

Meet Our Spring 2026 Cohort



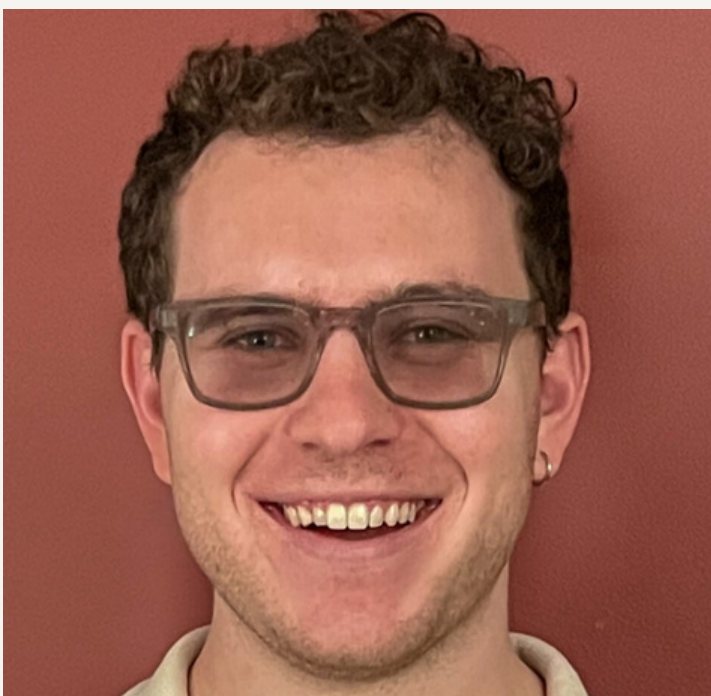
Victoria Bryant

Victoria is a second-year Master's student in Education Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she specializes in quantitative data analysis. She earned her B.A. in Public Policy and Political Science, with a minor in Spanish, from UNC Chapel Hill and previously served as a Chancellor's Fellow supporting initiatives in educational equity and community engagement. At Columbia, she has collaborated with Boston Public Schools and The Studio Museum in Harlem. She hopes to pursue a career exploring museum-school partnerships that support marginalized students' academic identity development.



Jennifer Frish

Jennifer is currently pursuing an M.A. in Sociology of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from American University and began her career through the Chicago Teaching Fellows program while completing an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction at National Louis University. She taught kindergarten on Chicago's South Side, elementary school in Manhattan, and later at a charter school in Rhode Island. These experiences fuel her passion for advancing educational equity and strengthening school systems.



Sam Gittleman

Sam is pursuing his Master's in English Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. After receiving his B.A. in Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology from WashU, Sam's love of teaching has taken him from the woods of Maine to South Africa, where he taught at the School for Ethics and Global Leadership and the African Leadership Academy, and to New York City public schools. Sam's particularly interested in an education that allows all of our students to engage deeply, come alive, and develop their agency.

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Arushi Gupta

Arushi is pursuing her LLM at Columbia Law School. She is passionate about uplifting marginalised groups of society and believes that law can contribute to that endeavour. At the same time, she wants to think about and work towards dismantling legal systems that impede justice. At CLPR, Arushi hopes to work towards strengthening the education system, and find, how, law and other tools can help achieve that goal.



Neha Gupta

Neha is pursuing her Master's of Education in Sociology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, building upon her B.A. in Sociology from the University of Maryland and exploring interactions between sociology, economics, and education policy. Previously, she worked as a program director at a test preparation company, expanding access for underrepresented students and strategizing innovative program design to optimize product effectiveness. She continues to tutor students, specializing in learning differences and under-motivation. She is most passionate about improving equitable access to quality resources and revitalizing student empowerment.



Evelynne Ashley Hatton

Evelynne is a second-year student at Columbia Law School. She received her B.A. in philosophy from the Ohio State University. During her undergraduate studies, she served as a peer mentor to first-year students and trained members of student organizations in suicide prevention. Evelynne is passionate about child and education law, and during law school, she has assisted in representing children in Family Court as a legal intern at the Children's Law Center.

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Sophia Heisman-Gibbons

Sophia is a third-year student at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School. After studying Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought at Amherst College, I became passionate about using legal advocacy for systemic change. I am dedicated to serving families and children, having worked with the ACLU's Racial Justice Program and Penn Law's Custody and Protection Project. Prior to law school, I worked at Latham & Watkins and look forward to returning there as a First-Year Associate upon graduation.



Fiona Hoang

Fiona is pursuing her Master's in Education Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University. She received a B.A. in Political Science from Providence College. Before attending Teachers College, she worked in the classroom, after-school programming, and educational research in Rhode Island, Maine, and Vietnam. She is interested in how education intersects with policy, both theoretically and experientially, to shape students' experiences and outcomes. More specifically, she is concentrated on cultivating accessible and practical policies in rural education, international comparative education standards, and after-school development.



Nilesh Jain

Nilesh is pursuing his Master's in Education Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University. After doing MBA in Finance, Nilesh worked for 25 years in Capital Markets in India and the United States. Nilesh started public service roles in 2018 with Edgemont Board of Education. He is currently on Board of Education Southern Westchester BOCES, Treasurer STEM Alliance Mamaroneck and Advisory Board member Yonkers Partner in Education. Nilesh is passionate about strengthening civic and democratic engagement with community, designing inclusive school policies and advocacy for equitable school funding.

