The knowledge that they have gained working in their classrooms has contributed to wonderful dialogue with our Careers in Teaching class on the days that we meet for seminar.

Having the opportunity to observe my interns at Eagle Peak Montessori has been a significant experience for me, too, as it is the first time in my teaching career that I have been able to see Montessori education in action and learn from my teacher colleagues at that site. The value of this partnership cannot be overstated. I think I am a better instructor by having the opportunity to observe in elementary classrooms, and especially in the Montessori classrooms. This has been a valuable partnership for both my students and me to expand our understanding of pedagogy and to grow as education professionals. I look forward to continuing this partnership with Principal Michelle Hammons and Eagle Peak Montessori School.

Sincerely,

Christine L. Reimer, M.A.  
Social Science & Careers in Teaching  
Northgate High School

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Michael McAlister, Ed. D., Principal  
Kelly Cooper, Vice Principal  
Craig Bocks, Vice Principal  
Tucker Farrar, Dean of Students





March 11, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

From grades 2 through 8, our son had the opportunity to attend Eagle Peak Montessori. The curriculum was fluid enough to allow learning above his current grade level. This was an important feature to us since, according to the public-school administrator during his 1<sup>st</sup> grade year, learning to his ability was unavailable there. Programs at the school exposed him to community participation both locally and globally. He was well prepared to tackle the rigors of the college prep high school he attends and, at the end of his freshman year, received formal acknowledgement from his school for his consistent outstanding marks. His time at Eagle Peak Montessori placed him on a course for lifelong interest in learning and success.

I understand the school's charter is being considered for renewal. This school is an asset to the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, contributing to the elevation of the district.

Cordially,

Rachael Bergman  
Managing Director

13th of March, 2019

**MDUSD Board of Directors**

To whom it may concern,

I have been a parent to children at Eagle Peak Montessori School for 11 years. My daughter was the first class to continue all the way through middle school at EPMS. I currently have 2 boys attending 5th and 8th grade but for the sake of this letter will focus on my daughter's experience as she is the only one to have moved on to a standardized high school.

Alexis, my daughter was originally enrolled at a sought after kindergarten in Pleasant Hill but halfway through the year, I saw the excitement she had for learning dwindling. She spent weeks practicing for the Spelling Bee to come home disappointed after realizing it would be presented in written test form. It was experiences such as this that had me searching for something else, a school experience that would be engaging and progressive. We found Eagle Peak Montessori. Despite our lack of experience in Montessori, Alexis flourished. A few years in, we discovered Alexis was dyslexic... this was a non-issue in the Montessori environment. She presented as being very disorganized and struggled with alignment, cursive writing and test situations. 4th and 5th grade were a struggle for her however part of the Montessori curriculum is that in 6th grade you spend the entire year working on an extensive research project and presentation. During this year long project the children learn study and organization skills that benefit them for the rest of their lives. My daughter still credits her sixth grade teacher and this process for her success in high school. She is currently in all AP classes at Clayton Valley Charter in their Medical Academy. While working a part time job teaching young children how to ride horses, varsity water polo player and varsity wrestlers, she also averages a 4.17 GPA. This summer, she has been invited to speak on behalf of her school as a delegate from the state of California at two different future Physicians of America summits. The thing that I am most proud of is her ability to manage these things on her own, this was not a natural skill for her but was a result of the personal attention that she received as a student at Eagle Peak Montessori School.

Beyond the stellar academic guidance my children have received at Eagle Peak Montessori, the attention paid to individuality, emotional well-being, practical skills and an awareness for the world around them has made each of my children caring wonderful participants in their community within Eagle Peak and beyond. I am forever grateful to Michelle Hammons and her staff for the progressive energy and expertise they bring to our community.

Sincerely,

Jenn Mecham

March 10, 2019

Dear MDUSD Board of Directors,

Eight Years ago I filled out an application and provided the necessary supporting documentation for my son to attend Eagle Peak Montessori School. Considering he attended a Montessori pre-school it seemed like the natural fit. I was impressed when I had the classroom visit and spoke with some of the staff. Leading up to lottery day all of our household was excited to find out the fate of our soon to be first grader. At the lottery they read off name after name of excited children and parents to be attending the school of our choice. They finished the list of students who were accepted, and our son's name was nowhere to be found. Then they started the waitlist and he was number 12...not bad. We just need 11 parents to change their minds or have a change in life situation.

