



Alejandro Montaña

Residency Placement: 2nd Grade, Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Valerie Sedillo

Hometown: Sacramento, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Sacramento
Degree Earned: BA in Photography

My Inspiration to Teach My inspiration to teach comes from my personal experience with teachers that listened to me and helped me get through high school. I want to be able to help young people realize the importance of making good decisions that could help them stay off the path of an unhealthy lifestyle.

Why I Chose Aspire: I began working for Aspire as an after school educator in 2013 and I have grown very fond of the school culture and students at Aspire. In a way, it has become a second family to me. I chose the ATR because I want to continue contributing to the growth of our students and help make college for certain.



Alisabeth Cotton

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy
Mentor: Sally Lowe

Hometown: Morada, CA
Undergraduate University: Pepperdine University
Degree Earned: BA in Liberal Arts

My Inspiration to Teach: I love children, teaching, and learning! Ever since I was in Kindergarten at Aspire, I had the dream of being a teacher and having an impact on students. My mom, aunts, and grandma, were all incredible teachers and it is my desire to follow in their footsteps.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was a founding student at VSA and attended it from Kindergarten through 3rd grade. This experience with Aspire had an incredible impact on my life, and it is my wish to give back to the school that invested so much in me. It is my dream to teach and inspire the students in the same way that the teachers at VSA had inspired me years ago.



Ana De La Torre

Residency Placement: 8th Grade Special Education, Aspire Ollin University Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Kate Spencer

Hometown: Montebello, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Los Angeles
Degree Earned: BA Political Science and Chicana/o Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: All the students I have worked with throughout my experience in education serve as my inspiration to teach. Not only have they molded me into a better mentor and role model, but they made me realize that working towards equal education is something I want to commit my time to.

Why I Chose Aspire: This program is a great way to get teaching experience with the guidance of amazing mentors. As a resident, you truly feel supported by the entire Aspire team and having the opportunity to implement what you learn in the graduate courses directly into the classroom has been a great learning experience.



Anamaria Silva

Residency Placement: 11th Grade English, Aspire Langston Hughes Academy
Mentor: Amy Powell

Hometown: Stockton, CA
Undergraduate University: University of the Pacific
Degree Earned: BFA in Graphic Design, Minor in Classics with a Latin Emphasis

My Inspiration to Teach: I was drawn to teaching as a result of the staggering realization that many children of color do not experience a positive educational environment, and, thus, face immeasurable socioeconomic consequences. It is my hope to arm future generations with the ability to think for themselves, and to foster their curiosity so that they become life-long learners.

Why I Chose Aspire: I am impressed with the tremendous amount of support that Aspire's unique residency program offers its teacher residents. Moreover, the opportunity to learn and grow alongside a master teacher during my first year in the classroom is invaluable.

Andrea Rubio

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire River Oaks Academy
Mentor: Rebecca Jimenez

Hometown: Redding, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Sacramento
Degree Earned: BA in Liberal Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach is so that I can make a difference in a child's life. I wish to be that teacher who the students will remember because I was able to make a positive impact in their lives. I know that I might not be able to make a difference in every student's lives that are in my classroom, but I wish to impact at least a couple. I want education to be something that students look forward to do. I want students to have a positive experience when going to school. I want to make learning fun for students, so that it motivates them to want to learn more.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose Aspire Teacher Residency program, because I strongly believe that the only way to make a good teacher is by providing them with a mentor not only when they first become a teacher, but before as well. Aspire Public Schools are not only school, they are communities within a school and I am very grateful to now be part of the community.



Anna Truong

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire APEX Academy
Mentor: Anita Rodriguez

Hometown: Stockton, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Sacramento
Degree Earned: BA in Child Development

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration came from my prior elementary school teachers. They showed genuine concern and compassion to not only myself, but to my peers. It was the greatest feeling to be cared for and loved by someone who was originally a stranger to me. They shaped and molded me in many ways and I am grateful for those experiences. I hope to inspire my future students and help them find the motivation to learn, even if they may have obstacles in their way.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I loved the idea of having a mentor and being able to get as much real life exposure to teaching. I also loved their mission and stressing the importance of college to our students. Education is very important to me, and being able to work at a school that stresses that is amazing!



April Harwood

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Coleman Elementary
Mentor: Sherrika Scott

Hometown: Memphis, TN
Undergraduate University: University of Memphis
Degree Earned: Interdisciplinary Studies; English and Anthropology

My Inspiration to Teach: I want to be a force of change in our world, and I think there is no better way to do this, than to bridge the knowledge gap. A good education can change a person's life. I want to teach every student I have not just to read, but to develop a love for reading and books. As an educator I also want to go beyond the normal school work and make sure that every one of my students knows that I love them, and that they learn to try hard and believe in themselves. I cannot think of a more fulfilling job, where I can see the positive and loving impact I am having on a child's life daily.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose the Aspire Teacher Residency, because of its core values. I got to do some teacher shadowing before I applied, and got to see everything first hand. The most amazing thing I got to see was the collaboration process. There is a sense of family and care here that everyone has, and everyone really wants you to be your best. The Aspire Teacher Residency also pairs you with a mentor teacher, giving you the opportunity to be both a student in a Master's program and in the classroom daily learning first hand from the experience with your mentor teacher. I believe that this is an irreplaceable experience.



Ashley Duarte-Salaices

Residency Placement: High School/ Special Education, Aspire Langston Hughes Academy
Mentor: Adeline (Addy) Taylor

Hometown: Stockton, CA
Undergraduate University: University of the Pacific
Degree Earned: BA in Psychology

My Inspiration to Teach: I want to be a force of change in our world, and I think there is no better way to do this, than to bridge the knowledge gap. A good education can change a person's life. I want to teach every student I have not just to read, but to develop a love for reading and books. As an educator I also want to go beyond the normal school work and make sure that every one of my students knows that I love them, and that they learn to try hard and believe in themselves. I cannot think of a more fulfilling job, where I can see the positive and loving impact I am having on a child's life daily.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I have worked for Aspire for the past five years and I am a firm believe Aspire's mission. Also, I like that the program provides their residences an opportunity to work with a Master Teacher for an entire school year while simultaneously also earning a MA and credentials.



