

Charleston > excellence is our standard
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

February 4, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been teaching high school social studies for over seventeen years, and I have taught AP United States Government and Politics for the past fourteen years. During my tenure, I have been named the runner-up teacher of the year for the Charleston County School District, coached several academic state champion teams, designed and implemented an AP Academy, serve as the lead AP teacher for Wando High School, and advise our school's human trafficking student task force.

Eva Chillura has been a student in my AP US Government and Politics class for the past six months, but I have known this student for the past two years. I first met Eva when she was selected to be on our student leadership board for AP Academy. This is a competitive process, and we only select three to four students per grade to serve in the leadership position. Eva was one of the unique students who earned the recognition as a sophomore, and throughout the application and interview stage she demonstrated poise and maturity. Those traits have helped her play an integral role in starting a student mentorship program.

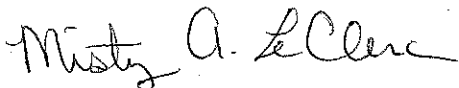
Her maturity also influences her writing for our school newspaper, *The Tribal Tribune*. Last year, I was working to start a human trafficking task force with some local community members, and Eva attended one of our after school lectures given by a human trafficking survivor. She was there to search for a possible story. The lecture turned into interviews with the survivor, individuals working for nonprofit groups, and officials appointed by our state's attorney general. The result was an article published in our school's newspaper that finally encouraged people to talk about a problem everyone chooses to ignore in our suburban community. Her writing was so informative that those very same community members have used her article as the conduit to start conversations with others in our school district and around the community.

Eva's writing has always proven to be insightful and her stories focus on issues impacting our student body. At times, these issues may not be comfortable for our administration, but they are important conversations that need to be started. For instance, we have a thriving Advanced Placement program at our school, but it is a program that lacks diversity. Asking difficult questions and forcing our school to re-evaluate our culture, Eva told the story of two Wando High Schools divided by color. Recently, she tackled our school's mascot, and if the use of a warrior image is culturally insensitive. Eva has the ability to bring up controversial issues without alienating anyone.

I have also been impressed with Eva's integrity as a student journalist. After her story on human trafficking, her curiosity about the issue continued to grow and lead her to the sole leadership role for our student task force. However she refuses to use her position as co-editor-in-chief of the paper to advance our agenda. Sitting in a two hour meeting with our community partners someone suggested we use the school newspaper to raise the profile of our task force. Eva was quick to extend a promise of sharing our next event with the editorial board, but also make it known stories for our paper our voted on by the students on the board, and she would not dictate the story they would cover. She would make the pitch, but ultimately it was up to a democratic vote. She really impressed me with her strong ethics and standing up to a table full of adults who wanted easy acquiescence.

I highly recommend Eva Chillura for SC's Journalist of the Year for 2020. Her contributions as a student journalist for our school have positively impacted Wando High School. She has raised the profile of issues ranging from safety to inclusiveness, and she has become someone who leads by example. When she uncovers an issue, she finds a way to become involved.

Sincerely,



Misty A. LeClerc
AP Government and Politics