After leaving the lottery in March (I believe), I started on my plan B. Plan B involved visiting other schools with a good reputation that could accommodate our first grader. We looked at a Christian School and my last result was the neighborhood school (not desirable.) I probably started calling the Eagle Peak office in June every week to see where our child's name was on the waiting list. Early on there was no movement, as the first day of school approached he moved closer to the top of the list but not close enough to become a student. Amy (school secretary) called me about a week before Bridge-week to let me know there were two or three students in front of us and our name may get called at any time and we have to be ready. As you can imagine I was anxious for a week. By the time Bridge-week started and I still hadn't heard I thought it was over. I'd decided our son would go to the neighborhood school for a month and if we still didn't get in to Eagle Peak we would sign up for the Christian school. We finally got the call...two days into Bridge week. Amy said can you come tomorrow, of course!!! I was in a meeting when I received the call and I jumped up and down and screamed. Co-workers thought I was crazy, but it was worth it. Since the day we were accepted to Eagle Peak it has been a great experience. I love the small school experience...it's like family. The teachers are wonderful and Ms. Hammons is phenomenal! All of the teachers care about our children and Ms. Hammons knows every child's name. Our son is now a freshman in high school and there is always the concern as to how he would adjust. He has adjusted so well it's a little scary. He is socially comfortable in a large school setting and academically prepared. His first semester he received a 4.0 at Clayton Valley Charter High School with over 2000 students. As we know high school can be fun, scary or a little bit of both. There are a number of Eagle Peakers that attend Clayton Valley and all that I know of are adjusting well. I am thankful for the Eagle Peak experience. It helped our son establish good study habits and develop a strong sense of self so he's not going to high school looking for other people to follow...he's a natural leader and I know much of that is attributable to his invaluable experience at Eagle Peak.

Sincerely,

Jamillah Spears

(Mother of Taleeb Weaver)

March 2019

Dear MDUSD Board of Directors,

Throughout my life lots have contributed to who I am. I am a student with a 4.17 gpa in high school, I have a thirst for knowledge and a knack for outside the box thinking. I wouldn't be who I am today without Eagle Peak Montessori charter. Throughout the 8 years of my life there, I learned not only age advanced math science language and reading, but also life skills that many of my current peers still don't understand. From a young age integrity, respect, and kindness have been my core values.

I write today to explain the value that this school has been in my life. I will never be able to comprehend what my life would have been like if I not attend eagle peak. All of my peers that are from eagle peak are excelling in standardized curriculum. I look back from my junior year in high school to my years in that environment with nothing but fondness. I will forever stand by the core values taught to me in morning meetings.

Someday I hope for my children to attend a school just like eagle peak.

Sincerely,

Alexis Vlavianos

March 14, 2019

Dear MDUSD Board,

My name is Vanessa Hernandez and I am one of Eagle Peak's Adolescent Program trailblazers. I spoke in front of the district's board in support of Eagle Peak's charter renewal 5 years ago, at that time we were petitioning to add 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade to our school. I am now a junior in High School. By being able to stay at eagle peak for those extra three years (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) was an amazing opportunity. Honestly, I miss being a student at eagle peak very much! Being an Eagle Peaker taught me how to be, not only a good student but also taught me great personal qualities which have helped to shape who I am today. Integrity, being kind to others as well as the ability to work in a sense of community are qualities Eagle Peak helped me to learn.

One thing that parents were unsure of when we added 6-8th grade was how 8th graders would transition into high school. I, personally, had an easy transition. It was definitely weird seeing 2200 people at my school each day, but I quickly adjusted to this change, as well as making good relationships with my new teachers and forming more friendships. Academically, I found the transition to freshman year very smooth. Eagle Peak really prepared me for the academic work expected in high school. I am now enrolled in AP and honor classes and while they are challenging I welcome the extra work. I have maintained a 4.0 since I began high school and I truly feel that I am successful as a student and as a member of my community because of the foundation I was given at Eagle Peak. I still have a tight bond with my Eagle Peak friends; we hang out everyday and this is another reason I am grateful to Eagle Peak for

Thank you, MDUSD board for giving us the opportunity to have a school like Eagle Peak!

Sincerely,

Vanessa Hernandez

March 12, 2019

Dear MDUSD:

My name is Berenice Hernandez and I am a parent at Eagle Peak Montessori, I have been there for 12 years as all 4 of my kids have been or are currently Eagle Peakers. My oldest completed 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Eagle Peak and she is now at sophomore at San Francisco State University, her major is criminal justices and she has made the Dean's list since her freshman year. My second youngest completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade and was part of the first graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. She is now 16, a junior in high school and keeps a 4.17 GPA. My two youngest are in second and 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Eagle Peak.

Eagle Peak Montessori has been a blessing in our lives and we feel very fortunate to have this as a choice school in our district. My 8<sup>th</sup> grader transitioned smoothly both academically and socially into high school, even though it was a big change to a much bigger school, the skills she learned at Eagle Peak helped her during this milestone. I plan to keep both my youngest children at Eagle Peak through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The sense of community, the teachers and the principal have truly made this a second home for our family. I am fortunate to be able to volunteer there on a weekly basis and this helps me see so much of what the students are involved in. My children feel safe and enjoy going to school there.

I'd like to express my gratitude to the district for providing this choice to the students and their families. I am looking forward to more learning, more memories as we continue with our journey at this very special place called Eagle Peak,

Sincerely,

Berenice Hernandez  
Eagle Peak parent  
[bernicahernandez@mc.com](mailto:bernicahernandez@mc.com)