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Daphne Kass

Daphne is a second-year student at NYU School of Law. She earned her B.A. in Ethics, History, and Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon University. Before attending law school, Daphne joined Teach For America, where she taught elementary school math in the Bronx. She also worked as a tutor in high school and college and is deeply passionate about expanding access to quality education. Daphne aspires to pursue a career that combines her interests in education, equity, and public policy.



Jenny Lim

Jenny is a second-year student at NYU School of Law. Her interest in education policy began in a teacher-prep curriculum and grew at the University of Virginia, where she mentored English language learners. Teaching Korean over Zoom during the pandemic further highlighted for her how crises deepen domestic educational inequalities. Through CRPL, Jenny hopes to develop the tools necessary to advance systemic improvements in public education, combining her background in politics and economics with her passion for expanding access and equity.



Jia Xuan Valene Lim

Valene is pursuing her graduate MA degree in Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences at Columbia University, following her BA degree in Human, Social, and Political Sciences at the University of Cambridge. Given her background in both qualitative and quantitative social sciences, she is passionate about exploring public policy issues from multidisciplinary angles. Upon graduation, she will be joining the Singapore government as a civil servant.

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Nia McFall

Nia is a second-year student at New York University School of Law. They graduated from New York University in 2021 with a B.A. in Social & Cultural Analysis with a concentration in Politics & Africana Studies. During undergrad Nia worked as a civic curriculum teacher in Brooklyn through Generation Citizen and spent the rest of undergrad training other students to lead their own classrooms. Nia's mother has been an educator in Chicago for over 20 years, influencing Nia's passion for education policy and reform.



Anurag Mishra

Anurag Mishra is a Master of Public Administration candidate at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, concentrating in Tech Policy and Innovation. He holds a Master's in Economics from the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade and a Bachelor's from the University of Delhi. Before SIPA, he worked with the World Bank's Global Education Practice and served as Chief of Staff to the Education Minister of Delhi, leading reforms in public schools and skill development. Anurag aspires to leverage artificial intelligence to design evidence-based policies that transform education and enhance learning outcomes globally.



Sophia Parizadeh

Sophia is a second-year student at UC Irvine School of Law and holds a B.A. from UC Berkeley. She previously served as an AmeriCorps fellow at the San Diego Superior Court, assisting self-represented litigants. Her background includes work with the Berkeley Human Rights Center and teaching English and Farsi. Sophia focuses on the intersection of policy, technology, and governance, specifically the responsible integration of AI in education. She is dedicated to improving access and outcomes for marginalized students through innovative policy solutions.

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Patrícia Santana da Silva

Patrícia Santana is pursuing her Master's in International and Comparative Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She holds an LL.B. in Law from Brazil and, as a social-impact leader, has supported leadership development networks focused on community strengthening and public-sector improvement. Her roles span philanthropy and education at Fundação Lemann, the Latin America Leadership Academy, and as Executive Director of Equidade.info at Stanford's Lemann Center, where she led a national study on educational inequities. Patrícia aims to advance equity-centered education policy, with interest in decolonial education, philanthropy, and collaborative networks driving systemic change.



Zaria Stevenson

Zaria is a second-year student at Howard University School of Law, where she also earned her B.S. in Psychology as a member of the Women's Soccer Team. Throughout her academic career, she has focused on mentorship, educating D.C. youth through grassroots programs and helping athletes transition into corporate careers. Having worked closely with students across various settings, Zaria is deeply interested in how education intersects with policy, law, and community enrichment to create lasting impact.



Ronald Taylor

Ronald J. Taylor is an MBA candidate at Columbia Business School, concentrating in Private Equity and Impact Investing. He holds an Ed.M. in Independent School Leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University and a B.A. in Policy Studies and M.S.Ed. from Syracuse University. His career spans youth safety and policy at TikTok, and educational leadership and teaching roles at The Browning School, Horace Mann, and Harlem Children's Zone. He aims to leverage impact capital to expand educational opportunity and Black male achievement through philanthropic investment and systems-level change.

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Matthew Watts

Matthew J.A. Watts is a dynamic leader and U.S. Army Captain pursuing a dual MIA/MBA at Columbia Business School and the School of International and Public Affairs as a Consortium Fellow. As the owner of Watts Family Dentistry, a \$2.9M practice, he drove a complex succession transition, increasing profitability by \$900,000 YOY through data-driven operations. Concurrently, his seven-year military career spans global leadership, commanding a 126-member troop and serving as an Aide-de-Camp. Matthew's B.S. is from West Point. Recognized as a "30 Under 30" leader, he inspires teams, optimizes systems, and leads with empathy and precision.



Camille Watts

Camille is a dual-degree MBA/MIA candidate at Columbia Business School and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, concentrating in Social and Urban Policy. She previously served as a U.S. Army Human Resources Officer, where she developed and implemented administrative policies across multiple military organizations. Camille seeks to bridge public policy and business leadership to advance inclusive opportunities and equitable pathways for underserved communities.



Anna Weaver

Anna is a second-year student at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. She received her B.A. from Johns Hopkins University in Film & Media Studies. Prior to pursuing a legal education, Anna was professionally focused on arts education. She has worked in a teaching artist and an education programming capacity at numerous arts non-profit organizations, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Anna is excited to implement her growing legal skills in the fight to secure a quality education for all students.

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Gargi Yadav

Gargi is a first-year Master of Public Administration candidate at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, concentrating in International Finance and Economic Policy. She holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Delhi. Prior to SIPA, she worked at a public policy think tank in New Delhi, focusing on research and capacity-building initiatives across governance, education. Her interests lie in leveraging finance and evidence-based policy towards development outcomes.