

Positive Comments About Richard Freeman-Toole

March 8, 2007

Dear CRSD School Board Members, and members of the CRSD Administration:

We recently learned that the Board of Education and administrators have received negative comments about the performance of Richard Freeman-Toole as music teacher and music program director, and may not retain his services as a teacher.

This is not surprising, as Dr. Freeman-Toole suffers from Asberger's Syndrome, which affects the way that he deals with parents and other community members in a social setting. If you tell him "thanks" for a great student concert, and there have been many, you may be ignored. But he hears you, so keep right on doing it.

What is astounding is that the board and administrators at our schools would in any way confuse social skill with classroom methods and results. Richard Freeman-Toole has a deep respect for students and is an incredible teacher. Witness the widening participation of students in the younger classes, among Native students and other students who have not been involved in extra-curricular activities who are now finding music.

Freeman-Toole is both willing and able to continually work on his classroom skills. He has an amazing knowledge of music, history, literature which he is able to communicate to students and community members. Witness the many groups in and out of the schools that have formed around his teaching. Witness the care he has taken as a "homeroom advisor" to know everything about the students he is responsible for.

He is a kind man, and deeply respectful of other people, especially students. The classroom and the stage are his life.

For students who may have expected that music was no big deal, or an easy class, something requiring not much effort on their part, Freeman-Toole may be a difficult personality. He is building a program in which students expect to work, to listen, to excel. A student totally consumed with an athletic sport may not have time to also excel in music. The students coming up

understand this, though the upper classmen may not.

But another side of that "problem" is that Freeman-Toole has brought kids into music that had no connection with music or anything else. He's helped students who were dropping through the cracks, and given them something to stand up straight and respect themselves about. Didn't we pledge a few years ago to be "student centered" in all respects?

Our daughter is not even in a music class, and has never had a chance to be part of organized music instruction in all her school years. This year, Freeman-Toole learned that she played "bluegrass" bass fiddle and taught her how to read bass fiddle music. He brought her into performances and gave her last year of high school an entirely different dimension. I venture to say it will affect her whole life to have had these good experiences.

Now my daughter and all our family participates in the community choir, which is the best two hours of my week. My sheet music is covered with notes I've jotted down from F-T's instruction--windows on music and music history I have never had before. And I truly believe he does this at every level he teaches.

Are we looking for the perfectly social and amenable music teacher? We've hardly ever been able to find ANY music teacher for the district who could succeed at the incredibly difficult task of conducting programs in all the schools.

Freeman-Toole is a real teacher worth keeping, and he would stay with us for many years and build a fine program for our children. He's already started. Please let him continue.

I hope you hear from others with positive things to say.

Sincerely,
Mary and Jim Odden
Parents and CV community members

From:

Mary Odden <mail@copperriverrecord.com>

Sent: Tue Mar 20 14:46

To:

jelliott@crsd.k12.ak.us, Michael Johnson <mjohn ...

Priority: Normal

Subject:

Dr. Freeman-Toole retention

Type: Embedded HTML/Text

March 20, 2007

Dear Dr. Elliott--

I have sent emails your way this week and they bounced---because I mistakenly forgot the last "t" in your name! So I trust this one will make it through cyber space.

You will probably know by now that many people in the community were surprised to learn that Dr. Richard Freeman-Toole might not be retained. I have been talking to students, teachers, parents, community members who are grateful to R F-T for his instruction and his willingness to bring school and community together in many venues. And we have been writing about the concerts and music programs in the paper without a thought (until a Christmas-time conversation with MJ) that they would come to an end.

I've tried to contact as many of those appreciative people as I can, so that they can talk with you about the importance of retaining R F-T. I've probably spread your wrong email address, too--but hopefully some of those letters of support will get through.

There is an ambient negativity which often prevails in this area, and I don't think we are unique as far as small communities go. You will tend to hear from the people who have a complaint before you hear from the people who are satisfied, even thrilled, with the way things are going.

As you evaluate Dr. Freeman-Toole's tenure, my family would like you to consider that the job any CRSD music instructor has lately been asked to perform is a very demanding one--more like asking one basketball coach to serve all the needs of all the schools than asking one math teacher or another instructor of a discipline whose venue is strictly classroom.

And in spite of what many people would (and have) considered the impossibility of the job of creating music programs (not just classrooms) in several schools, R F-T, a relatively new teacher, has not only succeeded, but the programs are growing and have become much more inclusive of the Native community and students who did not have anything else going in their lives.

