

# Ohio University TEACH CLEVELAND

## Tips for Effectively Writing About Teaching in Urban Spaces Rooted in Asset-Based Thinking

Dear Patton College of Education Teacher Candidate,

This is such an exciting time for you as you are becoming closer to your intern year and eventually successfully leading your own classroom. As you apply to participate in the wonderful OHIO Teach Cleveland opportunity, we have included several important insights to carefully consider as you not only write your personal statements, but also reflect on your teaching motivations and philosophies.

1. Do discuss the assets of where you are hoping to teach and the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in any and all environments. We want to hear how embracing diversity is valuable to you and why teaching in Cleveland offers an opportunity to expand upon your commitment to learning and teaching in diverse spaces.
2. Read through your reasons for teaching in an urban space, and determine if you on more than one occasion, mention the challenges of teaching in urban spaces, even if it is supported by your ideas of how to work through the challenges. If you talk more about challenges, how can you transform this perspective to focus on what is positive about working in an urban space? Yes, you can talk about the need for equity in every space, urban, suburban or rural, but ensure that your discussion about equity, justice and injustice is balanced.
3. Avoid framing your interest in teaching in an urban school, as an opportunity to “fix” what is broken, or to “save” students from themselves and their environment. Do your reasons for teaching in an urban environment reflect that you see your future students, schools and communities as assets instead of problems to fix?
4. Talk about how you will serve as an asset based on unique teaching skills that you possess. Instead of the commonly used reasons for teaching such as being caring, and loving to work with kids, what makes you stand out? Provide specific examples of the type of pedagogy you will implement and value. Always choose the route of specificity instead of writing generally. We really want to know as much as we can about you.
5. Engage in a bit of research about the school district. What are some of the initiatives you would like to engage in? What is the mission and vision of the school district? How does it align with your teaching philosophy? How do you embody the mission and vision of PCOE and how might this help to align with your reasons for teaching in Cleveland?
6. Discuss the reciprocal nature of teaching in any environment. Just as you hope to bring your unique skills to teaching in any space, how will teaching in any unique space support your growth as an emerging teacher?