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Foundations of Public Education

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### Being a Positive Figure

Growing up people always ask what you want to be when you grow up or what you want to do in life. If someone asked me in fourth grade what I wanted to be when I grow up, the answer would be very different from the answer I would give today. When I was younger, I wanted to be a dermatologist. I did not put any thinking into it, I only knew I wanted to make money. The more I grew and got older, the more I started to regret wanting to go that way in life. I did not find that much interest in it and I had no motivation to do the work for it. I applied to college with my major set as biology and got accepted. The countdown till college started and as time ticked down, I slowly started to not want to go into biology but the question was, what would I do with my life and what do I want to be? Which by the way, is one of the hardest questions to consider. But that is when it hit me, I want to be an elementary school teacher.

After weeks and weeks of debating what to change my major to, I finally changed it to elementary education. But something was different, it is more than a major and more than just a job. For the past couple years my mom has been telling me I needed to do something dealing with kids and children because in her opinion I am very good with kids. I never really considered her suggestions and took them with a grain of salt, until recently I found myself thinking of all the benefits to teaching. Being raised with a single mother of four kids allowed me to grow up in a way not many people experience. Because of this, I know how it is to struggle and have school

as an outlet from home life. Thinking back, the most influential people in my childhood were my teachers. I want to be that influential and positive figure in a child's life. Or in general, I want to help them grow and learn to their full potential. I want to be that safe place a student can go to for comfort and help. Regardless of what I want, it is based on the children's needs.

At the end of the day it comes down to the students and their needs. The children need teachers who are there for more than just teaching. Teachers who are there for more than the benefits, ones that genuinely care about the students as growing children. The students need guidance as they grow up and seeing that children spend more time at school than with their family, it is a teachers responsibility to guide them in making the right choices and teach them how to grow up. With more teachers like this the kids will most likely enjoy school more creating them to feel in a comfortable and safe environment.

Because of the way I was raised, I am a family oriented person. Teaching allows me to be involved with my children. I can support my children at their sporting events, be there to help do their math or reading homework at night, and be there to give my kids the life I wanted but did not receive. I realized it is not about the money but what you can do for others while enjoying your job and work space/environment. If you enjoy what you are doing and are genuinely interested in the job, the pay is not a factor.

Although I am very excited and happy to be majoring in elementary education to become a teacher, I still have some fears. I have a fear of being in a toxic work environment, with a staff and fellow teachers who do not deeply care about children as humans. Education is important but a child cannot thrive and grow in a place with workers that only cares about the paycheck and benefits. Children learn the best when they feel wanted and feel safe. With that being said

children will feel comfortable coming out of their shell if they feel comfortable in the environment. Teaching them social skills and other helpful lessons they can use outside of school. I decided to major in elementary education to create that environment where children can go to be themselves and learn basic education but also learn skills they can apply in their outside lives. Like stated before, I also want to be there for the children and help them with life; be the positive figure they need to thrive.