Beatrice Woods

Residency Placement: 4th Grade, Aspire APEX Academy
Mentor: Sam Estante

Hometown: Davis, CA
Undergraduate University: University of the Pacific
Degree Earned: BA in Speech-Language Pathology

My Inspiration to Teach: I was inspired to teach when I worked as a City Year AmeriCorps member at Rosa Parks in South Sacramento. Working as a City Year was both the most tiring and the most energizing experience I've had. The students I worked with were the definition of resilience. They brought me joy every day. I knew after a couple months in that urban school environment that I wanted to work as a teacher of urban youth for years to come.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I wanted to jump right into working in the classroom. I love that the ATR allows us to do that by pairing us with a master teacher; we are able to gain real world teaching experience immediately. Additionally, we are supported with theories and discussions in our master's classes that can be directly related to our work in the classroom. Aspire Public Schools have a culture of positivity and excellence that I admire and strive to contribute to as a member of the community.



Brandy Mitchell

Residency Placement: 6th Grade English, Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Taylor Reed

Hometown: Marin City, CA
Undergraduate University: DeVry University
Degree Earned: BS in Management

My Inspiration to Teach: Teaching is an awesome responsibility and a privilege I have in making a difference in the lives of so many young people. It is a delight to expose, mold, shape and challenge their thinking and using that to shape their learning experiences. There were quite a few special people in my past that did this for me and now I get the opportunity to return the favor!

Why I Chose Aspire: Aspire offers a quality educational foundation to students from disenfranchised communities which can prove pivotal in not just changing the lives of the students, but also positively impact the communities they live within. Learning from Aspire mentors and putting our knowledge into practice daily through classroom teaching experiences are the most wholesome experiences a new teacher can have. ATR provides opportunity for classroom experiences but also aligned graduate degree courses that truly prepare you for teaching.

Bryan Platz

Residency Placement: 6th Grade Humanities, Aspire Centennial College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Kelly Arnold

Hometown: Edmond, Oklahoma
Undergraduate University: University of California, Los Angeles
Degree Earned: BA in American Literature and Culture, Education Studies Minor

My Inspiration to Teach: I first deeply love building relationships and learning with students. I am passionate about learning, and I enjoy seeing this learning with others. I also believe that education is the key for a true democracy, and I desire to empower the students of my classroom.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR due to the communities that Aspire serves, as well as the focus of support and hands on development. I have worked with communities near many of the Aspire schools in Los Angeles, and I wanted to continue serving these communities. I also desired to begin my teaching career focusing on my development skills, which I believe the resident models gives, so that I may best serve my future students.



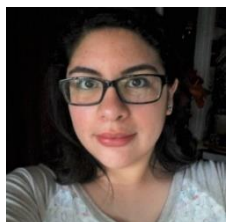
Carey Rose

Residency Placement: 2nd Grade, Aspire Hanley #2 Elementary School
Mentor: Kate Waldron

Hometown: Germantown, TN
Undergraduate University: University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Degree Earned: BS in Public Relations

My Inspiration to Teach: After graduating from the University of Tennessee, I packed my bags and moved to Haiti, where I spent the next six months living and teaching at a secondary boarding school just outside of Port-au-Prince. I am so appreciative of the time I spent teaching in Haiti because it showed me the power that education has to transform the lives of those living in poverty. After graduating, every student at the school promises to stay in Haiti and freely share what they have been given for free. I feel called to make that same commitment now in my own hometown of Memphis!

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose Aspire because I am so appreciative of the great purpose present in everything that we do and for the support provided to every new teacher. I am confident that I will feel completely prepared to step into my own classroom and be successful at the end of my residency year. I am so grateful to be a part of the Aspire family!



Celia Magaña

Residency Placement: 8th & 10th Grade English, Aspire
Mentor: Erica Ramirez

Hometown: Oakland, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Santa Barbara
Degree Earned: BS in Language, Culture, and Society

My Inspiration to Teach: I am tremendously grateful for the opportunities that I have been afforded throughout my education. As such, I feel a need to help support the growth of students who come from communities like my own.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was initially drawn to ATR because of its' strong mentorship dynamics and rigorous preparation of first-year teachers. Additionally, I know what it's like to be a student in an Aspire school and want to continue my journey with Aspire as an Aspire educator.



Chelsi Foreman

Residency Placement: 2nd Grade, Aspire Summit Charter Academy
Mentor: Kenny France

Hometown: Modesto, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Davis
Degree Earned: BS Human Development

My Inspiration to Teach: I did not choose teaching, but teaching chose me. I was originally committed to a career in the healthcare field. However, after an internship in a kindergarten classroom, I fell in love with teaching. I loved having personal relationships with my students; I felt privileged to have contributed to their success, even if my contribution seemed minimal. I teach because I want to inspire students to aim high, dream big, and believe.

Why I Chose Aspire: The ATR does *not* produce mediocre teachers. Similar to the Aspire school system, the residency program strives for excellence—no substitutions. The ATR is committed to training expert teachers so that students from any community can go to college. I believe in the potential of all students, so I chose the ATR.



Ciara Robinson-Jacob

Residency Placement: 5th Grade, Aspire Richmond Technology Academy
Mentor: Samantha So

Hometown: Oakland, CA
Undergraduate University: University of San Francisco
Degree Earned: BA in Communication Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach comes from when I was in school, there were so many teachers and mentors who poured into me to help me get to where I am today. It is now my turn to pour back into the community. I want to help create opportunities for my students and help them achieve their goals.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I love that Aspire advocates College for Certain! I have the opportunity to get hands on experience by working in a classroom and a mentor who is always available to help me.



