

Dear potential mentor:

I am a music education major at Western Michigan University, and I am highly interested in being a student teacher at your school for my final internship. For these last few months, I have been eager to continue the expansion of my teaching techniques in a professional environment such as your school. My passion for learning from teaching will make me an important asset to your team and a person you can count on to support you throughout our time together.

I have always wanted to gain as much experience as possible when it comes to music. I became a music education major in order to learn everything I can about every aspect of music, and in the process I found a love for teaching and connecting with others who share the same passion. As my curiosity about teaching grew, I was able to reach out to local organizations about opportunities to explore music directing and vocal lessons. I became an irreplaceable asset at the Three Rivers Community Players and was able to direct many vocal and instrumental ensembles. These opportunities led me to gaining a network of students and clients that I have been teaching privately since this past winter. I pride myself on my dedication to each individual and the sense of community that only music can offer.

I truly believe that my educational background, combined with my hands-on experience, will allow me to contribute meaningfully to your team. I'm grateful for the time and consideration you've given me during this application process. While my resume highlights many of my achievements, I would love the opportunity to meet in person to better share how I can bring unique value to your team and grow under your mentorship.

Sincerely,
Claire Eickhoff

CLAIRE EICKHOFF

Claire.e.eickhoff@wmich.edu • (269) 718-6383

Motivated and communicative individual seeking a Music Education internship for the final semester of a Bachelor's degree. Dedicated to applying a passion for hands-on learning and innovative problem-solving techniques to support students in achieving both personal and academic goals.

Education

Bachelor of Music Education

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI
Primary Instruments: Trombone, Piano

Expected Fall 2025

Relevant Coursework

Instrumental Methods I Pre-internship: KPS Hillside Middle School

- Observed once a week for both 6th grade and 7th/8th grade band classes
- Taught sectionals, class rehearsals, and basic fundamentals such as embouchure, tone production, note accuracy, and air stability
- Created and taught lesson plans with supervision of band director

Field Experience

March 2023-Present

Pit Director/Vocal Director: *Be More Chill the Musical* - Three Rivers Community Players

- Hired professional musicians and directed a small ensemble, accompanying a musical
- Directed music rehearsals and sectionals

Vocal Director: *Legally Blonde the Musical*, *The 24th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* - Three Rivers Community Players

- Taught large adult ensembles vocal technique and songs consecutively for multiple show cycles at a local theater

Vocal Teacher/Director: *The Addams Family Musical*, *The Lightning Thief* - Mendon High School

- Taught large young adult/adolescent ensembles vocal technique and songs consecutively for multiple show cycles at a school drama club

Instrumental Coordinator/Vocal Director: *Three Rivers Community Players' Cabaret* - Three Rivers Community Players

- Directed and performed in a small ensemble while providing live music for more than 15 different solo performances

Independent Teaching:

- Taught private lessons weekly for students of all ages
- Provided on-call advice and lessons for students of all ages

Currently Employed

May 2024-Present

Greenleaf Hospitality Group • Old Burdick's Bar & Grill at Wings West

Work Experience

Bartending/Hosting/Serving: *Elysium restaurant, Olde Mill Golf Course*

April 2021-July 2022

Lighting/Sound Crew: *Three Rivers Community Players*

Fitting Room/Phone Management/Cash Register: *Walmart, Meijer*

July 2019-April 2021

Useful Skills

Transposition/Composition

- Experience with orchestration and small ensemble arrangements
- Experience with transposition and small scale compositions

Piano Proficiency

- 16 years of piano experience, 10 years of private lessons

Vocal Proficiency

- 2 years of private voice lessons and 10 years of vocal experience

Tech Savvy

- Contributed to website creation
- Social media experience

Describe the personal dispositions, skills, or attributes you believe are necessary to be an outstanding teacher.

When I started high school, I was under the impression that the education system had failed me and that there was no hope for someone like me to succeed. I had no close friends, no sense of self, and no one to turn to when I needed help. As I progressed through my high school years, I met four notable teachers that aided me in developing my own ideas and self-confidence. I went from someone with low grades and no direction in life to giving a speech for my graduating class and getting into one of the most competitive music studios in the state. This was all thanks to those four educators who embraced their empathy to contribute to something they were passionate about. When I got to college, it was August of 2020, and the whole world was scrambling for any sort of stability that was accessible. It's hard to admit, but I struggled immensely, to the point where I contemplated halting the continuation of my extended education. Again, it was the educators around me that pulled me out of the darkness of that time, and I ended up discovering more about myself than ever before. When I started working with my own students, I realized that the torch had been passed to me, and all I want now is to be a mentor like those who came before me. The look that students have when they surprise themselves or discover something new leaves a mark on my heart that cannot be expressed with words. I believe that I will have a major contribution to a classroom because I genuinely want students to succeed. Not only in society's standards, but in their own eyes and soul.

