A In (Ainee) Jeong

Dr. Cadray

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The Tenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution states: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

Education is not explicitly mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. Of course, along with the federal government, the Constitution does have an effect on public education. But the primary power is given to the states.

This results in many differences among the school systems and curriculums of each state, and I was able to see those differences firsthand when I moved from Georgia to Indiana.

I grew up in Georgia and attended school there from preschool up to 8th grade. Following my graduation from Clarke Middle School, my family relocated to Indiana, where I completed 9th to 12th grade at Noblesville High School.

Thus, most of my schooling took place in Georgia—more specifically, Athens, Georgia, which houses the University of Georgia. My schooling in Indiana took place in Noblesville, a suburb of Indianapolis, the state capital.

When I visited the administrative office to enroll into the Noblesville school system, I remember them telling me I would have to take the Algebra I ECA—or, End of Course Assessment—which was required of 8th graders who had taken Algebra that previous year and are looking to take Geometry their freshman year of high school.

At this time, I wasn’t sure what Algebra consisted of exactly. I did know that I learned the basics of Pre-Algebra in the “Accelerated Math” class in 5th grade. But in middle school, Math was always just called “Math.”

In 8th grade back in Georgia, I remembered our math teachers would tell us that in high school, our math classes would be called “Math 1,” “Math 2,” “Math 3,” and so on. But in Noblesville, Math had different names like Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus.

I found that this difference in curriculum made it difficult for my Athens friends to distinguish certain math concepts, one of them once telling me, “I think I learned Algebra through Calculus, but I’m not actually sure.”

While this apparent difference made credit transfer and course placement from Georgia to Indiana a little more tedious, fortunately, other translations from one state to the other proved to be easier.

Georgia’s Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests, or the CRCT, which were taken in grades 1-8 during my time in Georgia schooling, were quite parallel to the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus, or the ISTEP+, administered to grades 3-8. This made some of the technicalities of transitioning from the Georgia school system to the Indiana one a little smoother.

Thinking back on my experience between the two states, there is definitely much more I could discuss besides the contrasts in curriculum. However, these other things such as student body demographics, usage of technology, programs and extra-curriculars offered don’t wholly depend on the state governments’ power over education and could differ from school to school, district to district, city to city.

Nonetheless, the matter of state power ties in with other, broader issues in education such as standardized testing, funding, and the effectiveness of federal educational intervention. As I learn more about these wider issues in my Educational Studies courses, gain more insight from field experiences, and continue to reflect on my own education background, I am still in the process of forming my own personal stance on whether or not states should have the chief control over their education and school systems.

I’m thankful that my transition from Georgia to Indiana was not so drastic and difficult for me to excel. I had no trouble adapting to Indiana schooling and in completing the graduation requirements, which I would later find out are also slightly different from those of Georgia.

The mostly hassle-free transition was thanks to having active community support in both Athens and Noblesville. Athens’ schools, being in a college-town, had much support from UGA, where incentives for reading a certain number of books could earn you a free ticket to a college basketball game. Noblesville’s School Board, being in a small town with just one high school, was heavily dependent on the voice of passionate parents and devoted faculty to make decisions.

The ease of transition was also thanks to the constant family support, encouragement, and motivation that I received from when I first set foot in a preschool to even now as I attend Emory. My parents did not let the differences in state testing and standards hinder my academic growth and achievement. For instance, looking back to when I enrolled in my new school in Indiana, if my dad had not been straightforward with the counselor, I would not have had the chance to prove I had already learned Algebra I back in Georgia, and I would surely not be where I am today.