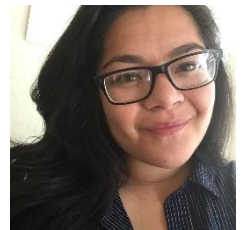
Corynn Carino

Residency Placement: 5th Grade, Aspire ERES Academy
Mentor: Jessica Ayala

Hometown: Los Gatos, CA
Undergraduate University: University of Miami
Degree Earned: BS Communication and International Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: I can associate many positive experiences with education over the course of my life and attribute much success to the encouragement I received from positive adults. Education has provided me with the opportunity to pursue my dreams. I believe that all students have the capacity to learn and deserve access to a quality education that will help them follow their dreams. Quality education gives students the opportunity to decide for themselves what they believe in, and with this knowledge, advocate for the world they want to live within.

Why I Chose Aspire: Aspire celebrates the story of each student and focuses on what they bring to the classroom rather than what they lack. The residency model provides residents with the unique opportunity to spend the entire year learning from and practicing with master educators that are invested in your growth. I know ATR will hold me to high expectations and support me in my journey to becoming an educator.



Desiree Apodaca

Residency Placement: 2nd Grade, Aspire Monarch Academy
Mentor: Karen Schreiner

Hometown: Le Grand, CA
Undergraduate University: Mills College
Degree Earned: BA in English Literature and Ethnic Studies

My Inspiration to Teach My inspiration to teach comes from the privilege of support that I received throughout my life that encouraged me, challenged me, and offered me opportunities to succeed academically. Whereas I was afforded the privilege of support due to many intersecting factors and identities that were in my favor, that should not be the deciding factor in whether a student receives a quality education. Through challenging and meaningful instruction as well as collective encouragement from myself, the school, families, and community, I am hopeful that my students will feel what I felt growing up – capable and worthy of an education.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I don't want to just be a teacher. I want to be an effective teacher! With the amount of in-class experiences and daily support, I'm confident ATR will set me up for success.



Diamond Johnson

Residency Placement: 4th & 5th Grade Math and Science, Aspire Coleman Elementary
Mentor: Katina Allen

Hometown: Memphis, TN
Undergraduate University: University of Memphis
Degree Earned: BA in Science (English)

My Inspiration to Teach: What brought me to teaching is the constant need for dedicated educators in the urban/impoverished areas of my city. Aside from living in Washington, D.C for 3 years, I was born and raised in Memphis and I know the struggle of children being in need of a caring learning environment where the focus is on them and their success.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I love what they stand for (College for Certain)! A really close friend of mine went through the program and she said it was the best experience of her life. She was in Stockton, California and she experienced an amazing culture full of educators and mentors who cared for her on her journey to being a successful/amazingly effective. Educator. I can honestly say that joining the Aspire Teacher Residency has fulfilled all the same qualities and characteristics that my friend so explained to me last year. I feel cared for, supported, and ready to dive in and learn all that I can from my amazing mentor Katina Allen and the surrounding educators in my school. It is also a marvelous feeling when you walk into a new place of work and you feel like family. ATR offers an amazing program and I feel lucky to have been accepted!



Elle Dvorak

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Alexander Twilight Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Chelsea Ortiz

Hometown: Sacramento, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Long Beach
Degree Earned: BA in Communication Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: I am inspired to teach because a little encouragement and belief in someone goes a long way. It can positively affect the rest of their life. I believe teaching is the perfect platform and opportunity to do just that.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of their strong mission. I observed a classroom at ATCPA before I officially applied for the residency, and I was hooked. The teacher's specialized educational techniques combined with the "College for Certain" mission allowed students to learn effectively and feel encouraged. I could not imagine a better program and I was sold.



Erin Mayo

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire Titan Academy
Mentor: Lourdes Meraz

Hometown: Walnut Creek, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Riverside
Degree Earned: BA in Women's Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: To serve the underserved and to make a difference in the lives of children.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of their goal for College for Certain for all students. The positive atmosphere and team-oriented relationships developed between the faculty and staff at their campuses are also great.



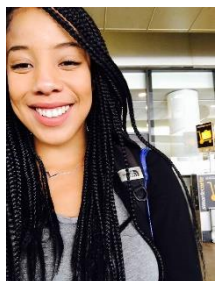
Gabriel Castaneda

Residency Placement: 6th Grade Math, Aspire Centennial College Preparatory
Mentor: Daniel Gil

Hometown: Lynwood, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Long Beach
Degree Earned: BS in Mathematics

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach came from an awesome Calculus teacher in high school who showed me the power of mathematics and pushed me to pursue higher education. His patience and dedication made me realize how teaching can impact the lives of people and shape their thinking. I pursued teaching because I want to share my love for mathematics and guide my students to a better future.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR program because I believe that a quality education is a guaranteed right to our students. I want to be the teacher who students look back upon and realize how I laid out the foundation for their educational careers. I love the approach that Aspire is taking "College for Certain." In the end I want to gain valuable support that will help me become a highly effective teacher.



Iris Velasco Wilkes

Residency Placement: Elementary Education Specialist, Aspire Triumph Technology Academy
Mentor: Erin Beeson

Hometown: Mountain View, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Santa Cruz
Degree Earned: BA in Sociology

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach is the opportunity to engage students in such a way where they feel excited about learning! Our students come to us with knowledge, resilience and so many experiences, and I love watching them develop those skills and work towards becoming life-long learners.

Why I Chose Aspire: I believe strongly in the Aspire mission of college for certain. I was ecstatic to have the opportunity to learn and work alongside my mentor teacher, while also receiving guidance and direction from my director and cohort. I feel extremely lucky to be supported by a group with so much expertise!



Ivan Martinez

Residency Placement: 6th Grade Humanities, Aspire Tate Academy
Mentor: Isabel Gomez

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Los Angeles
Degree Earned: BA in Literature

My Inspiration to Teach: To change the fabric of my community so that I may be able to materialize my beliefs into inspiring the lives of my people and the people that will come from them.

