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To whom it may concern:

While vacationing in Mesa this summer, I had the opportunity to read many news articles centering on math education. I learned that Arizona had added a fourth year of math as a graduation requirement, that the state had adopted the Common Core Standards and that the incorporation of technology in the classroom is on the rise. I was intrigued with all of this as I have wanted to relocate back to Arizona for years.

I am seeking a mathematics teaching position at the high school level. I have a Bachelor's degree in mathematics, a Master's degree in education and I have completed the course "Teaching and Learning at the Community College" through Rio Salado. I still have contacts in Arizona from when I student taught in the Mesa School District and I was informed that I was qualified to teach dual enrollment courses at the high school – because of my degree in mathematics – but that I needed to complete the Rio Salado course, which I did, in January 2013.

I was in the second grade when I made the decision to be a teacher and I have never strayed off that path. The passion that I had then has only grown in the eight years that I have been teaching. I began my career teaching seventh grade general mathematics at Stapley Junior High School in Mesa, Arizona. I then relocated to Wisconsin. For the past seven years I have been teaching at Central High School, District of Westosha; my alma mater. I have taught Algebra, Informal Geometry, Geometry, Algebra 2, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus and Intro to Calculus.

During my tenure at Central, I have written curriculum, aligned to the Common Core Standards, for Intro to Calculus, and amended it when the course became Pre-Calculus. I have also written an articulation agreement with Gateway Technical College for Pre-Calculus; and now my students receive credit for taking the course "College Algebra with Trigonometry" while in high school.

I have collaborated with my fellow math colleagues and have written curriculum – aligned to the CCSS-M – and common assessments for Informal Geometry, Algebra 2, and Trigonometry. Currently, our entire math department is working with Sue Hanson-Otis, a math specialist who is coaching us in the Standards for Mathematical Practices (as defined in the Common Core Standards).

I have served on two committees while at Central High School, one for grading, and the other for technology. I have been a member of the grading team for three years. During the 2010 – 2011 school year, the grading committee researched standards-based grading and developed an implementation plan that was put into effect at the beginning of the 2011 – 2012 school year. Central High School's grading practices follow these guidelines:

- Grades are based on and organized by learning targets

- Performance standards are used to determine grades
- Each course reports two grades: an academic achievement grade and a life skills grade
- The academic achievement grade is derived from a variety of summative assessments aligned to the learning targets of a course
- Within the grading period, if more current assessment data demonstrates greater achievement of a previously scored learning target, the previous score may be exempted

Central's grading philosophy is as follows:

The purpose for grading is to engage teachers and students in the process of assessing progress toward the acquisition of targeted knowledge and skills in order to inform future learning and instruction. The purpose for final course grades is to communicate to students, parents, teachers and other users of this data, the level of competency a student has achieved as related to the knowledge and skills (learning targets) expected within a course.

The academic achievement grade reflects this "level of competency." Grades for homework completion are not factored into this grade. The academic achievement grade is based solely on summative assessments. Homework and other "effort" grades are evaluated and reported as a life skills grade. We decided to go this route based on our research indicated that "effort" grades could falsely send an incorrect message about student achievement. (For some students, "effort" artificially inflated their grades; for others, the grade reported suppressed the student's true understanding of the material.) This coincides with the 21st Century Skills student outcome of life and career skills.

This brings me to the technology committee on which I have served on since the end of 2011 – 2012 school year. The technology team was formed to address another student outcome of the 21st Century Skills – information, media, and technology skills. Central High School began a "one to one" program, starting with the 2012 freshman class. This year, all incoming freshman were expected to have a laptop, netbook, or tablet equipped with an external keyboard. (Daily check-out of devices, as well as, lease agreements, are also available.) The goal of Central's 1:1 program is to incorporate technology into the curriculum to engage students in 21st century learning. This program will go school wide beginning in the fall.

I have received training in Moodle and Google docs. I have my own website – as our Moodle sites are organized by course – which my students can access: www.schultzjen.weebly.com. For each course I teach, students can download notes packets, lesson guides, and access links and other helpful documents (most that I have created) to assist them with the subject matter.

In addition to Moodle and Google docs, I use my Smart Board in every one of my classes every day. It's an extremely valuable tool when demonstrating the use Texas Instruments graphing calculators. I have the TI-Smartview Emulator software and I can project an interactive representation of the calculator's display for the entire class. Furthermore, all of my course notes are electronic and I use Smart Notebook to organize all of my lessons in the GANAG format.

Jane E. Pollock's GANAG – aka "Teaching Schema for Master Learners" – is an adaptation of Madeline Hunter's lesson planning, Barak Rosenshine's six teaching steps in direct instruction, and the works of J. F. Herbart. According to Pollock, "A teacher using the Teaching Schema for Master Learners designs

lessons deliberately so as to prepare students for learning, help them connect new information to prior information, and cement those ideas or skills.” The GANAG format allows for this. The acronym represents the parts of the lesson design:

- Goal – Set the learning objective(s)
- Access Prior Knowledge
- New Information – declarative and procedural
- Application – Apply thinking skills and/or a real-world situation
- Goal – Generalize or summarize back to the objective

Students are expected to assess themselves at the beginning, as well as at the end of each lesson as part of the “Goal” stage. Feedback is an essential element of this lesson format and it’s huge with regards to Central’s grading policy concerning formative assessments. I have my students fill out, what I call, “GAG sheets” for each lesson. It’s here that they write down the goal, assess themselves, complete an accessing prior knowledge activity, and an application and/or exit problem. They submit them at the end of each class period, that way I am able to assess their understanding of the lesson and provide feedback.

As I mentioned previously, I am very familiar with the Common Core Standards as I have read through them many times in preparing curriculum, course materials, and assessments. I have also taken the opportunity to review Arizona’s Department of Education’s website and I observed that Arizona has an additional domain: Discrete Mathematics. I also noticed that Arizona students will be tested via the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) instead of by means of the Smarted Balanced Assessment. I have taken a look at some PARCC sample test items and I am impressed with what is currently available for educators. Besides, I pride myself on being prepared. I’m doing my homework now so that I’m ready when the 2013 – 2014 school begins in Valley schools this August. (If there’s anything else I should study up on, please let me know.)

Thank you for taking the opportunity to read this letter of interest. I have attached all application materials, including four letters of recommendation. If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me; I will be more than happy to provide you with it. I would appreciate the opportunity to interview for any high school math teaching positions in your district. I am available for phone interviews. I am willing to make the trip out to Arizona during my Spring Break which begins March 29th and continues through April 8th, should you want to meet me in person. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Schultz