

MIT Application Prompt 4

I was able to put my desire to teach to practice during my observation at Capital High School, and through volunteer work at The Children's Center on the Evergreen Campus. I dove head first into the public school realm under my mentor teachers, Mx. Mikinaak and Mr. Wall. This "post" pandemic world setting allowed me to observe the resilience of this generation of students. Where I thought I would see indifference and malaise, I observed curiosity and a call to collaborate. This is a new class; students with high expectations of adults and a drive to have a superior educational experience to what was offered pre-pandemic. These teenagers know what they want and they are not afraid to vocalize or call out instances of injustice.

One theme that kept repeating itself was a constant call for action and change. I inquired of both my mentor teachers and students: what can be done? The biggest, and the most visually obvious issue at hand, is classroom size—an average of 30+ kids. I was invited to a history department meeting where they were problem-solving this issue with the prospect of co-teaching. The idea immediately piqued my interest, particularly as a Greener, because of the collaborative nature of having two teachers in the room and the bountiful opportunity it would provide for student engagement. These teachers were making big moves, moves that would provide long-lasting, positive change—exactly the kind of change I hope to one day be a part of.

To round out my experience working with students I wanted to go straight to the root of learning, early childhood education. I spent the day volunteering in the preschool wing of the child center's Bear classroom. Their urgency to be so intensely alive was sometimes astounding, constantly engaging in their environment and with each other. Just like the high school students, these children had no problem expressing their desires for what makes them happy. A push on the swing provided not only fun but a chance to regulate their nervous system. We hear this idea about the passiveness of pandemic babies but this is generation Alpha speaking, and they have so much to say! Seeing the progression in education deeply connected me to the idea of teaching with urgency. This cyclical experience allowed me to see how new generations adapt to their shifting environments, specifically during times of constant change. There is a call for educators to center the voices of students and help them to facilitate that change. That is exactly the kind of teaching I know this program will provide for me, and exactly the kind of change this world desperately needs right now.