I came to Barren County my Freshman year, having switched districts with one goal in mind: to complete the early childhood education pathway. I always knew I wanted to work with children, and the opportunity to co-op at a daycare was exactly what I needed.

 In these four years here at Barren County, I have achieved so much, and overcome so many challenges. Middle school was an extremely hard two years for me, struggling deeply with mental health, which in turn affected my school life. Though I maintained passing grades, I wasn’t meeting my full potential. Moving schools felt like a fresh start, to leave all of that behind and “figure it all out” so to speak.

 My freshman year was a bit tricky, as I tried to find who I was, and where I fit in, something I have always struggled with. Growing up with severe ADHD, and high funtioning autsim, I learned to mask, to appear “normal”. And while that skill helps me through day to day life, it often leaves me feeling disconnected from myself, and like I have no real place to belong.

 By Sophomore year, things finally began to change in that aspect. One notable change I made was the very thing people know me for today, my dresses. I have always loved history, and historical fashion, and occasionally wore old dresses. I found myself looking forward to those days, feeling a sense of self, and happiness, when I wore these old clothes. But despite my enjoyment, I wasn’t blind to the weird looks and backhanded comments I received. So, I told myself, “I can’t wear these old dresses every day, I have to dress normally sometimes”. But then, I paused. Why couldn’t I wear them all the time? I realized, there was no real reason.

 Junior year was a year of lots of growth and change, I wore my dresses every day with pride, branched out and began making friends with similar interests, but most importantly, I started co-op. Co-op gave me a sense of belonging, of freedom, and purpose. Working with the kids, I knew for sure I had found my calling.And now, as a senior, I am working for those goals more than ever. But that wasn’t my only achievement. I got a car, a liscense, and a real college plan. Furthermore, I expanded on my skills and hobbies outside of school. I have always had a love for drawing, but I let my insecurities get to me. I would get so frustrated with myself, feeling like I wasn’t good enough, making my hobby unenjoyable. But, just as I grew in school and work, I grew in art.

It can be hard to see how far I’ve come in my highschool career, but now, as a senior in my last semester, I can really look back and see the growth. Not only have I grown personally, in confidence, self-expression, and comfortablity. But also in an educational, professional way. Currently, I am taking three dual credit classes for SKY, one of which is my first college education class. Everyday I am getting closer and closer to my lifelong goal of becoming a preschool teacher, and each step of my highschool career has helped me along that path.