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# ARGENTA SAGE

## BE MORE EMPOWERED

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April 6, 2010

TO: Whom It May Concern  
FROM: Steve Larsgaard

SUBJECT: Letter of Reference, **James Rickley**

*I met Jim Rickley in the summer of 2004 when he was hired as Lander County School District's assistant superintendent. I had been appointed superintendent earlier in the year. I found Mr. Rickley to be innovative and thorough in the completion of the variety of tasks placed before him. His compilation and interpretation of district student achievement data became the cornerstone of the district's school improvement initiative—a directive placed on my desk by our school board.*

*I retired in the summer of 2006 and have continued my association with Mr. Rickley. I have been in regular contact with Mr. Rickley and have spent many hours in the last four years discussing trends in educational research with a primary focus on educational improvement and the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act and it's Nevada Law step sister. Mr. Rickley is well versed in with these laws. His contributions have undoubtedly helped Lander County School District to achieve "AYP" status at every school in the district over the last six years. Clearly, parents, students, teachers, and building principals have had their part to play in this noteworthy accomplishment but it is important to also recognize the role played by Mr. Rickley.*

*It is unfortunate that the Lander County School Board has been faced with several years of budget shortfalls that have now led to cutting vital staff positions. Undoubtedly, in the years to come the Board will come realize the key function the assistant superintended played in the District's administrative operations and student achievement.*

*Clearly, Mr. Rickley's service will be missed and his experience will serve him well in his next educational role. I believe his time in Lander County makes him a top candidate for any school administrative position he should seek and perhaps no more so than for the position of superintendent. Lander County relatively small size has given Mr. Rickley the chance to gain insight into all the components of central office school administration from finances to personnel to educational policy to student achievement.*

*I would invite you to refer to past letters of reference I have written for additional information about Mr. Rickley. Should you have any specific questions don't hesitate to contact me.*

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STEVE LARSGAARD, EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT  
680 S SCOTT, BATTLE MOUNTAIN, NEVADA 89820  
775-635-5294, LARSGAARD@AOL.COM

# ARGENTA SAGE

## BE MORE EMPOWERED

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February 27, 2007

TO: Whom It May Concern  
FROM: Steve Larsgaard  
SUBJECT: Letter of Reference, **James Rickley**

I have had the pleasure of associating with Mr. Rickley for the past several years, initially as Superintendent for Lander County School District and more recently as an Educational Consultant and friend. As a consultant, I have conferred with Mr. Rickley while analyzing student achievement data. Jim has also been an excellent resource when we have discussed educational trends and research. Jim is a valued resource because of his a broad range of experience. He has worked as a music teacher, a principal, and most recently as an assistant superintendent responsible for state mandated testing, student data analysis, and curriculum / program development. Mr. Rickley and I spent quite a bit of time together developing a standards-based report card. I hope a day will come when he is able to implement this concept. Jim's data analysis was most instrumental in aiding each of Lander's schools develop comprehensive school improvement plans. In the last few years Lander's schools have been identified as "exemplary" and "high achieving". Jim will be the first to say that the students, teachers, and principals were the reasons behind this recognition. On the other hand without pertinent information it is difficult to navigate the rocky road to better schools. Needless to say this data also played an important role in Lander's successful awards of various federal / state grants.

Mr. Rickley is also blessed with excellent computer skills. In fact these skills have enabled him to be very efficient. Jim performs at a high level and always puts in more than a full day of work. His productivity is second to none. Furthermore I have found Jim to have a passion for doing all that can be done for the betterment of the students he serves. Lastly, I believe Jim is a person of high integrity.

Upon my retirement as superintendent I provided Mr. Rickley with a letter of recommendation that provides more detail about his contributions to Lander County School District. Hopefully he will include this earlier letter of reference in his application packet. I recommend Mr. Rickley without reservation. Should you have any specific questions of me, don't hesitate to contact me.

