

D. My AmeriCorps volunteer work and work at Tacoma Rescue Mission cemented my love for children and want to be a teacher. I have always enjoyed school since I was small, and so teaching seemed like a very logical path. But prior to this job, I hadn't had the one-on-one experience to prove that teaching was for me. I worked with twenty-three students at this job and helped improve their literacy, and it had a very strong impact on me.

For one thing, I noticed how needed teachers are in a post-Covid climate. Students are missing out on important learning, and it needs to be supplemented with teachers who both know what they are doing and are passionate about it. As Rita Pierson once said, "Every child needs a champion." Schools need to add teachers that see the gap in learning left behind and are empowered to close it.

Another reason I discovered was that I enjoyed seeing students come out of their shells and thrive in ways they hadn't thought possible for themselves previously. I had a student tell me "Miss Taylor, after reading with you I can do things now!" She was a hugely smart child, just very shy, and her teacher didn't have the capability to give the one-on-one time she needed to blossom. I was so glad to help in that way. Thirdly, as I will mention in one of the other prompts, education must be reformed if we expect to help young minds thrive. Where better to do that than from inside a classroom? If I can make a mark and make sure things such as Black and disability history don't go untaught, I would feel great about my overall contribution to this world.

My Tacoma Rescue Mission work didn't directly influence my educational wishes, but it did help me in another way. I worked there during winter break, and I very quickly learned that there were worse things in the world than losing a week with my family. There were people at the Mission who became houseless recently, and there were also people still struggling to get by in the current housing market. By serving meals to them, I was kept grounded in the community I was serving in and felt an immediate urge to do my part to make the world a better place. I believe education can do that. Many of the people I came in contact with may have been students that schools could have helped achieve more, but who got looked over in the quest for individual greatness. Working at TRM taught me that school should not be an individual affair. Focusing resources on those governments "expect" to succeed lets others fall through the cracks. Working at Tacoma Rescue felt like a family: no one got left behind, and no one went without a unique job to do. It is my personal view that school should be like this, as well. I am ready and willing to take on the job of ensuring that every student feels seen.