In my daughter's words, "well, he nearly single-handedly saved Devin Newman's life"--gave him a reason to come to school and excel until other factors dragged Devin down again. But there are many stories of students whose entire school experience, and entire future, has been positively affected by R F-T. And he has just begun. Witness that the younger classrooms and groups--being brought forward with the expectation that effort is required in music--are very robust with participants.

And we would like to ask you to keep in mind that school and community (communities) are in this instance of retention very entwined. Many groups of students and community members have formed around R F-T's instruction and inspiration, and in the case of the community orchestra and choir groups, they give side-by-side peer experience between students and adults. I urge you to see that this is the goal of internships, of school-to-work, and simply the transition from student status to adulthood--something that is critical to student success in the world. We already have this going in our music groups and it is hard to create and valuable, and should not be lightly dismissed.

School is so rarified and divided from the community in many regards that when we can dissolve that boundary and give young people ownership of a vocation or avocation they can carry forward into adulthood, we should recognize it and preserve it.

Education should be a full-contact sport--or we aren't doing our jobs as educators. As an old English instructor, that is my fervent belief.

So this music we're getting from Freeman-Toole isn't just a nicety for the rest of us--it is a main vehicle for giving students some ownership of their own lives.

Please retain Dr. Richard Freeman-Toole as CRSD music instructor.

-Mary, Jim, and Kari (12th grade) odden
Nelchina
822-3727

December 2006:

From:

Sent: Sat Dec 16 23:27

To:

freemant@crsd.k12.ak.us

Priority: Normal

Cc:

mjohnson@crsd.k12.ak.us

Subject:

Thanks for our Music Program

Type: Text

December 15, 2006

Dear Dr. Freeman-Toole,

Many thanks for your direction in our Copper Center School Christmas Concert on Thursday night. The kids performed well, and received many compliments from the audience. I was especially excited to hear the appreciative comments from the native parents.

As you know, at our school the native parents have never really bought into the music program, at least in the 7 years I've been here. It is very gratifying to see native parents actually buy violins for their kids, and get excited about their music lessons with you. Many of these families are on the thin edge of poverty, and struggling with diverse issues in their lives. I know you have loaned your own instruments out to kids, given private lessons after school to Sierra, and received calls at home about broken strings. I appreciate your cultural sensitivity in bringing violins down to our school, which has tapped into a cultural value of Athabaskan fiddlers and fiddle dances. An elder asked me when the kids would be ready to hold a fiddle dance!

Thank you for bringing music to our school, and enriching the lives of our students!

cc: Michael Johnson, Principal GHS/GJHS

Hello All -

I was extremely saddened to hear that the district plans on not retaining Dr. Freeman-Toole. I had thought that a final decision on his retention had not been made as of last week but I see the job has been posted to the Alaska Teacher Placement website as of March 7, 2007. As a parent of 3 kids who are involved in various aspects of Dr. Freeman-Toole's music programs, I feel that by not retaining him we are not keeping the best interest of our kids in mind. Since he has been here, this community has benefited from his community orchestra & choir, children's choir, music lessons, student recitals and music concerts. I have a strange feeling that the decision not to retain him had absolutely nothing to do with his ability as a music teacher but came from parents and community members who

simply do not like him. Gene and I have been here almost 16 years and never have we had a music program with the magnitude of his. He truly loves music and it is very evident in everything he does. I have traveled as a chaperone for the past two years to the music regions with Dr. Freeman-Toole and have greatly enjoyed listening to our kids and hearing from other schools how lucky we are to have such a dedicated music teacher. I would ask if the kids involved in the music program have been questioned on how they feel about their teacher and his music program? My kids have not and feel that their opinion is of no value. I have talked with all 3 of my kids about music class and they all have said that they like Dr. Freeman-Toole and they feel he is really interested in them learning and appreciating music and that they would like him to stay. Carley was so looking forward to getting to play the violin next year in 5th grade. None of my children have ever experienced an unpleasant class with Dr. Freeman-Toole and said if some kid had complained that the kid was probably at fault (for example; forgetting an instrument and/or music several days in a row). Please remember when a complaint is aired there are always two sides.

We need to be keeping the teachers that have an actual interest in what they teach and in teaching our kids! I would hope that Dr. Freeman-Toole has been objectively evaluated by his supervisor(s) and that their judgement has not been clouded by unsubstantiated facts or opinions. I urge you all to make sure that Dr. Freeman-Toole has been given a "fair" shake before deciding his fate and that of our music program. As a parent that is involved in my children's education I would like to see Dr. Freeman-Toole retained.