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## LANDER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Steve Larsgaard  
Superintendent  
James F. Rickley  
Assistant Superintendent

January 20, 2006

TO: Whom it may concern  
FROM: Steve Larsgaard  
SUBJECT: Letter of Reference for **Jim Rickley**

Mr. Rickley has been employed by Lander County School District as Assistant Superintendent since July, 2004. Jim's work ethic, job attendance, and punctuality are excellent. I do not recall a circumstance when he missed work, been late to work or failed to complete job duties.

Jim has paid careful attention to the many details of his job. He has oversight of administering all of the school district's tests as mandated by Nevada Law. As a consequence the district's test security, test data, and test administration reflect the highest standards. Mr. Rickley has also played a key role in collating student information over the last several years. He, probably more so than anyone in the district, has an intimate understanding of the academic performance trends of most of the students in district. The compilation of this information served as the cornerstone of individual school improvement plans throughout the district. It would be easy to underestimate or understate the energy and time this task took to complete. Clearly, Mr. Rickley's diligence to this task will reap benefits for years to come and the data was key in the development of individual school improvement plans.

Mr. Rickley continues to seek training in curriculum development and instructional technique. He has expressed his belief that all students deserve an opportunity to thrive and learn as a result of working with teachers who have their best interest at heart. Teachers are to meet the needs of students and are to use instructional techniques best for students not most convenient for teachers. To this end he consistently shares information about differentiated instruction with staff. He is an avid reader of educational research and does his utmost to stay current on educational research and topics. He routinely shares this information with staff.

Mr. Rickley is a deep thinker with a strong desire to help all students and staff become accomplished. Jim clearly has the intellectual capacity and desire to become an able superintendent. Should you have any specific questions about Mr. Rickley's performance don't hesitate to contact me.

# LANDER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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**April 12, 2010**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

**Reference: Recommendation for Jim Rickley**

It is with a great deal of confidence, that I recommend Jim Rickley to fill a leadership position at your institution. As Superintendent, I have supervised Mr. Rickley from the fall of 2006 until the present time while he served as assistant superintendent. He has been employed as assistant superintendent since July 2004. His excellent work ethic, punctuality and attendance are very positive attributes that indicate how effective he is at his job.

Mr. Rickley's primary functions include district test director, school improvement coordinator, data collection and distribution, PowerSchool oversight, implementing technological applications for the District and classroom, and curriculum development facilitator. As a member of our leadership team, he has been involved in planning and conducting staff training and professional development. He has also provided valuable service in managing the school district's webpage. In each of these assigned areas, Mr. Rickley has proven himself to be competent, and accessible.

Training, attention to detail, and follow-up, are the key components that Mr. Rickley has blended into a very successful testing program. He has established an infrastructure that has all but eliminated testing irregularities and mistakes. In addition, he has provided the enthusiasm and motivation that our staff needed to approach testing and test preparation in a positive light.

Mr. Rickley is superb at analyzing student data and compiling it into information that may be used in the learning environment. He is excellent at presenting the information in such a way that it is easily understood. He is very capable of assisting instructional staff to understand and use student data in the teaching process. He has been instrumental in developing and implementing District and site school improvement plans. Under his tutelage, our schools have very effective improvement plans and are applying the goals and objectives so that our students will have the opportunity to achieve as required by State and Federal regulations and standards.

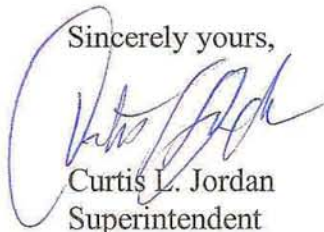
Mr. Rickley is the most knowledgeable and skilled computer operator that I have had the privilege of working with in my 41 years in education. He has an excellent understanding of software applications and how technology may be applied in an educational setting. Furthermore, he has the ability to explain and demonstrate how to

apply programs to meet the needs of teachers, students, and support staff. He has been instrumental in developing and implementing our PowerSchool Program, our accountability program, and our alternative testing program (MAP).

As District curriculum facilitator, Mr. Rickley is very good at assisting the staff in implementing standards. He works well with teachers and principals to provide training in classroom and lesson methodology to increase student achievement and improve the learning environment.