Why I Chose Aspire: I choose ATR because I align my mission statement with that of Aspires and am convinced that the rigor will better prepare me to shape the world around me. I also after years of working in education have never felt more at home than I do working at Aspire and feel this is evident that there is a purpose to me being here at Aspire and it is now my place give that purpose fulfillment.



Jacqueline Vergara

Residency Placement: 9th Grade English, Aspire Pacific Academy
Mentor: Grace Collins

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Los Angeles
Degree Earned: BA in Sociology and Spanish

Graduate University: CUNY Graduate School of Journalism
Degree Earned: Masters in Journalism

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach stems from my belief that a good educational foundation can be the key to success or disaster. When I was in school I had the misfortune of seeing lots of ineffective teaching practices that didn't give the students any useful information or applicable skills, and too many negative attitudes and apathy that spread like wildfire from teacher to student. I want to be part of the solution to this issue and help the upcoming generation excel as students and as citizens of the world.

Why I Chose Aspire: I kind of feel like it chose me! Initially I wanted to be a part of it because it just seemed like a really good teaching program. However, now that I've taken a couple of courses and gotten to know more about the values and the mission of the organization, I can say that I want to be a part of it because of the care given to making sure the students' individual experiences and cultures are valued and validated. I love the fact that Aspire places heavy emphasis on character development as well as academic excellence.



Jaime Ziemba

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
Mentor: Gina Perlite

Hometown: East Longmeadow, MA
Undergraduate University: Wheelock College
Degree Earned: BS in Psychology

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach comes from the teachers that have taught me and from the students. In my education, I had teachers that made learning exciting and fun. I hope to bring that to my students. The students inspire me by their excitement and curiosity to learn. I strive to become the best teacher I can be.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of the hands on experience in the classroom. I believe the best way to learn is by doing, ATR gives me that opportunity to learn in the classroom and experience a full year of teaching. ATR trains residents in many areas a traditional education program does not. This experience will prepare me for a lifelong career in education.



James Carr Jr

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School (EPACS)
Mentor: Nikki Hill

Hometown: East Palo Alto, CA
Undergraduate University: University of Colorado at Boulder
Degree Earned: BA in Ethnic Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach comes from several different people. My father, before he passed, was a community man who felt giving back to where you are from is important. The chance to influence my own childhood community positively comes directly from him. My elementary school teachers also inspire me to teach. The impact they have had in my life has inspired me to do the same for students who were similar to me. My ultimate inspiration to teach are my future kids. To be able to exemplify that no matter what your background is or your circumstances, education can provide you the ability to change who you are for the better.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because the program gave me the chance to work directly within my community to make a change. ATR also gives me the opportunity to work towards my own education while quickly giving me the opportunity to teach.



James Shelton

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire Hanley 2
Mentor: Meredith Kent

Hometown: Nashville, TN
Undergraduate University: Tennessee State University
Degree Earned: BA in Business Administration

My Inspiration to Teach: It's something that could only be explained by having a conversation about it with me.

Why I Chose Aspire: ATR has a very in-depth hands on process.



Jennifer Herring

Residency Placement: 2nd Grade, Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Valerie Valdez

Hometown: Sacramento, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Sacramento
Degree Earned: BA in Liberal Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: One of my favorite things to do in life is to help others learn the things that they did not think they could – the things that were “too hard” for them or that they did not think they were capable of learning. Though I have a lot to learn, this has always been the thing that comes most natural to me. When combined with a love of kids, being a teacher is the only thing that makes sense.

Why I Chose Aspire: I want to be the best teacher that I can be. I want to be able to walk into my classroom in my first year as a credentialed teacher and know that I will be able to teach my students well and will receive the support needed to make that a reality. No other credentialing program provides the kind of preparation and support that this program does.



Jill Walker

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire River Oaks Charter School
Mentor: Darlene Nutting

Hometown: Oroville, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Chico
Degree Earned: BA in Social Work

My Inspiration to Teach: Teaching actually allows me to have a positive impact on a child’s life when I felt like all I was doing was spinning my wheels in Social Services.

Why I Chose Aspire: I already knew how much I loved working for Aspire, so it seemed like a natural fit when I needed to take my skills to the next level.



Jimmy Aguilar

Residency Placement: 4th Grade, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School
Mentor: Stephanie Hardinger

Hometown: Redwood City, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Santa Barbara
Degree Earned: BA Latin American and Iberian Studies + Spanish

My Inspiration to Teach My inspiration to teach comes from my desire to be a positive role model. I want to be able to make a difference in students’ lives by inspiring them to love learning!

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of the program’s hands-on approach to student-teaching. I like the fact that I am not only able to learn effective practices and theories, but get the opportunity to apply them in the classroom alongside a mentor teacher that will guide me through it all.



Joyce Han

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire Firestone Academy
Mentor: Kathy Rodriguez

Hometown: Claremont, CA
Undergraduate University: Vassar College
Degree Earned: BA in Psychology

My Inspiration to Teach: I believe social and racial inequities can be addressed through public education, and I see myself as a person with the potential to enact change.

Why I Chose Aspire: ATR is going to help me grow and prepare to become the teacher my students deserve.



