June 2, 2014

To: Whom it may concern

From: Naomi Sutherland

 Middle School Math Teacher

 Sunshine School District

Reference: Emily Huerta

I have had the pleasure of teaching Algebra (grade 6) and Geometry (grade 7) to Emily Huerta these past two years and would like to tell you more about her math talents so that she is properly placed within your sequenced math courses.

Emily is a military dependent and has moved districts many times. Fortunately, she brought to us documentation of her math acceleration and enrichment experiences since 3rd grade and these have proven invaluable in scheduling courses to meet Emily’s mathematical needs.

Emily is one of the most talented mathematics students I have ever had the pleasure to teach. She loves to work with numbers and figures, especially when solving structured or real-world problems, and has remarkable abilities to approach each problem using various strategies—some quite novel! She relishes challenges and prefers to speed along at her own pace. However, she rarely engages in class discussions, preferring to sit at the back of the room to “blend in.”

Because she was ahead of our standard middle school math sequence by two years, she joined older students in standard courses where the pacing was much too slow to meet her needs. So I had to work overtime to find or create extra challenges for Emily. If I hadn’t done so, she would have found MANY ways to socialize both overtly or covertly.

Gifted girls, in general, have been known to assimilate and “go underground” in order to fit in with the crowd as early as 4th grade. But in mathematics, this problem is magnified intensely. All mathematical careers are open to Emily, including those that would utilize her spatial reasoning talent; please keep Emily challenged by allowing her to move at her own pace, go into greater depth as her interest dictates, and provide interdisciplinary connections or real-world applications.

Naomi Sutherland

Math Instructor, Algebra and Geometry

Sunshine School District