

Essay

Please write and title a 500-700-word essay on the following theme:

School district throughout Missouri and the Nation are facing a shortage of teachers. In your essay, identify and explain how best to recruit students to pursue a teaching career. Reflect upon those teachers whom you consider to be excellent teachers. What skills are needed to be high-quality teachers? Please provide examples of how high-quality teaching inspired you to succeed as a student.

Make Teaching a Profession of Prominence.

Day one of my senior year, I walked into my first hour class, which was mainly juniors and seniors. I was prepared for the typical first day of school information. Instead, my teacher looked up and said, "I have a very serious question for all of you." He then went on to go around the room and ask each senior what they planned to do with their life.

As my classmates answered, I heard everything from doctor to lawyer to child advocate. Finally, my name was called, I excitedly answered, "I will be attending the University of Missouri to earn a degree in Agricultural Education with emphasis in the teaching option."

I will never forget the look and reaction I got from my fellow students. In fact, the girl sitting next to me asked, "Why on Earth would you want to be a teacher, they work way too hard for little pay?" I was dumbfounded. Why would you not want to be a teacher? Both of my parents are teachers. It was in my blood. The only response I could come up with was, "Well, I do not know".

For the next few weeks, I pondered the question I had been asked? Why do I want to become a teacher? I have had the privilege of having some pretty amazing teachers during my life. Mrs. Warbritton's love of reading taught me how important it was to read. Mrs. Williamson's love of writing taught me the value of putting my thoughts on paper. Mrs. McBride's love of science taught me to explore new worlds and never stop asking why? Mrs. Fadler's love of relationships in biology taught me the value of being a family and leaving no one behind. My agriculture teacher's love of meeting challenges head on, taught me to embrace the storms of life.

I have had so many teachers who have inspired me. Why would anyone not want to be a teacher? As I reflected on my friend's response, it was clear that many students see teachers as overworked and underpaid. I feel that if you asked anyone, with the exception of a few careers, they would say they are overworked and underpaid. So how do we encourage great minds to become teachers? How do we change the perception around teaching?

I do not have the answers to these tough questions, but I have a few suggestions. To begin, our society must focus on the positive and not the negative. Schools must begin to celebrate teachers as heroes, in front of their students and communities. Students and parents must see that teachers are valued and important. Schools could host a teaching excellence celebration, where teachers are recognized for their dedication and impact.

Annamarie Stone – MSBA Future Builders Belcher Scholarship Application

Next, teachers must become advocates for the profession. I have two parents who are both teachers. I know the job is long and hard. But teachers need to stop talking about the long hours and low pay. They must begin showcasing the impact they are making. Why would anyone want to be a teacher, if all they hear is do not go into this profession?

Schools must make the teaching profession as important as other professions. When we were in elementary school and had to research careers, never once was a teacher assigned. It was careers like nursing, doctors, and lawyers. Later in life, teachers were never invited to classrooms to talk about their profession. Schools must make teaching a career of focus.

Finally, schools must show an opportunity for advancement in the profession. When you become a teacher, the only real way to advance in the profession is to become an administrator. Not everyone wants to be a principal or superintendent. My generation values advancement. School systems must find a way to allow teachers to advance within the profession and reward them financially for it.

In order to recruit students to aspire to be teachers we must all work together. Teachers must promote the profession in a positive manner, schools must highlight the profession, and districts must allow for advancement in the teaching profession with accompanying pay increases. This may not solve the teacher shortage, but I feel it would help reverse the growing trend.