Thank-you for your attention,

From: "Mary Odden" <fiddletunes@hotmail.com>

Subject: RE: Great Job!

Date: Sun, 17 Dec 2006 17:24:16 +0000

. . . I'm very motivated to promote music in general and
>Freeman-Toole's program in particular. At our recent recitals and
>concerts, I have seen kids I never saw before--on stage. RFT is
>providing some avenues for expression for formerly alienated
>individuals and giving them a place to stand and have confidence in
>themselves. Otherwise, the insistence on religious and athletic and
>academic conformity has been pushing those kids aside. Kari told me
>flat out about one boy, "Music has changed his life." So this is
>powerful stuff and if the admin does not recognize it, they'd have
>to be hiding under a rock.

Taken from Copper River Record, December 6, 2006

. . . Music is coming alive for students, adults, and audiences around the Copper Valley, thanks to Freeman-Toole's work and inspiration. . . .

It has been such a pleasure in the last three years to hear young musicians develop from tentative beginners into confident even masterful performers. We parents sit on the edge of our seats, silently encouraging those young performers through the next note, and the next. CRSD Music Director Richard Freeman-Toole drew our attention to the hard work of Eddie Carew, brand new to the baritone but bravely performing "Hill Street Blues." . . .

The performers came in many sizes, ages, levels of accomplishment, but the benefit of Freeman-Toole's instruction and respect for students is demonstrated in many ways. In the accompaniments, and in the recital atmosphere, it is clear that the moment of performance wholly belongs to the the young performer(s) on stage. And each musician rises to the occasion. . . .

Mary Odden

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I would like to take a moment to convey my appreciation and support of Dr. Richard Freeman-Toole, and his fine work developing a wide spectrum music program within the greater Copper Basin.

The recent Junior/Senior High School band performance is an excellent example of how Dr. Freeman-Toole has enriched our community. Opportunities to enjoy live performances within the area are few and far between. I have no children in the local school system, yet I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed the performances of these young artists. Certainly, the benefits of the school music program extend far beyond just the families of the student performers.

Though I am not a parent, I must admit that I am the benefactor of Dr. Freeman-Toole's talents through the local community orchestra. As a member of this group I have had the pleasure of working with Richard on a personal basis, and have found him to be the consummate professional. Not only a talented musician in his own right, I have found him to be an excellent instructor, with the ability to bring out the best in any student, regardless of age.

It is my hope that the local school system will continue to recognize how Dr. Freeman-Toole has enriched our community and ensure his future employment and contribution to our local youth.

I would be happy to provide further reference for Richard. Should you wish to discuss this or any other topic in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached via phone at (907) 822-7210.

Sincerely,

Marshall Neeck
Chief Ranger
Wrangell-St. Elis National Park and Preserve

Dr. James Elliot, CRSD†Superintendent†jelliot@crsd.k12.ak.us
Tammy Van Wyhe, Instruction† tvanwyhe@crsd.k12.ak.us
Michael Johnson, Glennallen Principal†† mjohnson@crsd.k12.ak.us
Reed Carlson†Kenny Lake Principal† rcarlson@crsd.k12.ak.us
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Michelle Bayless† mbayless@cvinet.net

Cynthia Pyle† rcpile@cvinternet.net
Dr. Richard Freeman-Toole freemant@crsd.k12.ak.us

9 March 2007

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to sing praise to the class of Dr. Richard Freeman-Toole. Although he seems a bit gruff and socially backwards, I think RFT loves teaching the kids and does a good job of it.

My son would be a good example of RFT's ability to teach and share the passion of love for music. Michael James started playing the trumpet, moved the next year to clarinet and the bass clarinet, and then onto the saxophone and tenor saxophone. Michael looks forward to the recitals and times that he gets to be up in front of the audience to play and share what he has learned. He and RFT seem to have a close friendship as teacher/student. RFT has taken my son under his wing and helped him with the love of music get through some hard family times this past year.

I would recommend keeping Dr. RFT on in the Copper River School District to teach and encourage our students and all the members of the community in the area of music.

