

My Educational Experience

The Anchorage School District has allowed me to have a unique educational experience. Throughout my career as an ASD student, I've gotten to be part of three special programs: the Spanish Immersion Program, the Seminar School, and the Biomedical Career Academy. The education I have gotten through these programs has helped define who I am as a person and will continue to impact me throughout my life.

I was part of the Spanish Immersion Program throughout elementary and middle school. The Anchorage School District offers this Spanish Immersion Program at Government Hill Elementary School, Romig Middle School, and West High School. My Cuban father taught me enough Spanish to enter The Spanish Immersion Program as a Spanish-speaking student. During my time in the Spanish Immersion Program, I spent half the day learning in English and half the day learning in Spanish. Although I spoke some Spanish at home since it's my father's native language, I would have never learned to write in Spanish if I had not attended the Spanish Immersion Program. I also had the opportunity to truly refine my Spanish skills, since I could gain a greater Spanish vocabulary and learn the grammar rules of the Spanish language. Beyond just learning the language, being part of the Spanish Immersion Program helped teach me about Hispanic culture. In the future, I hope to become a surgeon. The Spanish skills I have gained from attending the Spanish Immersion Program will be integral to helping me understand and communicate with Spanish-speaking patients.

For high school, I left the Spanish Immersion Program and attended Service High School, where I was part of the Seminar School. The Seminar School is a program which encourages

kids to become independent thinkers by having them read texts written by great philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle, and Emerson. Once students have read those texts, they come together in small groups to discuss the meaning of the text and how it relates to contemporary society. After this, students have a seminar about whether or not the ideas presented by the ancient philosopher are still relevant in modern society. Before high school, I was always a quiet person. Attending the Seminar School and being forced to speak in front of the class during seminars forced me to overcome my shyness. The confidence I have gained from being part of the Seminar School will help me later in life as I go through college and hopefully medical school. Also, going along with the mission of the Seminar School, being part of this program has helped me become an independent thinker. I know not only how to follow directions but also how to think outside the box and find creative solutions to problems I encounter. This will help me should I become a doctor, since sometimes it may be unclear how to treat a patient and I must come up with a solution without the guidance of others.

Another program I have been apart of at Service High School is the Biomedical Career Academy. This program is a combination of Project Lead the Way and Health Occupation Students of America, both of which are national programs designed to help high schoolers gain an insight into the medical field. I have always had an interest in medicine, so I'm extremely grateful these programs have given me the opportunity to gain insight into various career pathways in the medical field. Thanks to these programs, I have decided to pursue a career as an orthopedic surgeon. Also, as part of these programs, I had to do a community service project and a research project. For these projects, I chose to do a fundraiser for the Foundation for African Medicine and Education and to work with the Anchorage Young Women's Christian Association

to research why so many low-income women do not receive essential breast and cervical cancer screening. These programs have helped me when it comes to applying for colleges, since most people I'm competing against for slots in competitive schools have completed some sort of research. I'm incredibly grateful to the Biomedical Career Academy for helping me find which career I would like to pursue and prepare me for the college admission process.

The Spanish skills, independent thinking skills, and sense of direction I have gained from being part of the Spanish Immersion Program, Seminar School, and Biomedical Career Academy have helped shape who I am and define who I will become.