

Velez, Lee Anne
Elementary Education
Prompt B

Many life experiences have shaped my pursuit of a teaching certification in elementary education. As a mother of four children, I have made a conscious and consistent effort to be a part of their education world by volunteering for their schools; participating in parent-teacher organizations; volunteer coaching from elementary, middle, and high school levels; and eventually pursuing a job as a preschool paraeducator to a full-time special education support professional. Working as an educational support professional has provided me with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the classroom. With that experience alongside subbing as an emergency certified teacher, I have been able to observe and substitute teach along the range of grades pre-k to fifth grade, highly supported life skills, art and library. That range of grade and age level has prompted a lot of flexibility and adaptability as age, subject and even time of day, was persistent to the students' needs. On the teaching front, I've experienced teacher preparatory styles based on experience and technology use- while some teachers have written plans and others utilize slideshows- the varying levels of teaching have been insightful and motivating.

My growth areas are also included in those strengths based on the subjects and their changing curriculums. While I've been lucky to have been in one school district, it will also be a challenge to experience other school districts and what their student populations are like. I also aim to seek more community and social justice work integrated in curriculums like ethnic studies. While it's important to educate students on the basics of reading, math, and the sciences, I believe there is a crucial connection between social studies and social, emotional learning. These connections are rooted in social justice and doing more research and teaching that we must ask questions on how and why we've been taught what we've been taught and how to implement change, will help to have a better understanding of our American education system.

My hopes are that by participating in this cohort, I will be able to learn more pertinent and relevant skills that are needed for the students of this generation and climate and community. Our world is ever changing, ever melding, ever growing and it's crucial that educators entering the academic realm be equipped with relevant skills and strategies that are collaborative, cooperative, and cohesive.