

FUTURE GOALS ESSAY

I have been a list maker as far back as I can remember. I have lists for everything, including a general outline for my life (think of Jenny Grogan from *Marley and Me*). My list includes objectives and dreams like teaching Kindergarten and obtaining my master's degree. When I think of the list, it has most of the ticks; I have my dream job in my dream district, I am weeks away from my master's, and although, in some ways, I have achieved most of this dreaded "to-do" list, it just can't end here. As an educator, I recognize the ever-changing state of my career and all the hats I wear throughout the day, you must ebb and flow, and more importantly, you have to grow. In order to grow and build upon the knowledge, I have gained through my career and in my current Master of Arts program. I intend to add new boxes to my list. These include obtaining a second master's to gain more pedagogical knowledge and grow as a leader. Additionally, exploring various methodologies from trauma-informed teaching practices to become an advocate and developing a better understanding of post-secondary teaching to later become a professor.

My first objective is to obtain a second master's degree. My plan is to begin this endeavor in Fall 2023. My goal is through this educational journey; I will gain pedagogical knowledge and be more prepared to one day pursue my doctorate. Admittedly, I feel overwhelmed by all the choices- where to go and what to study. Therefore, I have narrowed the list of considerations to these two programs: A Master of Arts in Children's Literature from Eastern Michigan University or a Master of Arts in Educational Administration from the University of Michigan. I feel conflicted because part of me wants to go into administration and be a leader for my school. Still, the other part recognizes my passion for children's literature and the possibility of teaching children literature courses. Either degree will provide me with various pedagogies for teaching and leading, intertwining with my goal of becoming a college professor.

My next objective is to explore various methodologies from trauma-informed teaching practices. I feel it is vital to research this pathway to find ways to support students with varied needs and become an advocate for them. It is becoming more apparent that children are facing terrible situations and desperately need an advocate. To execute this goal, I will utilize a past project of mine where I list ways to become more involved with trauma-informed training through the National Education Association. Additionally, I would love to spend time volunteering and mentoring children at the Whaley's Children Center in Flint, MI, to gain new perspectives on trauma's impact and ways to support my students better. I plan to begin attending training this fall and apply to become a mentor by the start of 2023. This goal aligns with my long-term goals because it will allow me to grow as an advocate and learn new methodologies to help my students. Furthermore, this knowledge will support me in teaching students from every level.

My last objective is to become a college professor. This goal was selected because it aligns with my most significant life goal: leading and inspiring others to teach the change they wish to see. The goal to teach at the collegiate level is a long-term goal; I can't see myself leaving my kindergarten classroom anytime soon, but I would love to teach part-time at a local college within the next five years to begin this journey and gain experience. Eventually, I would like to teach full-time at a college. I recognize that the students I will serve will be much older and provide me with a new opportunity to learn about teaching in post-secondary settings. To best prepare for this, I plan to explore the before-mentioned master's programs and look to add-on specialized courses to help me prepare. Another consideration would be to obtain a graduate

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certificate in post-secondary education from a university such as the program offered at Michigan State University.

Overall, each new objective is intertwined with my life's mission. Without one, the others cease to exist. Life is about experiences, and without the knowledge of a second master's degree or experience of spending time learning and working alongside students facing trauma, I would not be the teacher I want to be for my future students. Each pathway leads me to further discoveries and abilities to lead, teach, and inspire.