In closing, let me again recommend Jim Rickley for a position at your institution. I believe this individual will add a dimension of expertise, efficiency and cooperation to your overall program. If you desire more information or have questions, please feel free to call me at (775) 635-2886.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Curtis L. Jordan", is written over the typed name and title.

Curtis L. Jordan  
Superintendent



*Lander County*  
*Executive Director*  
*Gene Etcheverry*

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April 6, 2010

Mr. James F. Rickley  
106 Cove Avenue  
Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased and honored to provide this letter of recommendation for Mr. James F. Rickley.

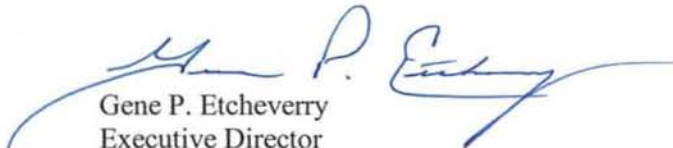
Jim became known to me shortly after he assumed the Principal position for the Lund School in White Pine County School District. The phenomenal accomplishments of Mr. Rickley in elevating the Lund School to a position of prominence among the highest achieving schools in the State of Nevada were widely recognized. Mr. Rickley, while building a standard of excellence in educational programs for the Lund School, also provided oversight of a major construction project culminating in a new school facility for the Lund community. Jim should be credited with not only making the Lund School a reality, but making the project a success.

I currently enjoy the fortunate circumstance of working with Jim on many county-wide and community-specific issues in his position as Assistant Superintendent of the Lander County School District. Jim is both a respected colleague and a close personal friend. Jim exhibits the highest levels of dedication and professionalism that are a credit to the Lander County School District. Lander County, the Lander County Board of Commissioners and I, as the Executive Director of Lander County, appreciate working with Jim Rickley and hold him in high professional regard. Jim is known for his forthright, yet compassionate approach and demonstrates the highest levels of credibility and professionalism.

In closing, please accept this recommendation for James F. Rickley as a personal and professional attestation to a colleague and his credentials. I am honored and privileged to provide this testimonial for a respected colleague and friend.

Please contact me (775) 635-2885 or, by e-mail, at [getcheverry@landercountynv.org](mailto:getcheverry@landercountynv.org) if I can provide any further information or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

  
Gene P. Etcheverry  
Executive Director  
Lander County



To Whom It May Concern:

I have been asked to write this letter for Mr. James Rickley. I have worked with Mr. Rickley for the past year as a colleague in the Lander County School District. As a new principal, he has been extremely supportive and helpful. He is a good listener and also has a solid perspective on the big picture in our school district.

Mr. Rickley is a meticulous planner and carries out his tasks in the areas of testing and data collection and reporting in said fashion. He is thorough in each step and dots all the "i's" and crosses all the "t's". You can be certain that there will be no violations or discrepancies in any of these areas. He takes his responsibilities very seriously and expects the same from those of us also responsible in these areas in our buildings.

One of his major strengths is in the area of computer technology. He manages our Power School programs and is invaluable in the day-to-day operations of our data management system. He has helped to troubleshoot problems and design the fixes to keep us up and running. He is creative in the use of technology to help steam-line our systems and to keep us up-to-date in our rural community.

Lastly, he is very knowledgeable in the arena of federal programs, changes, and the politics of district management. He participates extensively on state education committees and is always abreast of the latest updates and how they will impact our students in the classrooms, both at the state and federal levels. He reads extensively and passes the pertinent information to us in a manner we can utilize at the building level. He is clearly a master in the area of standards and how to assess them at the classroom level in ways that are user-friendly and formative in nature.

Our district is going through budget shortfalls as are many others and if we were to lose Mr. Rickley, we would have many areas to fill in his absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.



*Susan Baldwin*  
Susan Baldwin, Principal

Battle Mountain High School

# BATTLE MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

425 Weaver Avenue  
Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820  
775-635-5436

April 6, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of recommendation for James F. Rickley. I have known him for nearly six years during his tenure as Assistant Superintendent of Lander County School District.