Julian Xavier Whatley

Residency Placement: 2nd Grade, Aspire Gateway Academy
Mentor: Jack Ha

Hometown: Pacific Palisades, California
Undergraduate University: University of Southern California
Degree Earned: BA in Interactive Media

My Inspiration to Teach: When I was in third grade, I was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, a form of high-functioning Autism. I had several learning disabilities associated with Asperger Syndrome, such as lower motor functioning and poor verbal processing skills. However, thanks to the strong support from my parents and the schools that I attended, I was able to receive accommodations to compensate for my disabilities. Thanks to my parents and the school’s aid, I attended and graduated from USC and I am now in the ATR (Aspire Teacher Residency) program. I decided that I wanted to work as a teacher in an urban-city environment so that I could help other disadvantaged children succeed, children who may not have as strong of a support network as I did.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose the ATR program because it will prepare to work as a teacher more effectively than any other program. The ATR program is the only teacher program I know that follows the model of deliberate practice. The deliberate practice model of learning has two criteria: 1) The learner must put in thousands of hours of hard work and 2) The person must have a coach or mentor to guide the practice so that learner continues to grow and improve. The ATR program will put me through many hours of hard work both as a teacher resident, and I will have guidance from my mentor so that I may learn as efficiently and effectively as possible. By the end of the program, I will have the tools I need to work as a teacher and make a positive impact in the lives of the students that I teach.



Katie B. Roper

Residency Placement: 6th Grade Humanities, Aspire Benjamin Holt Middle School
Mentor: Kether Dooley

Hometown: Lodi, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Chico
Degree Earned: BA in English Studies and Minor in Creative Writing

My Inspiration to Teach: For most of my life I've known that I would someday become a teacher. I'm inspired everyday by the students I get to work alongside and build relationships with. I truly believe great teachers can have a profound impact on students' lives and I would love to be considered one of those great teachers.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was one of the very first Aspire students when University Public School (now known as Vincent Shalvey Academy) opened their doors in 1999. I started in 1st grade and went until 8th grade at Benjamin Holt CPA. After I graduated from college I was able to come back to Ben Holt and become a Guest Teacher. When the time came to pick a teaching program I knew ATR was a perfect fit. It has been an incredible opportunity to be able to give back to the community that helped shape me into the person I am today.



Kayla Bowman

Residency Placement: 9th/10th Grade English, Aspire Ben Holt College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Jaime Hernandez

Hometown: Orangevale, CA
Undergraduate University: San Jose State University
Degree Earned: BA in Sociology

Graduate University: National University
Degree Earned: Masters in Public Health

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach comes from my desire to empower youth to lead happy and healthy lives. I stand firmly on the belief that an empowering and positive educational experience is the foundation upon which we can build such a life, and I hope to provide that experience for my students. I believe that students need an advocate in the classroom, and through this ATR experience, I hope to become that advocate!

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of the incredible hands-on experience the program provides for the Residents. The opportunity to learn from and work alongside a master teacher for an entire year is invaluable to the learning process! Residents are pushed beyond their comfort zones on a daily basis, and I believe that is why ATR Residents are so successful after the residency year is over. I feel honored to be part of such an incredible program, and I cannot wait to see where it takes me.



Kim Adamson

Residency Placement: History, Aspire Pacific Academy
Mentor: Lucy Cerritos

Hometown: Costa Mesa, California
Undergraduate University: : University of Washington
Degree Earned: BA in International Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: I was fortunate enough to have had a high quality, rigorous education, and I firmly believe all children deserve the same, regardless of race, socio-economic status, disabilities or any other factor. However, my adult experiences living and working in urban settings like Seattle, Los Angeles and Paris provided me with greater insight to how local, domestic and global disparities in education can lead to or continue cycles of poverty, prejudice and lack of opportunity, and can ultimately deepen division between communities. This personal evolution has been the basis of my drive for becoming a teacher, and it is a privilege to be a position that has the power to bring greater social justice to the world.

Why I Chose Aspire: I've always been interested in the charter school movement, and once I found the ATR program, I knew that teaching at Aspire Schools would be the most meaningful organization where I could impact children through education. I believe Aspire's 'College For Certain' commitment is the best way to provide underserved students with greater opportunities in life. As an aspiring teacher, ATR's pairing of residents with master teachers as mentors as a way to develop effective teachers is unique because it provides Residents with a strong support system of mentors, colleagues and staff while also creating consistent opportunities to reflect and grow as a teacher. The gradual release approach is especially beneficial because it directly mirrors the rate at which Residents learn and develop as a teacher, which I believe is ultimately the key to creating educators who are effective, confident and prepared to teach for years to come.



Laura Henn

Residency Placement: 6/7th Science, Aspire Golden State Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Krista Toumi

Hometown: Mill Valley, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Santa Cruz
Degree Earned: BS in Plant Science

My Inspiration to Teach: Teaching is intellectually stimulating, social-justice oriented, and motivating due to the relationships you build with students. Some of the people who have had the biggest impact on me outside of my family are teachers.

Why I Chose Aspire: I think the most efficient way of becoming an effective teacher, making sure you have the support you need to grow, and at the same time continuing to provide the students with high-level instruction is to work with a mentor teacher for an entire year.



Liz Petrie

Residency Placement: 8th Grade Humanities, Aspire Ollin Univeristy Prep
Mentor: Berenice Solis

Hometown: St. Louis, MO
Undergraduate University: University of Missouri
Degree Earned: BA in English

My Inspiration to Teach: I'm inspired to teach because I want to develop lifelong learners. I feel like so often people just accept things as fact, without doing their own research, and forming their own opinion. By instilling a love of learning in students, I believe that they will be able to think critically, and form their own thoughts and opinions about the world they live in.

Why I Chose Aspire: Once I finally decided to become a teacher, I started researching teacher residency programs. I knew I wanted a program where I was actively putting theory into practice, and where I had the opportunity to learn from a master teacher. I specifically chose ATR after speaking with a current and former resident, and hearing about ATR's success rate. I also appreciated how thoughtful the mentor teacher selection process is—ATR makes sure that residents learn from successful and experienced teachers.



Malia Vitousek

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School
Mentor: Chana Stewart

Hometown: Kamuela, HI
Undergraduate University: Colorado College
Degree Earned: BA in English and Education

My Inspiration to Teach: Children are so inspiring! I believe that each child can learn and that teachers have the responsibility to empower learning, independence, and passion. I love working with students and sparking a love of learning!

