

## Setting Goals to Score Them

By: Jessica Vocke

In 2015 I obtained my Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education and child development from Michigan State University. At this point in time I knew two things: my passion was working with young children and that I was ready for a new challenge outside of Michigan. I made a major decision and decided to pursue my teaching internship in Chicago, IL in a first-grade classroom in Chicago Public Schools. I had lived in Michigan my entire life, so this was a very big change for me. After three years of teaching, I realized I was yearning to learn more. I applied for Michigan State University's Master of Arts in Education (MAED) program with a concentration in P-12 School and Postsecondary Leadership, in hopes of becoming a better leader, better educator, and to continually be a lifelong learner.

Now, in my final semester of the MAED program, I can confidently say that I have become a better leader and educator, and I will continually be a lifelong learner. At the same time, I believe that these goals can be improved, but they will never be completed. Throughout my lifetime I will continue to focus on these goals and try my best to improve as a leader, educator, and learner.

The MAED program provides various resources regarding the best practices on how to work with coworkers, families, and students. After studying this information, I feel confident in myself as a leader and take away many strategies to best support the staff, families, and students at my school. Now, as this program is coming to a close, I realize that I view leadership differently. Two of the biggest take-aways from this program are that a good leader needs to be a good listener and a good leader needs to work together with staff, families, and students as a team. Leaders need to put themselves in other peoples' shoes and need to look at situations from different perspectives.

Being an educator in 2020 has been a year like no other. No one was expecting the changes brought on by the pandemic, and we were all required to learn on the fly. This year I really focused on my three goals, but I also focused on being as flexible and adaptive as possible. After five years of teaching, I was getting very comfortable in my position. Due to the global pandemic and switching to remote learning in March, I had to find new strategies and ways to educate my preschool students. I feel as though Michigan State University has provided the perfect program that provides knowledge, resources, and confidence in being an adaptive and flexible leader in uncertain times.