

## **GOAL STATEMENT**

*Kia Felder Williams*

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My academic, research and professional goals have been shaped by my educational background, training and desire to fill a gap in my community. I was born, raised and attended schools in Montgomery County, MD, and I have been honored to serve the students and staff of Prince George's County schools (PGCPS) for the past six years, providing educational leadership and assisting with the administration and supervision of the Autism Program/Special Education Department of my elementary school. As I look with hope towards my future, I am truly thankful for consideration to the PhD in Education program at George Mason University.

I earned a Bachelor of Science in Management and Marketing and then worked for 19 years in the private, non-profit sector as a Director of Operations. After deciding on a change of careers, I accepted the call to education. As a career changer, my approach to teaching/education was non-traditional. I earned my initial certification and training through the Resident Teacher Program of PGCPS. After my initial certification, I gave myself to advanced and specialized graduate studies. I received my Master of Arts in Leadership in Teaching, with a concentration in Special Education - Students with Severe Cognitive and Social-emotional Disabilities, completed advanced post-graduate studies in Educational Leadership and Administration, earning my Administrator I certification, and gained Advanced Professional Certification in Special Education (K-adult). With 20+ years of administrative experience and six years of hands-on teaching and supervisory experience in Special Education, my goals and aspirations are shifting.

## **Academic Goals, Research & Professional Goals**

My purpose in pursuing the PhD in Education program at George Mason University is to enter into a career in higher education where I will teach prospective and current teachers, strengthen research skills, and serve as an Interventions consultant for students, teachers, and parents of students with disabilities. I am drawn to the foundation of Project A.S.P.I.R.E. and its focus on pedagogy, research, technology and intervention. My academic background and interests fall within these four pillars.

Ultimately, I want to equip and develop special educators to work with students with disabilities from high needs areas. I desire to conduct substantive research that helps students with disabilities grow in ability and independence. I want to develop excellent research skills and continue the effective identification and evaluation of evidence-based interventions designed to propel the instruction and learning for students with high incidence disabilities from high needs areas. I would be honored to join the PhD in Education program at George Mason University. My background, educational experience and special education development have prepared me to enter this program, and my strong determination, motivation and career aspirations align with this program.

***\*I request consideration for Project A.S.P.I.R.E.***