Why I Chose Aspire: ATR is an incredible program! The level of support and in-school training is unparalleled. I love the opportunity to be in the classroom with an expert teacher, absorb critical theory, and connect with a supportive cohort and the Aspire community.



Marisol Cardella

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire APEX Academy
Mentor: Cherie Sandoval

Hometown: Loomis, CA
Undergraduate University: San Jose State University
Degree Earned: BA in Pictorial Arts

My Inspiration to Teach: To help make a difference in a student's life and to help create more involved and educated members of society.

Why I Chose Aspire: It is a very supportive and involved credential program. This program really focuses on creating viable and passionate teachers who will make a difference in the lives of the students they teach.



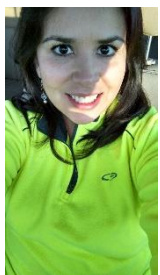
Megan Myers

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Alexia Thomas

Hometown: Cambria, CA
Undergraduate University: Temple University
Degree Earned: BA in Sociology

My Inspiration to Teach: I am consistently in awe of the inquisitive nature children are instilled with. Teachers have a particular role in the lives of our young people. They have such great influence over the academic and socio emotional growth children experience. I am inspired to teach because I want to be an encouraging and thoughtful being in their lives. I strive to see all children for the talented souls that they are so I can be a positive influence in their development as human beings. I am in a continual state of development myself and our youth are always teaching me through their genuine perspectives of reality. Our students encourage and guide me to become more aware of how I show up in the world especially as their teacher.

Why I Chose Aspire: The residency offers such a unique learning experience for new teacher development. We are provided theoretical educational practices and are able to immediately apply those practices in the classrooms we serve with our mentor teachers. The model of giving master teachers the opportunity to share their best practices ensures residents are prepared to be effective in their own classrooms further down the road. In a world overflowing with inequities I am inspired by the Aspire mission to equip students with the tools they need to succeed. Aspire focuses upon low-income, communities of color while challenging all staff members to develop their equity lens so we can better serve our students and their families. The residency encourages development of teaching skills while always connecting our practices to societal realities we are all experiencing. I am very thankful for this program model!



Myra Jauregui

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy
Mentor: DeeAnna Tolentino

Hometown: Linden, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Sacramento
Degree Earned: BA in Liberal Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach grew while I lived in Guadalajara Mexico. The short time I spent with a fifth grade class allowed me to fall in love with education. Molding these young minds and hearing their inspiring stories to want to learn showed me the impact a teacher can have on their students. I've also had the opportunity to work in a variety of classrooms, and have had the pleasure to get to know many students along the way. My only wish is to have left a small seed in each of those students to want to reach for the stars. I want to continue to plant seeds and inspire a generation of college ready scholars.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of the hands on experience in the classroom for the entire school year. I also chose ATR because of the experience and knowledge teachers have to help guide and mold me to be an expert teacher. The experiences and opportunities to learn while in ATR is like no other program out there.



Naticia Massod Smith

Residency Placement: Middle School SPED, Aspire Benjamin Holt Middle School
Mentor: Gabby Mosqueda

Hometown: Stockton, California
Undergraduate University: San Francisco State University
Degree Earned: BA in Sociology

My Inspiration to Teach: I never really believed that education was my calling until I started working in an afterschool program. It was there that I fell in love with helping children and making a positive impact in their life. It was there I discovered how influential some teachers were in my life and it made me realize I wanted to do the same for as many students as possible.

Why I Chose Aspire: I worked for Aspire for two years and really fell in love with the company and what it stood for: *College for Certain*. They not only care deeply about the education of their students but of their teachers as well. I didn't know that a program existed for special education until a coworker told me about it. It was then that I decided to look further into it and the rest is history. Once I found out how amazing the program was I knew it was meant to be.



Nelly Martinez

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Monarch Academy
Mentor: Bianca Garcia

Hometown: Whittier, CA
Undergraduate University: San Francisco State University
Degree Earned: BA History, Minor Latin American Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: I want to provide my students with the opportunities that I missed out during my elementary years. I look at my students and imagine all the infinite possibilities that await them as they continue to grow their love of learning. At the end of the year, I wish my students to pursue their dreams and help others reach their own as well.

Why I Chose Aspire: I wanted to learn under the guidance of supportive teachers that shared the same passion in building a stronger school community. I wanted have the opportunity to grow and gain the fundamental skills to become a more effective educator.



Nike Odusanya

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Coleman Elementary
Mentor: Asha Wesley

Hometown: Lagos, Nigeria
Undergraduate University: Bethel University
Degree Earned: Bachelor of Science

My Inspiration to Teach: Teaching is an expression of love, it creates freedom and allows me to guide an individual person to reach everything they set their mind to at an early age. It give me the opportunity to change a Childs mindset so that they understand what ATR represents, "College For Certain". This is my inspiration for teaching. Being able to be that role model to our future generation is a blessing.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I saw graduates of the program learn, practice, and perform so well. I figured I needed to sharpen up my teaching skills so I decided to go with ATR so I can get the mentor guidance and the help of the program so I am able to become a highly effective teacher.



Princess A. Akosah

Residency Placement: 6th Grade Math and Science, Aspire Inskeep Academy
Mentor: Taquita Aguilar

Hometown: Bronx, NY
Undergraduate University: Ithaca College
Degree Earned: BA in Legal Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: I decide to pursue teaching as my career because I am passionate about making a difference. As educators we hold so much power in shaping the mindset and perspective of the upcoming generation. I specifically choose to work in an urban neighborhood because there is so much negativity in the world. Urban kids often hear how unworthy or worthless they are. I want to teach children that with education, determination and drive the negative words and things they see daily are meaningless. I want to instill belief in young people and help them see the power that they hold.

Why I Chose Aspire: ATR is an exceptional program that believes in training, teamwork and collaboration. In urban schools today there are many teachers who are unprepared to meet the needs of urban kids. Without adequate intentional training it is impossible to properly serve our urban city youth. Aspire believes in equipping its residents with the tools necessary to create intentional teachers who understand they work they do and can meet the needs of the students they serve.