Thank you for your time and willingness to listen.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Parent of a Junior High Student

From:

'jeanette sutherland' <joyful3n1@hotmail.com>

Sent: Sat Mar 10 17:19

To:

jelliot@crsd.k12.ak.us

Priority: Normal

Cc:

freemant@crsd.k12.ak.us

Subject:

Retaining Dr. Freeman-Toole

Type: HTML Msg

Dear Dr. Elliot:

Just recently, I been informed of the decision to send Dr. Freeman-Toole down the road. Because I do not have the time to write in detail, I am sending this note as a harbinger to announce the arrival of a more detailed letter to follow, in support of retaining this exceptionally talented man. I cannot express my deep appreciation in a few brief words, for all that he has done for me personally and for the valley as a whole. I pray that you will assist the majority of us, mostly long term residents who rarely complain, as we extend our words of praise in this time of crisis. Not by chance was he called to this position. The number of souls (where the vibration of music is felt) affected by his music is exceedingly great! Truly, we do need this master musician and teacher; and he needs us as well.

In all sincerity,
Jeanette Sutherland
Assistant Coordinator for the CV Community Orchestra and Choir

From:
To: "jeanette sutherland" <joyful3n1@hotmail.com>
Subject: RE: Re: RFT Apologia
Date: Tue, 27 Mar 2007 14:09:55 -0800

Thanks for this,
Jeannette. I'll have to get his school e-mail and respond.
Funny, but my letter (not yet sent) addresses the personality "stuff", as his talent for music is a given. I did sit in on a "class" of his (when he was instructing my daughter) and wanted to hug him afterwards for how complimentary he was (and of course, an excellent voice teacher). I wasn't the least bit insulted that he said "who are you?" instead of "thank you for coming." What parent wouldn't be willing to overlook that after seeing what I say, hearing what I heard? Sheesh, people. Besides, I've always been amused by his blunt ways and he's never been outright rude unless I am one made of glass. But enough of that. Thanks again for trying to show support for Dr. Richard-Toole. My letter and opinion will be among the masses.

(vocally-trained by a professional, as if it matters:)

From:**Sent:** Sun Apr 1 14:28**To:**

bbetts@asb.org, theresa.absher@yahoo.com, pamelah ...

Priority: Normal**Cc:**

gakona@gakonaak.com, fiddletunes@hotmail.com

Subject:

Please Retain Dr. Freeman-Toole

Type: Embedded HTML/Text

Hello Everyone,

I want to thank each one of you for your service to the community. We also want to express our support for Dr. Freeman-Toole. Though he may be a bit eccentric, somewhat direct and , perhaps, socially challenged, it has been our observation and experience that he is passionate about teaching music to students and adults, both in the schools and in the community. He has provided a forum for students who may not participate in other extra-curricular activities to find an area to participate and be included in something larger than themselves. He has provided a forum for civic involvement and musical expression that had been missing for a number of years. This has certainly been true in the lives of our three children, Robert, Sarah and Adrienne. Our desire is that he be retained.

We all have room for improvement in various areas of our lives. We believe that grace triumphs over judgment, and ask that you would consider how grace can be applied in this situation, and how all of us, including Dr. Freeman-Toole, can learn and grow as a result of the decision you are making.

Sincerely, and with the highest regard,

Hello Dr. Freeman-Toole -

I just wanted to drop you a note to let you know how much Gene and I enjoyed last night's concert. The kids sounded wonderful. We have really appreciated the dedication you have to our music program. We haven't always had that in the past. You truly enjoy music and the kids and it shows. We also attended the recital last week and enjoyed that as well.

Thank you again,

Dr. Freeman-Toole,

Thank you for a nice evening. Our children think you are exceptional. Your sincerity in their performances and commitment to each individual child is evident in each performance. You truly teach from the heart. The children recognize and appreciate it. Thank you for your commitment to my children and the children in this district.

Sincerely,

Dr. Freeman-Toole,

Thanks so much for all your hard work with the students. We appreciate your talents and tenacity and have enjoyed listening to Briahna progress this year. Enjoy your well-earned vacation.

PS.

Dr. Freeman-Toole you are a good music teacher.

To:

Mjohnson@crsd.k12.ak.us, Freemant@crsd.k12.ak.us, ...

Priority: Normal

Subject:

mr. Freeman-Toole

Type: HTML Msg

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in regards to Mr. Freeman-Toole.

I have had opportunity to sit in several of Mr. Toole's classes. During this time I observed him in a variety of classroom situations. I was impressed with not only his musical abilities, but also with his interactions with the students.

