



## HOPKINTON HIGH SCHOOL

90 HAYDEN ROWE STREET, HOPKINTON, MA 01748

EVAN BISHOP, M.ED.  
PRINCIPAL

JUSTIN POMINVILLE, M.ED.  
LAURA THEIS, M.ED.  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

TELEPHONE (508) 497-9820  
FAX (508) 497-9829

Recommendation for Dr. Karen Zaleski

12/12/22

I have had the pleasure of working alongside Karen Zaleski for the past seven years. During this time, she has distinguished herself as a consummate professional and a caring person who puts what is best for students at the heart of her many decisions. As the Director of Student Services, Karen is extremely forward thinking, yet grounded. She is not afraid to make tough decisions or have difficult conversations, and she works very well with others. Her dedication and integrity are constantly on display. More importantly, Karen can be relied upon in a tight situation, and has a strong moral compass that steers her in the right direction. She is very well respected by our staff and community and would be greatly missed at Hopkinton.

Karen is a self-starter who takes a great deal of pride in her work. This shows in a variety of situations including budget negotiations, professional development planning, staff evaluations, and developing school improvement goals, just to name a few. To say Karen is 'involved' in the life of our district would be an understatement. She is a major contributor and is truly one of those special individuals that the school counts on for her strong leadership and great attitude.

Karen treats all students with respect and kindness, even in the most difficult situations. She sees beyond the moment to reflect what is best for the child and works with staff members to meet each student's needs. Karen is willing to make difficult decisions that benefit kids and stands behind those decisions, even in the face of adversity and conflict. I have seen firsthand Karen manage difficult situations with students, staff members and families. She is always professional, respectful and does what is best for all involved, even if it's not the most popular decision.

The most impressive quality about Karen, and why I feel she is an exemplary administrator, is her ability to build relationships with students, staff and parents. Karen is also an exceptional public speaker regardless of her audience. Another one of her true strengths is her ability to support the growth of others. She works tirelessly to improve those around her. Karen is patient, kind, and thoughtful, yet direct when things need to get accomplished. Without a doubt, Karen has the right demeanor and temperament to be a successful administrator at any district that is fortunate enough to hire her.

Overall, Karen is the type of person who is not afraid to ask for advice or help. As a result, she has grown into an experienced supervisor with a firm grasp of the budget process, student social/emotional needs, as well as current educational practices. Karen is well liked and respected by



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staff, parents and students alike. She is genuinely interested in the needs of those around her and is more than fair in her judgments. Based on my 15 years experience in public education, with the last 7 working in administration, Karen has all the qualities one would look for in an administrator.

I highly recommend Karen Zaleski. If you wish to speak further, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Evan Bishop  
Principal



# Hopkinton Public Schools

89 Hayden Rowe Street Hopkinton, MA. 01748

Dr. Carol Cavanaugh  
Superintendent

Telephone: 508-417-9360  
Fax: 508-497-9833

December 22 , 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Dr. Karen Zaleski, the woman whose candidacy this letter endorses, stands out to me as highly educated, exceedingly effective in her leadership, and personally gracious. With a doctorate in educational leadership and experience at the building and central office levels, Karen has prepared herself well for the highest levels of school leadership. Accordingly, I recommend her to you without reservation.

As the Superintendent and former Assistant Superintendent in the Hopkinton Public Schools, I have grown to know and admire Karen's work, which is not limited simply to the traditional role of Director of Student Services. Although she is indeed responsible first for district-wide special education programming, Dr. Zaleski also serves on our Leadership Design Team, meaning she plays a key role in Hopkinton's curriculum development. Karen's participation on the team has resulted in co-taught classrooms in which teachers have been trained in the delivery of specially designed instruction using a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Special education students' MCAS SGP scores and overall achievement have soared. In fact, in some cases, Hopkinton's special education students' SGP scores have been higher than those of the general education population. While Karen oversees and evaluates all of our special educators, team chairs, and related service providers, more importantly, she ensures the effective progress of 500+ students. If you seek a leader who can garner the momentum for change, Dr. Zaleski will serve you well. In fact, her most recent Tiered Focused Monitoring Review through Massachusetts DESE came perfect--not a single finding!