Raven Lewis

Residency Placement: 4th Grade English Language Arts, Aspire Hanley Elementary School
Mentor: Ayo Akinmoladun

Hometown: Memphis, TN
Undergraduate University: University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Degree Earned: BA in English with a minor in Africana Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach came from reading a book called *Savage Inequalities* by Jonathan Kozol. I had always considered, as a child, teaching might be the career best for me, but this book gave me the reason why I was needed in the classroom. I want to see every student experience educational equity so that they can become the great scholars they were meant to be!

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because this program supports and equips educators to be the most effective teachers in communities during the residency program and after.



Ruby Sandoval

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Titan Academy
Mentor: Jennifer Ghaneian

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Los Angeles
Degree Earned: BA in Political Science

My Inspiration to Teach: I think that education is a powerful tool and I would love to be able to empower others through education. I also want to see children in urban areas receive the education they deserve.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of the opportunity to receive hands-on experience, work with an effective teacher, and take courses relevant to what is being practiced in the classroom. Everyone I have spoken to about the program has told me that it is very rigorous and I know that is exactly what I need to become a great educator.



Sarah Park

Residency Placement: 7th/8th Grade, Aspire Centennial College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Rebecca Freed

Hometown: Anaheim, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Davis
Degree Earned: BA in Comparative Literature; Minor in Sociology

My Inspiration to Teach: I am inspired to teach because I love the learning process, a part of which involves understanding the world around us but perhaps more importantly, discovering our place in it. As a teacher, I have the privilege of not only exploring these themes but I also come intimately close to the intensely rich worlds of the students and the surrounding school community.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I believe that becoming an excellent teacher is a process that requires constant reflection, challenges, self-development and vulnerability. Teaching is a rigorous practice, and I am eager to gain as much guidance, wisdom and mentorship through the program. My first few weeks of ATR, I immediately noticed a strong sense of community and found myself blessed by supportive and caring relationships with other residents, mentors, staff, administrators and school community.



Sarah Pereira

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Capitol Heights Academy
Mentor: Amber Williams

Hometown: Elk Grove, CA
Undergraduate University: California State University, Sacramento
Degree Earned: BS in Recreation Administration

My Inspiration to Teach: I want to empower youth and be a catalyst for decreasing the achievement gap. I want to have a career that makes me feel that I serve a purpose and one that I am passionate about.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I felt that the residency model would be most beneficial for my learning experience. I admire the Aspire mission statement and feel that it strongly aligns with my beliefs. I feel that it is the best option for earning my masters and teaching credential. It is only one year and Aspire invests a ton of support for each resident.



Seena Mosissa

Residency Placement: 9th and 10th Special Education, Aspire Pacific Academy
Mentor: Christina Gonzalez

Hometown: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Undergraduate University: University of California, Irvine
Degree Earned: BA in Psychology and Social Behavior

My Inspiration to Teach: I faced a lot of obstacles in the classroom as a student and I was able to surpass those adversities because of some amazing teachers I had. I want to help students see their potential. They just need one person to show them that they can do whatever they want to do and be whatever they want to be and being a teacher gives me that opportunity.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I was a previous aspire employee who fell in love with the learning environment of the school that I worked at. Everything that the teachers did was rigorous and pushed students to their fullest potential. I wanted to work with an aspire mentor who can help me become the great teacher I want to be. Other programs that I looked at did not provide this kind of opportunity with a Master's program in just one year.



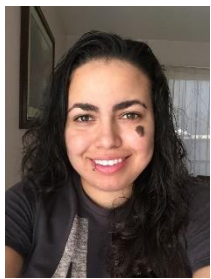
Shemsa Morkoch

Residency Placement: 8th Grade/Science, Aspire Benjamin Holt Middle School
Mentor: Patrick Chan

Hometown: Davis, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Berkeley
Degree Earned: BA in Integrative Biology

My Inspiration to Teach: My Inspiration to Teach: I am inspired to teach by my students' endless curiosity. Watching them gain confidence as they solve their own problems, come to their own conclusions, and grapple with challenges pushes me to create an educational environment in which all students have the opportunity to explore the world and discover themselves in the process.

Why I Chose Aspire: The Aspire Teacher Residency program allows me to learn the way I learn best – by seeing and then doing. This model, combined with the unrivaled challenge, support, and encouragement the program provides ensures that I will enter my first year of teaching informed, aware, and ready for anything!



Silvia Escalera

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Richmond Technology Academy
Mentor: Kim Nguyen

Hometown: Michoacán, México
Undergraduate University: University of California, Berkeley
Degree Earned: BA in Latin American Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach came from my high school Calculus teacher. Learning, although difficult at times, was very engaging and he pushed me to try harder when something didn't work out.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I had been working as an Instructional Aide the previous year and I truly believe in Aspire's mission to work with underserved students. Teachers have great support to achieve greatness in the classroom and this would be my opportunity to give back to my community.



Sonia Fernandez

Residency Placement: 4th Grade, Aspire Summit Charter Academy
Mentor: Amanda Brown

Hometown: Delhi, California
Undergraduate University: University of California, Merced
Degree Earned: BA in History

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach comes from my own experiences as a student. I often found myself struggling but thanks to a few of my teachers, I was able to overcome those challenges. I was inspired and I hope to one day inspire and impact a child's life the way my teachers inspired me.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I truly believe it is the best program to prepare me for a lifelong successful career of teaching. I completely believe in Aspire's "College for Certain" vision and I am excited to be a part of a program that invests so much in a child's education.



Sophie Hyson

Residency Placement: 5th Grade, Aspire Rosa Parks Academy
Mentor: Michelle Shackelford

Hometown: Tallahassee, FL
Undergraduate University: Barnard College
Degree Earned: BA in Environmental Biology

My Inspiration to Teach: The kids! I love working with students and watching them explore, learn and grow. The love and pride I get to feel when helping my students express themselves, think critically, and accomplish their goals makes all the hard work worth it. There is nothing better! I'm so excited to get to know my students and their families and be a little part of their path to success!

