



## Mary Gage Peterson Elementary School

5510 North Christiana Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60625

*College Graduates. Community Leaders. Cultural Ambassadors.*

Kate Kane  
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February 25, 2016

To my beloved parents of Peterson,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this letter. As some of you know, I was born in Malaysia, moved to Michigan to pursue my University education in 2001, and ultimately took my current position at Peterson in 2006.

For the past nine years (ever since I was hired), I have been working with the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) to ensure my continued legal status in this country. My current work visa only allows me to work until March 6<sup>th</sup> 2016. Although we have applied for another visa category, there is the significant risk of my legal status being in jeopardy while waiting for my case to be adjudicated. In the event that the visa is granted, I would return to Peterson and continue teaching.

At this time we remain hopeful that the O1 visa will be granted and that I will only be away for a short time (2-4 weeks). However, if the visa is not granted, I will not be able to return to Peterson and will spend the rest of the school year outside of the United States. In this second scenario, March 4<sup>th</sup> will be last day teaching at Peterson. Should this be the outcome, I will plan on returning to the United States in August, on a student visa in fall 2016 to pursue my PhD studies at either the University of Illinois (Urbana) or University of Michigan (Ann Arbor). Naturally, I would look forward to reconnecting with you in Chicago before my doctoral studies begin.

Although I have travelled very far from my family, in Peterson I found a new family. You were my brothers and sisters, my parents and friends, my teachers and mentors. Thank you for opening your arms and hearts to me. Thank you for your support for our music programs. Truly any success we've had is only possible because of you. I only hope that I've been able to pay back some of what you've given me through sharing the gift of music.

Thank you entrusting me with the care and education of your children for all these years. Through many trials and tribulations, you stood by me steadfast and true. I have learned so much about grace, courage and wisdom from you; life-lessons that will continue to guide me along this rocky path. I want to especially recognize Ms. Kane whose outpouring of tangible and moral support gives me strength and hope.

Despite these sad times, I know I have been incredibly blessed to know and work with you. It has been my greatest joy and honor to help students discover the music within themselves, and in so doing find happiness and solace; camaraderie and community. Through teaching music, I am continually renewed and rejuvenated as a musician. What a privilege it is to work from my passion and to daily rediscover my first love through the eyes of our young people. Together with you, we have built a community of musicians that will tie us together for many years to come.

Although this moment seems bleak, I believe that for music at Peterson, this is only a prelude, an opening act, the 1<sup>st</sup> movement in what is going to be a glorious, unfinished symphony. Greater things are yet to come, and there are new heights to scale. With your



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continued support for our music program, I am confident that we will continue the good work that we have begun and together change the world through the power of music. While it is my fondest wish that I might continue to work for and with all of you in the near future, this might not be possible. Nevertheless, my heart is full of love for all of you. Peterson made a difference in my life and my future endeavors will be incredibly enriched and informed by all I have learned during my time here. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

Yours Truly,

Anand Raj Sukumaran (Mr. S)