

As my only prior public-school experience consisted of my own childhood, I found that my volunteer work was invaluable to my perception of the wide variety of school campuses, classrooms, administrative differences, and teachers. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work within two different schools in two different districts. The amount of community support, freedom within the required curriculum, and funding in the classroom varied widely as well. I was able to see, hear, and converse with parents and teachers who were on opposite sides of the spectrum in terms of satisfaction with their child's education, and with teachers who were satisfied and dissatisfied with their position. Speaking one-on-one with educators and their frustration in the ability to teach what they believe is socially just, to have access to the resources necessary to give every student what they need, and the lack of support from administration was eye opening. The educators who let me into their classrooms met me with generosity and open hearts with answers to my questions. A common line drawn between the two was the lack of physical classroom support. Everyone was so grateful for my assistance with their students in and out of the classroom. Volunteering is something that I regrettably have not made much time for in my life. Just this small amount I participated in solidified the great importance of teamwork and community in our world.

My time in each of the classrooms and on field trips deeply supported my desire to work with children. It had been nearly a year since I had the chance to be in the classroom and I found it just as energizing and rewarding as I knew it to be for me. Despite the struggles and unmet needs I see in the system, it excited me to feel that I am taking steps to further my education to be an educator. For that, I was so thankful to have had the requirement of hours in the public school system. A little insight and experience comforted me in my path.