I observed one lesson in which Mr. Toole was teaching music theory. The students were working on note recognition. Several of the students were having difficulty with identifying the notes. Mr. Toole worked patiently with each student. He often checked for understanding and offered further assistance to those who had not understood. I was impressed with his

encouragement towards the students. He showed genuine care and patience with the students. He made them feel important and made them feel that no question was "dumb."

On another occasion I saw Mr. Toole working with his students in preparation for a performance. He worked patiently with all the students. He worked on fine tuning their individual and group pieces. He gave them advice on how to make the piece "stand" out and how to make it sound "better."

After the performance I observed as Mr. Toole went over the music with the students. I was most impressed with his critique of Sabrina Shorten. Although the student sang the piece off key... which he never once said this to her... he focused on what she did right. He made the student feel that she accomplished something. He focused on the positive things...even though it was apparent that she could have done better. I was genuinely impressed with the way he encouraged her. Sabrina could have easily been told what she did wrong... instead she left that class with a smile on her face. She was shown that she could go on. Talking with the student later... it was apparent that he had shown her that she was making progress.

I also had opportunity to observe Mr. Toole in a difficult situation. While I was in the class he had to deal with several discipline problems. He handled the situation well. He showed respect for the student and spoke to them in regards for their need to show respect to others. He dealt with each situation in a firm but fair approach.

Mr. Toole is a teacher that knows music and knows how to make other students strive towards doing their best. He looks for what they can do and focuses on their strengths.

Sincerely,

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been brought to my attention that there is no intention of hiring Dr. Freeman-Toole back for next year. I am very concerned about this. Dr. Freeman-Toole has been the best music teacher this district has had since Mr. Mc Swain. I have personally seen what he has done with my daughter and the effort he has put into her. When she wanted to have extra classes he would invite her to the Saturday class he was holding, and in the summer he opened a new door for

her. She has not only been taught music but if she wants to go far with this option she has the opportunity. I feel that if the district loses the talent and education of this teacher the district would lose a great asset. Please do not choose to lose this teacher.

Sincerely,

Dr. Freeman-Toole

PLEASE teach 🎵 here for many more years. What's happening w/ students is real magic. We appreciate you so much.

Sincerely,
Mary & Jim Odden

Subject:
Re: Absher
Type: Text

FYI, Melinda and Richard. THANK YOU for making a parent happy! :) I appreciate your efforts at conferences!

-----Original Message-----

From: Theresa Absher
[theresa_absher@labor.state.ak.us',' ','1')">theresa_absher@labor.state.ak.us]
Sent: Friday, October 27, 2006 3:25 PM
To: Michael Johnson (E-mail); tvanwyhe@crsd.k12.ak.us;
rlangseth@crsd.k12.ak.us
Subject: Parent/Techer Conferences - Dr. Freeman-Toole and Mrs. Tobey

I just wanted to drop you a note regarding the conferences I had with these teachers on Wednesday. This is the first time that my children have had a home room and I was very pleased with the meetings I had with their home room teachers. I was not able to make either of my meetings on time due to conflicts with my working hours, but both

teachers took the time to fit me into their very tight schedules.

I was very impressed with how much attention and concern both Mrs. Tobey and Dr. Freeman-Toole expressed. In particular, Dr. Freeman-Toole had some very helpful suggestions about helping Amanda improve her writing skills. This was one of the most helpful conferences I have ever had with any of my children's teachers. Mrs. Tobey is a delight and I appreciate how well organized and positive she is.

I know you receive a lot of complaints -- thought it might be nice to hear about something that went right.

Theresa Absher
ES Manager/Case Manager
Glennallen Job Center
PO Box 109
Glennallen, Alaska 99588-0109
Phone: (907) 822-3350
Fax: (907) 822-5526

To:

freemant@crsd.k12.ak.us

Priority: Normal

Subject:

Type: Text

Just wanted to let you know that I spoke in support of your program at Gakona school PTO meeting on tuesday. And also sent a letter of support for your program in general to M Johnson and board members. I hope that you continue to be around I thin your progaram is a huge asset to the community. And Jeremiah thinks its great.
thank you

-Student feedback

May, 2006:

To: Mr. Freeman-Toole

From:

Dear Mr. Freeman-Toole,

Thank you for being a great music teacher! Your passion for music is very inspiring and makes me want to learn more. I love your class and can't wait till next year. Have a great summer!

Mr. Freeman-Toole,

I wanted to thank you for being my band director. I cannot express just how much I have learned from you. I wanted you to know how much I appreciate all the time and effort you've given while working with me. I am very thankful for all the individual lessons with you. Those were a lot of fun for me! It is amazing to think that when I met you, I barely knew the basics of a saxophone. Now, I'm going to college with a music scholarship after just 2 years with you!

