

My name is MaKyla Williams and I was born on June 23, 2002. Ever since I was five years old, I've wanted to be a teacher. Over the years I've changed my mind multiple times on what subject I'd like to teach, but now I've set my eyes on sharing my love for science, biology in particular. I've always wanted to teach older kids, and after doing an internship where I was a student teacher for a freshman biology during my later years of high school, I knew that was exactly what I wanted to do. I've always had a love for giving back to my community as well, so I plan on teaching in a low-income neighborhoods, and would love to teach at the high school that I graduated from to directly impact my community's future. Personally, I've never had a science teacher that looked like me – an African American Woman, and I want to send a message for my students of color in particular that we are able to persevere and excel at anything we put our minds and hearts to.

Growing up, I longed teachers who I felt genuinely cared about and wanted to build relationship with me, and that's who I want to be for my students. I plan to be able to form meaningful relationships and share my passion of in science with them. Although I've never been naturally good at science, I loved learning about, as it was one of the subjects that continuously challenged me.

There were times where I contemplated if I wanted to do teaching – or even live at all. 2019 was an extremely hard year for me, as I spent the first six months in and out of hospitals. I struggled with my mental health and finding a purpose for my life. During one of my hospital visits, I spent three months in an out-patient program known as Innovations through Mesa Springs. I did group therapy there every Monday through Friday, and I met so many strong and unique people there. Meeting all of these different people, hearing their stories, and seeing how much of an impact my advice and presence made on them made me question if I wanted to

become a therapist. After my freshman year of high school when I saw my first therapist, it was always something that would creep back into my mind, and after group therapy, it was an idea that solidified for me. It felt so natural to be able to listen, care, and give advice to others, and people always told me that I was quite easy to talk to, so I thought why not? However, eventually, I settled on becoming a teacher with aspirations to form some type of mental health related club at the school I'd teach at. I want to be able to create a lasting effect on others. I want my students and peers to always remember me as their personal advocate, as someone who loves and believes in them; and I figured the best way to do that would be to share my love of learning and my compassionate heart with people who need it the most by being a teacher that handles classes with a different perspective – one that takes into account my student's mental health, one that builds up their confidence, one that loves them, and one that reminds them that they can get through and achieve anything despite all of the pushbacks life would and have given to them.