

I Public Education

I love public education because of what it taught me about the world and myself, preparing me for each endeavor life has brought me.

My educational experience started in the Catholic school system. It was at the end of my first grade year that my parents made the decisions to allow each son to choose if they wished to attend our community's public schools or stay in the Catholic school system. I can remember touring our neighborhood public elementary school and immediately being intoxicated by the energy the building contained.

It was in that public school that I was nurtured as an independent thinker and taught to think critically and compassionately about my environment. In our middle school, I fell in love with learning. I remember my team of teachers working collectively to stimulate my mind on current topics and issues while preparing me to think globally through interdisciplinary activities. As my educational experience continued, I entered one of my community's local high schools and found the power of diversity and the strength of self-identity. In my public high school I felt fully embraced by dedicated teachers, coaches, and advisors. Through their guidance, I was allowed to find out who I was through personal experiences as a leader and a participant in many teams, clubs, and activities.

Reflecting on my own education provided by the local public school system, I have immense appreciation for my public school teachers that brought creativity to the classroom, encouraged me to work hard, achieve goals and develop leadership skills. These professional educators connected our learning experience to the world all around making it feel relevant, and in doing so made me feel relevant.

I learned the power of embracing all others and myself in public school and for that I am truly thankful.

I love public education because it embraces all. Regardless of a child's socio economic status, ability level, race, gender, sexual identity, faith, or ethnicity, all are welcomed, educated, and nurtured by masterful artists of humanity. These artists are commonly referred to as teachers.

Best wishes friend,

**Nicholas Azzarella
Teacher of Special Education**