

Ingram Scholar Alumni Spotlight



LAUREN McCABE, Class of 2018

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lauren-mccabe-05a377119/>

DEGREES

B.S. Special Education, Vanderbilt University

M.Ed. Special Education, Vanderbilt University

CURRENT LOCATION

Nashville, TN

CURRENT EMPLOYER

Williamson County Schools

CURRENT OCCUPATION

High School Special Education Teacher

DESCRIBE YOUR CAREER PATH

My career path is defined by my Ingram experience and the scholar community. As a first year Ingram looking for service opportunities, the amazing fellow Ingram Scholar Abby at

Vanderbilt (Fun fact: Abby hosted me during finalist weekend, and we both eventually ended

up in the special education field together! The power of the Ingram community!). Next Steps at Vanderbilt provides a postsecondary college experience for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (<https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/nextsteps/>). Although I had no previous experiences with this population, I decided to become a peer mentor supporting these students in inclusive spaces as part of the Vanderbilt community. From that first mentorship experience my career path became clear. I also owe much gratitude to former Interim Ingram Director and Vanderbilt Special Education Department Chair Joe Wehby, who helped guide me onto my academic path in majoring in Special Education with a focus on those students with the most complex needs after seeing how much I loved my Ingram work with the disability community. I became increasingly passionate and involved with not only Next Steps at Vanderbilt, but service and advocacy work within the greater Nashville and Tennessee disability and special education community for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

After my 2018 graduation, I decided to stay at Peabody to complete my M.Ed. in Special Education to gain more hands-on experiences in the areas of special education I am most passionate about: finding meaningful, equitable, and person-centered postsecondary outcomes for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities motivated by the students in Next Steps at Vanderbilt. This meant in my research a focus on state-wide high school teacher training and technical assistance programs, disability policy opportunities at the state level focused on the adult service system, and coursework centered on individuals with

postsecondary navigation is not easy for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is my goal to find meaningful employment, education, independent living, and community access opportunities for my students to find belonging in their adult lives, despite the complex system they are entering.