Thank you so much! You've made a huge impact on my life!

Love,

RFT:

. . . In all the years (K-6) that my youngest son has attended public school, I can't remember him ever coming right out and (voluntarily) SAY he likes a teacher, especially a band teacher, until today! The 1st thing he said when he came home from school was simply and sincerely, "I Like Mr. Freeman-Toole." Since he didn't volunteer anything more, I asked him, "WHY?" ~ And ~ his response was -- "Because he picks his own music (as well as composes) and we aren't stuck with those stupid songs." I was thrilled to have the tables turned. . .

Jeannette Sutherland

-Mentor comments-Sept 4, 04

Richard sets his goals ~ giving the students through music to be operative thinkers. He is challenging his students bring out the creativity of each. Richard has a special way to connect with the students, Richard has clear articulation. His teaching methods are geared towards developing creativity and understanding of the arts (music). Richard has a great sense of humor which makes his class alive ~ learning is taking place.

Richard has a good rapport with his students. He is very a creative person who passes his love for music and creativity on to his students. Richard creates a

climate of creativity and challenge. He treats students with respect but demands quality. Richard knows his students and sets high standards for his class. The students know what is expected of them. Richard sets the mood of the class (very positive) his students were on task throughout this observation.

Richard knows his content area and passes on his love for music. He has high standards for his students, challenging throughout the class. His instruction creative but clear, the students know what is expected of them. Richard comes alive with his students, a high energy level ~ very positive with his students. He uses instruction time effectively. Richard constantly checks for understanding ~ challenging the students -- making learning fun. He passes his passion for music on to his students.

Richard is a creative person, his mind is four steps ahead of his action. He is very much into his art -- the music he is teaching. He involves the students, working with each with respect. He is demanding yet understanding. He is clear in his instruction checking for understanding of his students. It will be exciting to watch the progress Richard makes with his students.

Richard A. Burmeister, Ed.D
Assistant Professor, School of Ed.
University of Alaska Fairbanks
907 694 4340 nfrab@uaf.edu

-Peer critique

Richard,

What a nice email! You should know that I think your attitude with the kids has made a tremendous amount of difference to my students who are (dare I say it) a little lazy. Your enthusiasm and at times pushing has caused them to practice at home. Since they can see the improvement, they are getting really jazzed about playing their instruments. Thank YOU for all your time you have given to them! I know you have given up your own time and have invested a great deal to help the 5th graders.

Have a great Friday,

Dr. Freeman-Toole,

I just wanted to let you know how much my sixth graders enjoy band. Band has been offered to GES sixth graders for many years now, but this is certainly the most enthusiasm that I've seen. In the past when band has been cancelled, there's been a slight sigh of relief go throughout the room. Now it's definitely a disappointment if they do not have band on their normal two days per week.

My class was also very happy when they heard you were organizing our Christmas program this year.

Thanks very much for your dedication. It's obvious that you love music and teaching.

Respectfully,

-Supervisor's observation.

It was a pleasure sitting in on your classes today. You have a good balance of critical and complimentary. You seem to know when to push harder and when to lighten up. That's great.

I'm glad you're here.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Dr. Richard Freeman-Toole. I have known Dr. Freeman-Toole for the past year and a half as his education program supervisor with the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education.

Dr. Freeman-Toole is teaching music for the Copper River School District. He has been teaching a K-12 program for several schools within the district. He is based at Glennallen High School. Dr. Freeman-Toole is a very creative teacher and brings out the best of his students. He sets high goals for his students, and they strive to achieve the goals. I watched him take students with no musical background and have them performing within a few weeks.

He has a love for music and passes this love on to his students. He goes beyond just teaching music, he teaches appreciation, history and theory. I have not seen a music program develop with such success as I have seen the program he developed for his district.

Dr. Freeman-Toole is dedicated to perfection and teaching. He works his students hard but they respect him for this. He is willing to put in extra time before and after school to make sure his students are successful. Richard also has become a major part of his community giving concerts,

organizing the Chamber Players, and becoming part of the local culture.

I recommend Dr. Richard Freeman-Toole highly. Any district having him in their music program would be very lucky. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Burmeister, Ed.D
Assistant Professor, School of Ed.
University of Alaska Fairbanks
907 694 4340 nfrab@uaf.edu