Explain any work, volunteer, or personal experiences that are relevant to your interest in teaching and/or your ability to teach or work with students.

I stated in my cover letter and resume that I attained a lot of my field experience from a local theater in my hometown, called the Three Rivers Community Players, but that description does not show what was going on behind the scenes. I was approached by my eldest sister about a music directing position at the local theater I grew up at, while I was still questioning if teaching was for me. Little did I know, this decision would change my entire future. I quickly had to learn how to hire musicians and lead a full ensemble, and because of certain circumstances, I ended up vocally directing an adult ensemble for the first time in my life. After that first show, I was offered a position as a music director for a middle school drama club, leading to a long line of learning opportunities. Before I knew it, I had entered the most fast-paced segment of my life. For an entire year, I was offered back-to-back directing positions in multiple different show cycles. Because of the spontaneity of it all, I was able to learn more than ever before. I had to learn up to 25 songs every three months vocally, and in one case, 28 full scores on the piano in 3 weeks. After a year, I announced that I would be taking a break, and I got a call from a client involved in a show that I was not taking part in. They explained that their active music director was absent emotionally and physically. That same day, I drove forty minutes to attend the last half of the rehearsal, sight reading as I taught. I took on the role of music director shortly after that. These experiences taught me the importance of being a dedicated teacher.

Indicate the experiences you hope to have during your final internship. What skills or knowledge do you hope to gain?

During my pre-internship, I finally got a glimpse of what it's like to form a genuine connection with students. Before, I had only been able to help occasionally in the classroom while doing my observations. I hope that having a more substantial part in a student's learning process will aid me in learning more about how I can guide others towards their goals. To be more specific, I hope I am able to learn more about how to teach diverse learners and those that might not fall into the standard that society has placed for them. I have gone a good portion of my extended education without learning how to properly accommodate such students, and that's not right. Though I know that this is partially because there was never an opportunity for me to do so, now I want to make sure that I take that next step into becoming the best teacher that I can be.

From your point of view, how important is technology in education? What technology-related skills can you contribute to a school district?

Within my time teaching, I have been lucky enough to have worked in multiple contrasting environments with different resources. Because of this, I have been able to adapt to whatever setting I am in. I worked at a theater with a full sound system, a high-end electric keyboard, and a network of people that could help me find devices that I needed. I have also worked in the gymnasium of a small elementary school with a piano from the 1950s that hadn't been tuned in 20 years. I believe that technology isn't the foundation of a learning environment, but with that being said, this world is growing rapidly due to its advancements. I have been able to move with the momentum of that growth, learning how to handle a social media account, operate new and complex devices, and even help create a website for a small business. I have also worked as a stagehand for shows since I was 12 and can set light fixtures, handle large sound systems, and manage advanced computer programs. Even though I am able to teach without any technology, I do think that support devices can be incredibly helpful for diverse learners or aiding student concentration. Overall, it comes down to the needs of the students, and I will not hesitate to do whatever I can to further their learning experience.

How do you approach discipline and what role does it play in learning?

When I was a senior in high school, I had two teachers with extremely different teaching styles. One was incredibly strict and wouldn't hesitate before calling us out for doing the smallest thing wrong; the other teacher had no rules other than common sense and had us form our own sense of self-discipline. Both of these teachers were incredible in their own way and had one thing in common. Empathy. They were both looking out for us, hoping that what we got out of their class was impactful. Although one of my teachers was strict, she would always catch the slightest hint of discomfort in a student and ask to talk to them after class. This was not to scold them more but to check in and see if they were doing alright. She never saw an outburst from a student as a sign of disrespect; she saw it as a hint that there was something more going on behind the scenes. She somehow crafted a rigorous learning environment while also creating a space filled with good memories and bonding experiences. Her empathy is what made her a good educator instead of a dictator of knowledge. I believe that discipline will always be a developing idea in my lifetime. Right now, I think that students learn a lot from their own experiences, but they are also still so young. It wouldn't be right if I didn't have some sort of disciplinary system in my teaching. It is my job to show them the consequences of unjust actions, but it is also my job to teach them about empathy. Although I don't think I will ever be a very strict teacher, I believe that creating a proper learning environment is the most important thing an educator can do.