

After graduating from The Evergreen State College in 2015, I was hired as a paraeducator in a kindergarten and first grade classroom. I absolutely loved working at a school, which led me back to Evergreen to complete Elementary Endorsement requirements so that I could apply for the Masters in Teaching (MiT) program at Evergreen in 2016. While taking those classes, I was a one-on-one paraeducator for a student who needed social and emotional support.

In 2017 I was accepted into the MiT program and thrived. I was so intrigued in learning about the history of education and how the past has informed our present. I loved Learning theory and learning about how the brain works. I was inspired by the students, classmates, and professors that I worked with; and ultimately, I realized that I didn't want to become a teacher, I was more interested in being a student.

After I left the MiT program I got a job as a barista, which grew my leadership and communication skills immensely. I then applied on a whim for a position with the Professional Certification Office at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) as a Customer Service Specialist. I had no idea that four years and a baby later I would still be there. My time in the Certification Office has challenged me, given me opportunity for growth, and solidified my passion for public service.

In the four years since I started, I have had several roles and am currently an Administrative Program Specialist. My focus is certifying educators who have completed Washington State Approved Preparation Programs and certifying educators applying for limited certification, like Emergency Substitute Teachers. I am also heavily involved in working with the Paraeducator Certificate Program. My role directly serves Washington State educators and with that, directly serves students.

In my time at OSPI there has been a greater focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training. This is something that I have been happy to see and fully support, especially because I seek out learning

opportunities in my own life. The biggest pull for me applying to the Masters in Public Administration (MPA) program at Evergreen is that I want to build the skills and knowledge that I need to facilitate learning and growth when it comes to advocating for a diverse group of educators and students.

I want to be able to review current systems and find inequities so that I can work with a team to imagine and create new systems. I want to study and have a strong understanding of policy so that my desire to make positive change is not just an idea but will give me the language and tools to share those ideas with others. I want to take the time to learn about public administration and service within a historical, political, social, cultural, and economic context. I want to keep learning, growing, and serving my community and state in the best way that I can.

Every educational experience and working experience that I've had so far has solidified that I care about people. Whatever I'm doing, my intention is that I do it with care, with grace, and with understanding. I want to live my values in a workplace and be able to be humble and have a growth mindset. I want to embrace the community I work with for their strengths and be able to communicate in a way that feels honoring to them. I want to be equitable in the way that I serve educators. I want people who work with me to feel empowered and listened to.

I believe that the MPA program at Evergreen can give me the toolkit, resources, and the confidence to reach my goals. I also believe that coming out of this program I will have bigger and more creative ambitions than I can imagine right now.