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I want to become the best teacher I can be. I was attracted to the program's rigorous Masters and Credential courses, experienced teacher mentoring, and year-long classroom involvement. I know this combination will help me develop the knowledge, skill, practice, and grit that I will need to truly impact my students' lives for the better!



Tiffany Herndon

Residency Placement: 10-12th Grade World History/Social Justice, Aspire Alexander Twilight Secondary Academy
Mentor: Daniel Rios

Hometown: Columbia, MO
Undergraduate University: American Intercontinental University
Degree Earned: BA in Business Administration and Minor in Marketing

Graduate University: American Intercontinental University
Degree Earned: Masters in Business Administration

My Inspiration to Teach: I am inspired by the enormous disparity in our nation's education system that underscores a tremendous need for urban education reform. Recently, I became aware of the great need for educators of color to teach students of color and the significant achievement gap, resulting from the systemic perpetuation of inequities in our society and education that have been institutionalized. Therefore, I decided to 'be the change that I wanted to see in the world.'

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR, because its commitment to sending each of its students to college was an exhibition of its dedication to the future of its students. I was profoundly moved by its mission statement and dedication to making education culturally relevant for impoverished and students of color. Furthermore, I believe that the structure of the residency program develops effective teachers that will be prepared for the classroom on the very first day.



Trayvonte Britt

Residency Placement: 4th Grade/ Reading, Aspire Triumph Technology Academy
Mentor: Kaitlyn Williams

Hometown: Richmond, CA
Undergraduate University: New Mexico State University
Degree Earned: BA Business Administration and Management

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach comes from those who took the chance to believe in me during my younger years. There were a few teachers who told me I was capable of great things regardless of my situation, which truly motivated me to internalize that my possibilities were endless. These same teachers held me to high standards at all times, I am honored to be able to return the favor to our bright minds of the future.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because it is one of the best programs due to the fact that one is able to learn and practice simultaneously under a master teacher. This is beneficial in learning the practices of an educator first hand, and learning the way of Aspire, "College for Certain."



Vanessa Vargas

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire AMLA Academy
Mentor: Claudia Martinez

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
Undergraduate University: Harvard University
Degree Earned: BA in Sociology

My Inspiration to Teach: Teachers changed my life for the better and it seems only right that I devote my life to doing the same for as many children as I can.

Why I Chose Aspire: I cannot think of a better network of schools to teach at than one where you have the ability to train with a master teacher before you ever step foot into your own classroom.



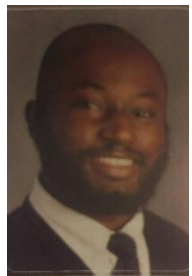
Victoria Phillips

Residency Placement: 7th and 8th Grade English, Aspire Centennial College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Jessica Kiang

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
Undergraduate University: University of California, Riverside
Degree Earned: BA in English

My Inspiration to Teach: I love to teach and inspire kids to be all that they can be. Building relationships and earning their respect is what keep me coming back every day. The students are my inspiration.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose the Aspire teaching residency because I was told that this program was one of the best out there. It has all of the support you need and they have such a positive attitude about teaching and education. The program not only helps the students, but it is also set up for the residents and the mentors to learn from each other. I love the populations that we serve and I am very confident that after this year I will be well prepared to run my own classroom.



Vitalis Obidi

Residency Placement: 6th Grade, Aspire Berkeley Maynard Academy
Mentor: Nicholas White

Hometown: Obolo Afor, Nigeria/San Francisco, CA
Undergraduate University: Santa Clara University
Degree Earned: BA in Political Science

My Inspiration to Teach: My Inspiration to Teach: As a youth I hated all the extra push my mentors and educators gave me to do better. I realized as I got older it was because of all the extra support that I became successful. I want to provide that same push to students who do not get the same support or chances to succeed like I did.

Why I Chose ATR: Aspire provides the best teacher supports and challenges teachers to become their best. I also appreciate the vast resources they provide to the student population they serve. I know after my time as a Resident, I will be much better prepared and would have provided excellent teaching to our scholars.



Yomyko Clark

Residency Placement: 6th Grade Math, Aspire Hanley Middle
Mentor: Tamera Malone

Hometown: Memphis, TN
Undergraduate University: University of Memphis
Degree Earned: BA in Social Work

My Inspiration to Teach: My inspiration to teach derives from working with children for several years throughout my college career. I chose to teach because I want to be an example to children that they can succeed and accomplish anything that they dream of.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because I want to be an excellent educator. I love that they take the time to mold and push you to your highest potential as an educator. Furthermore, I support the idea that they believe in: College for Certain, every child needs hope and love.



Yulissa Lopez

Residency Placement: 7th Grade Humanities, Aspire Ollin Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Keith Drucker

Hometown: Escondido, CA
Undergraduate University: University of Redlands
Degree Earned: B.A in Race and Ethnic Studies, Minor in Public Policy

My Inspiration to Teach: Growing up I was really privileged to have teachers that believed in my success and challenged be to grow into a strong and independent student. What motivates me to teach is my belief that every student deserves to feel supported and empowered throughout their education. The reality of the education system is that it's rooted in a legacy of systematic oppression that benefits some students while leaving other students too far behind. My inspiration to teach also comes from recognizing the inequities in education and recognizing the powerful role that teachers have in challenging unfair structures.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose ATR because of their gradual release of responsibility model. I really appreciate the fact that I'm able to learn directly from an experienced and effective mentor teacher and that at the same time I am challenged to find my own place within the classroom. The ATR program allows me to grow into a strong teacher by observing and practicing every day. I feel welcomed at the school I am placed and feel privileged to be working along other teachers that believe in their students and work really hard to be their best for their students!