Accordingly, Karen has made outstanding achievements in Hopkinton. She has brought in grant monies totaling roughly \$1.5 million dollars in just two years' time. She contracts with numerous vendors across the state, partners with our collaboratives, and has built in-district programs. She has analyzed special education curriculum and instruction PreK-12 and created a resource binder indicating what is available at each grade level as well as the deficits those resources are designed to target. She has trained educators in Orton Gillingham and Wilson, such that the District now has a cadre of educators who can address the needs of students diagnosed with dyslexia. And, when our district adopted "adjustment to practice" as a goal, Karen's staff—teachers, pathologists, therapists, related service providers and chairs—all had their work cut out for them, as did Karen. She devised a template by which staff would examine struggling students' data, design interventions, and record the gains, plateaus, or declines made by the students.

Here in Hopkinton, Karen manages a budget in excess of twelve million dollars. In special education, so much of the work one does demands using district, state, and federal monies wisely. Through the employment of educational consultants, programming has grown. Via grant monies, Karen has also accumulated resources. In terms of her regular budget, Karen has illustrated a fiscally responsible approach through a paraprofessional fading initiative, which resulted in students becoming more independent learners. Budgeting is clearly an area of strength for Dr. Zaleski, and her budgets are built with a student-centered focus.

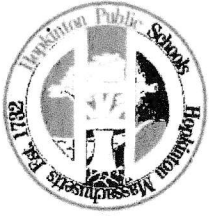
In regard to professional relationships, Karen has worked closely with the Hopkinton School Resource Officer, the Public Health Director, the Director of Hopkinton Youth and Family Services, the local pediatrician, and others. Through her work in the community she has developed external partnerships to support substance abuse prevention and intervention for the Town of Hopkinton. Beyond these folks, Karen is an integral part of the HPS District Leadership Team, the Central Office Team, and the Learning Design Team. Her relationships with all of these people are positive and productive; to a one, people would say they enjoy working with Dr. Zaleski. I point this out because, as anyone knows, it is critical for the leaders of any district to foster mutual respect with all parties, those within the school setting and those in the community.

In closing, I would encourage you to examine closely the depth of Karen's resume. As you can see, I wholly endorse Dr. Zaleski's candidacy. Should you require additional information, you can contact me in the Hopkinton Public Schools at 508-417-9360 or by cell at 774-275-8001.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Ann Cavanaugh".

Carol Ann Cavanaugh, PhD  
Superintendent Hopkinton Public Schools



## Hopkinton Public Schools

89 Hayden Rowe Street Hopkinton, MA 01748

Susan Rothermich, CPA, MCPPO  
Director of Finance & Operations  
srothermich@Hopkinton.K12.ma.us

Telephone: 508-417-9360  
Fax: 508-497-9833

To Whom It May Concern,

I am very pleased to write this letter on behalf of Dr. Karen Zaleski. Karen always exemplifies professionalism, expertise, leadership skills, and vision. She works tirelessly to ensure student success with a unique understanding of learning styles and social emotional issues. Karen has earned the trust and confidence of administrators, faculty, staff, students and the community of Hopkinton.

Hopkinton Public Schools is a district that demands high academic performance for all students. Karen works tirelessly to ensure all students have access to the curriculum with an eye toward their unique learning styles and struggles. Her communication with all stakeholders calls for a collaborative process that gains momentum and excitement. Her critical thinking and presentation skills are impressive. All decisions are data driven, with student outcomes the focus of the process for continuous improvement. Karen proactively promotes a long term vision to create programming that will allow student success and keep students within their home school environment.

Special education costs are a tremendous driver within a district budget. Karen has demonstrated the ability to manage a multi-million dollar budget, explore and write grants to support district initiatives and provide cost effective solutions when handling legal disputes. The ability to handle unforeseen costs and find creative solutions allows the district to continue to move forward to serve all learners.

Karen maintains the highest standards within her profession and is a valuable resource. Karen uses her background as a therapist to listen and understand all the issues. Her understanding of social emotional issues from a medical standpoint provides a lens beyond a standard academic approach. Many discussions also can be highly charged, both politically and emotionally. Karen's calm approach can quickly diffuse these situations and bring everyone together with the focus on student outcomes.

I have the highest regard for Karen's ability to move any district forward. Her management ability, fiscal prowess, vision and sincere concern for student growth is a valuable asset. More importantly, I am proud to call Karen my friend. I give her my highest recommendation and am confident in her ability to bring success to any district.

Regards,

Susan Rothermich  
Director of Finance & Operations