Like many elementary school teachers, my own elementary experience was formative. After changing schools several times during the primary grades, I settled into school life at Chugach Optional, a public school in Anchorage, Alaska. This school promoted student agency with flexible seating, teacher-student learning conferences, and student-directed learning plans. I have many fond memories of learning at my own pace in an environment which both supported and challenged me.

Despite always loving learning, I did not discover teaching as a profession until the end of my undergraduate coursework at the University of Maine. I was chosen to participate in a pilot program that trained student-athletes to work with elementary students on conflict resolution skills. It was this student-centered, hands-on, dynamic approach to learning that drew me to the field of teaching and reminded me of the things that I enjoyed about being a student at Chugach Optional. I returned to study at Loras College in Iowa a few years later to earn my teaching credentials and began my teaching career in Jordan School District, after relocating to Salt Lake City.

I stepped out of the classroom to raise my own family, while maintaining a connection to education through writing art lesson plans for local arts organizations. I returned to the classroom six years ago and was privileged to get a position at Washington Elementary. Working in a Title I school with knowledgeable and dedicated colleagues has again given me that sense of support and challenge that I associate with the excitement of learning.