



April 15, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of MS. ERINNI BINIKOS who is applying for a teaching position in your school district.

It was my pleasure having Ms. Binikos in SPED 314: Curriculum & Instruction for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities, fall 2018. She actively participated in class weekly and collaborated with her peers on numerous projects. Based on various activities that were completed in the class, several topics stood out that she found important in pursuing her goal of working with individuals with disabilities. While learning and experiencing through field work, Ms. Binikos became knowledgeable about concepts that she was able to put into practice. Choice and decision making, embedded skills, and creating a task analysis allowed her to see the benefits of writing each step out and then progress monitor while utilizing the least to most intrusive prompts. Through collaborative networking with peers, her class was responsible for creating an interactive booth for Olympic Town during Special Olympics, which was open to the entire ESU community through volunteering. While creating, presenting an elevator speech about the chosen booth activity, and facilitating the activities for the athletes, each of these areas enhanced her leadership, organizational and management skills.

Through collaborative discussion with Ms. Binikos, the following strengths were identified. They include: outstanding preparation and organizational skills, coordinating tasks, planning and arranging activities, setting goals, and meeting deadlines. In addition to solid organizational skills, she also exhibits strong communication abilities: openly expressing ideas and writing clearly and concisely, speaking effectively and listening attentively and providing well-thought out solutions. Interpersonal skills observed are: participation in cooperative networking, supportive of colleagues and an optimistic attitude. She is extremely respectful, professional, and an individual of integrity. Additional attributes are implementing fun, hands-on opportunities for her students to express themselves creatively and a desire to keep current on educational practices through professional development. With discussion, the areas of weaknesses acknowledged were identifying a common ground of respect and having fun with students while enforcing behavioral management strategies. The second area is learning to balance her passion for professional success and making time for personal life. Ms. Binikos has so much desire to be successful with her students and professional aspirations, she will sometimes overlook her own individual happiness. With each success and educational experience, these areas will become more manageable.

On campus activities at ESU included Student Senate, Council for Exceptional Children where Ms. Binikos volunteered at Family Fun Day and Open House on campus to promote the Special Education/Rehabilitation Department. Being a member of the University Honors Program since her sophomore year, all requirements were completed including taking three courses at an honors level, five hours of volunteering each semester, and creating an in-depth honors thesis with an advisor in the Special Education Department about behavior strategies in early intervention. This thesis was presented at the Honors Symposium. During her senior year, Ms. Binikos joined Sigma Pi Epsilon Delta, Special Education Honor Society for individuals "who have demonstrated excellence in academic work, initiative, and a potential for leadership in serving children and adults with disabilities", esu.edu. Taking on the role of Historian during the last semester allowed additional skills in flexibility and leadership. And finally, during her Primary II semester at ESU, she worked with colleagues to create a school-wide event at Donegan Elementary School, Bethlehem School District, for an Advocacy Project. The event was called, "Zen the Night". The students focused on learning mindfulness and stress relieving activities including, but not limited to, making stress bottles, coloring Zentangles, dancing in Zumba, taking pictures at a photo book, doing yoga, and petting therapy dogs. This opportunity was an extremely rewarding experience and Ms. Binikos learned essential skills in creating a school-wide event and collaborating with school personnel.

Because of her outstanding commitment to service and individuals with disabilities, I am confident Ms. Binikos would be an outstanding addition to your school district and highly recommend her without reservation.

Together in education,

Wendy Smith, 610.248.4593

Former Adjunct Professor, ESU, Special Education & Rehabilitation Department