

January 2, 2024

Dear Members of ADSOEF and OSO

I first want to express my sincerest gratitude to the Alpha Delta State Ohio Educational Foundation and the Ohio State Organization. I am a recipient of the Esther H. Strickland Student Teaching Grant. This grant has greatly helped financially during student teaching. By receiving this grant, I was able to focus my full attention on supporting my students in the classroom and learning how to be the best teacher I can be. With this grant, I no longer had to work a part-time job in the evenings and on the weekends to pay for my college expenses. Rather than working, I was able to devote that time to lesson planning, networking, and well-needed rest.

I completed my general education student teaching in kindergarten at Fostoria Elementary. My student teaching began before the school year started for the students, so I attended a week of professional development and workdays before the first day of school. This week allowed me to understand what goes into the beginning of the school year and how to best prepare for it when I have my own classroom. I also got to network with other professionals and experience all facets of education, including administration, curriculum, planning, classroom design, parent collaboration, and much more. For the first few weeks of school, I served as an educational support in the classroom for the students as I observed my mentor teacher in action. However, I quickly began taking over parts of the school day by planning and teaching on my own. This experience opened my eyes to life as a teacher and allowed me to experience strategies that may or may not work when I have my own classroom. Eventually, I took over the classroom completely, by planning and teaching all curriculum, transitioning students from one activity to the next, and making executive decisions in the moment. By taking control of the classroom, I had the opportunity to embrace the impact teachers can make on young children and deepen my love for education.

Although I loved the opportunity to lesson plan, attend staff meetings, and connect with parents, the best part was creating relationships with the students. My classroom had 23 kindergarteners ages 5 and 6 years old. They were full of energy and loved to learn. They also had a lot on their plate as many of them had inconsistent home lives outside the classroom. Showing up for them every day and welcoming them into the classroom reminded me of why I want to be a teacher. These young children were resilient and happy despite all that was going on in the background. Through these relationships, I planned lessons that would interest them and spark their curiosity, such as interactive math games, hands-on phonics activities, entertaining read-aloud, real-world connections to the content, and fun science investigations.

My student teaching was filled with growth, learning, and connection. I am extremely grateful for the grant I received and how it enhanced my student teaching experience. I am eager to have a classroom of my own and create deep, lasting relationships with my students while using best practices and well-supported curriculums. I desire to see students reach those "aha moments" where they see themselves as capable of success despite the challenges in front of them. Thank you again to the ADSOEF/OSO for the opportunity you gave me to pursue my student teaching experience with my full attention. I hope to teach kindergarten or second grade.

Thank you!
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