Mr. Rickley's ability to move fluidly between leadership and support roles for the district and school improvement committees made him an integral component of our success as the only district in Nevada along the I-80 corridor in which all schools consistently make AYP. In addition his skills in gathering, organizing, analyzing and interpreting data enabled us to stay focused and develop goals that actually fit the needs of our schools. The depth and breadth of his knowledge in the field of education along with his knowledge of past and current trends in the field provided context and clarification as committees struggled with school and district improvement plans. At one district improvement meeting, the massive amount of data was overwhelming. When I asked for specific information to be extracted and presented, he did so on the spot, making the data meaningful and useful.


Several years ago one of the principals requested an analysis of the school's longitudinal data. Mr. Rickley conducted that analysis and provided the principal with 10 math standards to target for improvement. Using that information, the principal designed and implemented a remediation program that addressed those standards and the result was a huge increase in CRT scores and the designation of that school as Exemplary.

I worked with Mr. Rickley annually in his capacity as the district's Test Director. His meticulous attention to detail made testing less stressful. The principals, teachers and I could trust that everything he gave us was accurate. If anyone had a question or encountered a problem, he was our "go-to" expert. He also responded to us promptly and patiently, no matter how often he was asked the same questions by different people.

Mr. Rickley has also served as an internal consultant to our staff. He was my resource when I had legal or strategic concerns. He was invaluable to our teachers both individually and in their professional learning teams. His responses to us were always timely and courteous. He listened carefully to staff, fixed the problems he could immediately, and, if there was nothing he could do about situation, explained why things could not be changed. Our staff trusts him to be an honest and accurate resource. His enthusiastic communication with staff was never interpreted as patronizing and his extensive knowledge enabled good staff ideas to become reality.

In summary, Mr. Rickley's vision, expertise, leadership ability, integrity and communication skills are outstanding. His commitment to students and the quality of their education is primary. Whatever he is tasked will be completed quickly and to the very highest standards as reflected in the fact that the Nevada State Department of Education has drafted him to serve on a number of committees because of his expertise including Race to the Top funding study committees, the Common Core Standards Alignment Committee, and the NCLB Nevada Curriculum Alignment Tool (NCAT) for schools in need of improvement committee. If you have questions or need further information, please contact me at 775-635-5436 ext. 216.

Sincerely,



Nancy Pickett, M.Ed., NBCC  
Schools to Careers Counselor  
Battle Mountain High School  
425 Weaver Avenue  
Battle Mountain, NV 89820



# BATTLE MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

425 Weaver Avenue  
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775-635-5436

William S. Cox  
Teacher  
Battle Mountain High School  
Battle Mountain, NV 89820

Tuesday, April 06, 2010

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for James Rickley. Jim worked with me at Lander County School District for seven years as Assistant Superintendent and as my direct supervisor when I taught at Austin Schools in Austin, Nevada. I consider him a mentor and colleague.

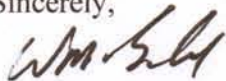
Jim is keenly devoted to his work, but being a real people person, he is also enjoyable to be around. Not only myself, but also the entire staff at Austin Schools, looked forward to Mr. Rickley spending the afternoon with us, if for no other reason, than the outstanding lunches he provided for our staff. In addition, Jim provided the Austin staff and the Battle Mountain High School Improvement Team with help understanding testing data and is a positive representative of the district administration.

James also provided valuable assistance to me as I began to pursue a doctorate degree. He always made time to talk with me and he was patient with me, as he had to more than once to explain the nuances of NCLB to me. Jim has encouraged me to higher aspirations and regardless of his busy schedule, has always made himself available to me.

I will personally miss James and his presence in Lander County School District. His service will be extremely difficult to replace along with his ability to relate data to teachers in a way that is practical.

In closing, let me say I have no hesitation in recommending James Rickley for any position pertaining education. I feel confident he would be an asset to whomever he serves.

Sincerely,



William S. Cox  
wcox@lander.k12.nv.us