

Expanding My Horizon

As my MAED Program comes to an end, it is difficult to predict what is in store for me down the road as an educator and lifelong learner. Over the past year and a half, I am blown away by how much I have grown as an educator through the knowledge and confidence I have gained during the timespan of the MAED Program. While it is bittersweet that I will be graduating in August, I look forward to moving forward and setting new career goals for myself to my broaden my horizon.

My first and most important goal is to find a new teaching job within the field of special education. After teaching special education in North Carolina for the past three years, my husband and I decided to move back to Michigan this summer. While we are excited to live close to family, I was sad to have to leave my current teaching position. I wore multiple hats in my teaching position in North Carolina, serving as the special education teacher for grades 4-6 in addition remediating all low achieving students following Response to Intervention. These roles allowed me to gain additional experience in the field of education and hopefully will help me find a future teaching job. We are closing on our first house next week and I have been eagerly applying for teaching positions around the Metro Detroit area. I hope to obtain a teaching position where I can utilize the experience gained in my previous teaching position and the skills I have acquired through the MAED Program with a concentration in Literacy Education and Special Education!

Once I have obtained a teaching job, my second goal is to seek informal educational opportunities and Professional Development opportunities within my

district. As a result of working full time while completing my Master's degree, I have not had free time to be able to take advantage of as many additional educational opportunities within my school district outside of school hours as I would have liked to. I look forward to having the opportunity to attend professional development workshops and conferences (focused on special education and elementary education) and continue to expand my knowledge on educational topics as a lifelong learner.

My third goal is to take more of a leadership role within my school. At my previous school in North Carolina I was in charge of scheduling, writing the paperwork, and hosting all Initial/Referral, Eligibility Determination, and Individualized Education Plan Meetings. I also met with parents whose children were not on my caseload, but I was remediating them through the tiers of Response to Intervention to share their growth or lack of progress (and eventually refer for special education services). As a first year special education teacher, I was unconfident taking on this leadership role and felt unknowledgeable when discussing literacy strategies to support struggling learners. It was for that reason I decided to focus my MAED concentration on Literacy Education to further build my knowledge in this area. I also began taking a leadership role at my previous school by serving as the Special Education Leadership Team Representative. I would like to continue this leadership role by serving on a committee (child study team, reading committee) at my future school. I would also like to become a resource and mentor for my future colleagues to seek guidance when they need advice on ways to meet the needs of students in their class with special needs. In addition, if I decide to eventually transition into a career outside of the classroom, I

hope to eventually move into an administrative position as a Special Education Teaching Consultant within a school district.

Lastly, a goal of mine as a lifelong learner and educator is to become certified in a reading program (i.e. Orton Gillingham or Wilson Reading System) to further meet the needs of my students with reading learning disabilities. This certification will allow me to better understand why particular students on my caseload struggle in reading and ways to target their individual needs to improve their overall reading ability. While I am still undecided about what program I wish to pursue, I am excited about the opportunity to become certified in a specific reading program. This will also open more doors for me in the future if I decide to tutor students' privately and work with struggling literacy learners outside of school hours.

As I search for a new teaching job in Michigan, I look forward to reaching these new goals I have set for myself. I am very grateful for all of the knowledge and experience I gained throughout the MAED Program and look forward to continuing to grow as an educator and a lifelong learner throughout my career.