

# Tenure Recommendation

**To:** Matt Hladun  
**From:** Robert Messia  
**Date:** October 2019  
**Re:** Tenure Recommendation

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## **Joshua Gela**

Joshua Gela has served as the Algonquin Middle School Assistant Principal for the past four years. During his time in this capacity at Algonquin, Josh has made a very positive impact on our school community.

Josh has assisted in making AMS an outstanding school for students, staff, parents and our entire community in many ways over the past four years. Josh transitioned to the assistant principal position in January 2016, moving from his role as a district-wide data coach. With this mid-year transition, Josh worked hard to build positive relationships with students, parents and staff members. Since that time, several clear examples of Josh's instructional leadership at AMS come to mind in reflecting on his impact here at AMS.

In 2017, Josh was instrumental in helping to create "The Warrior Way," the three character education principles students and staff identified as the most critical to student success in middle school. Through a collaborative process that involved a wide-range of stakeholders, Josh was able to help our building deepen its understanding of school community behavior expectations. Josh has also collaborated with instructional staff to make our Warrior Way Assemblies an incredibly positive, much-anticipated student experience each marking quarter. Furthermore, and in large part because of the work on "The Warrior Way," during our time working together, student discipline referrals to the office have decreased from an annual total in 2015-16 of 352 to a 2018-19 total of 203 office referrals.

Josh's work with the New York State Response to Intervention Demonstration Project has helped our school implement evidence-based instructional practices for all students, design a comprehensive program of intervention for students in reading, writing, mathematics, and most recently, behavioral and executive functioning skills. Additionally, Josh's background as a data-coach was instrumental in helping our school implement universal screening for all students and develop protocols to effectively analyze this information and make appropriate intervention decisions for students.

Josh has also led our school's Safety Team over the past four years. In that time he has helped teachers implement new protocols to support student safety in our building

through revisions to drills, developing relationships with law enforcement agencies, and creating table-top scenarios for all school staff members to think through various responses to ensure student safety.

It has been my good fortune to learn from and work with Josh and am particularly proud of our professional development work together, which includes a post in July 2019 for MiddleWeb.com entitled: "7 Ways Our Data Buy-in Builds School Capacity," that was circulated via ASCD, a forthcoming article in American Middle Level Educator Magazine focused on building positive school climate through character education touchstones, and a presentation at October's New York State Middle School Association Conference focused on providing a roadmap to other middle schools to assist in their development of Rtl programming.

Josh is quick to roll up his sleeves. From grilling chicken for teachers during what have become an annual tradition of highly attended staff professional development days over the summer, to helping teachers move furniture, to working after school with academically struggling students, Josh embraces a servant leadership role and does what it takes to make AMS a better place each day.

It is an honor to recommend Joshua Gela for tenure as a school district administrator for Averill Park.