

The History of Public Education

The purpose of this document is to define the original purpose of public education. It is very easy to do because it is right there in the documents that define our US Constitution. The founders of our country believed our constitution would only work if the people were virtuous. Today we use the word ethics (see [“The Law and a Calling”](#) for an example of ethical virtues). In those defining documents (in the first few paragraphs) you can see what they obviously meant by separation of Church and State, and why they needed public education for its most important subject, ethics.

Begins in Massachusetts with John Adams

It (that original purpose of public education) is found at the beginning of the [Constitution of the State of Massachusetts](#). John Adams’ lifelong passion was the study of government, and this hobby resulted in the first constitution. By the time of the Constitutional Convention, John had written so much on the subject, it was better for him not to be there for his ideas to be accepted. And that is what happened while John was serving his country in France. By reading John’s many words, you will see the idea of public education came with the idea of constitutional government, his idea. He wrote several formal papers on the subject (referenced with his constitution). Plus, while he was in France he and his wife Abigail exchanged many letters documenting for us what was going on at the time. These letters prove Abigail was very important in the history of this Country. They also prove the best way to get things done is to not seek the credit.

Summarized in the Massachusetts Constitution

The purpose of public education is found right at the beginning of the Massachusetts Constitution, in [Article Three](#). By the way, [Article Two](#) defines the separation of Church and State, and [Article One](#) states we are created equal. Before he wrote the first constitution, John also drafted our [Declaration of Independence](#) (with ideas from his previous documents); and he agreed with keeping as three separate documents: our [Bill of Rights](#), our Declaration of Independence and our [US Constitution](#). Expressing the same ideas, those three are combined in the Massachusetts Constitution. But, like a three legged stool, our Constitution is meaningless without those other two legs. If any other questions, the writers said to read the [Federalist Papers](#). Since he was first, all John’s writings define the word constitution.

Summary: History of Public Education

The purpose of this document is to define the original purpose of public education. The founders of our country believed our constitution would only work if the people were taught ethics.. In those defining documents (in the first few paragraphs) you can see what they meant by separation of Church and State, and why they needed public education for its most important subject, ethics. It is all in [Article Three](#).