

To Whom It May Concern:

February 27, 2026

I am thrilled to give my strongest and most enthusiastic recommendation of Matei Jirka. His intellect, unparalleled work ethic, and maturity make him an excellent candidate.

I've known Matei since September 2024, when he joined my *Introduction to Calculus* class. He chose to double up on math last year, taking both *Algebra 2* and *Introduction to Calculus* so he could double-accelerate himself. Since the pace of *Algebra 2* was not very challenging for Matei, he chose to self-study the second semester of the course and take the *Algebra 2 New York State Regents* exam a semester early. Of course, he passed the Regents test with Mastery.

I've come to know Matei well. We've had many conversations after school or over lunch about a myriad of topics: education policy, public transportation, music, and the new bicycle rail trail in town. He's also a member of my math club and team, so I've seen him in many different contexts. He has a lovely sense of humor, he's reflective and a good listener, a great conversation partner, and a kind human.

Matei impressed me every day in *Introduction to Calculus*. He's an incredibly strong analytical thinker and he dives into work with wonderful focus and attention. Every day I came armed with challenge questions specifically for Matei, which he always welcomed with a smile. But more often than not, Matei would create his own challenge questions. When finishing a problem involving a new concept, he'd dive in to develop a proof or see what else this new concept could do. For example, when the class discovered the power rule pattern to find derivatives, Matei didn't rest until he figured out *why* the power rule worked.

I try to do as little direct instruction as possible, instead allowing students to learn concepts through working on novel problems. Matei immediately thrived in this kind of learning environment. He puts in the time to fully understand a concept and his ability to focus on a problem until he is sure of his understanding illustrates his maturity as a learner. He works beautifully in a team of students, and asks excellent questions, ones that go to the heart of a new concept so that everyone in his team understands the underlying logic. And he was my proofreader: My homework is optional, but Matei always chose to do it, which is fortunate since he always found any errors on my answer keys!

I know that Matei is very excited for college and will work hard to get everything he can out of the experience. He's an ideal candidate to receive a scholarship.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn Stewart*

Kathryn Stewart

Mathematics Teacher, Math Team Coach, Mathletes Club Advisor

New York State Master Teacher