



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

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Update 1: Over the last 2 weeks at the Center for Law and Education in Boston, MA, I have been privileged to take my law school education into a practical context. During the first full week, I began statutory investigation, something that I have always been interested in exploring that was not part of the 1L curriculum. With the support of my supervising attorney, I was able to complete my first article. I have also begun doing research into bills being considered in MA that could have implications for our clients. My brief time at CLE has been inspiring, and I feel even more convinced that public interest law is the ideal path for my interests. While I am still learning and progressing slowly through my work, I appreciate my team's kindness. Thank you EJA for supporting my work!

Update 2: This week at CLE has been even more exciting! I was able to attend a public reading of a Frederick Douglass address for Juneteenth, which was televised! Seeing the work that CLE does in the community was really inspiring, and I look forward to helping plan such activities. In terms of other work, I have enjoyed being able to offer recommendations on drafts of important legal MOUs affecting the public schools system, and I have been able to hone in my legal research skills. Although I felt that I learned a lot in my school legal writing course, my internship has shown me how important the human aspect of lawyering is to create the strongest argument and determine the most relevant cases.

Update 3: I enjoy working at CLE more and more every day. This week, I have been continuing to do legal research regarding legislation affecting immigrant students in MA public schools. However, I have also been privileged to attend several important meetings led by attorneys on my team that are exposing me to the true complexities of education law. Despite believing that I had a good grasp on the generalities of the field, these meetings, as well as my research, have exposed me to the many layers of legal, policy, and practical considerations that shape



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educational advocacy. I have gained a greater appreciation for the thoughtful collaboration and strategic decision-making that goes into ensuring that students' rights are protected. This week, I look forward to completing a legal memo about the aforementioned legislation, as well as offering comments to my team on some DESE documents.

Update 4: This week was another productive time working at CLE. Although my boss was on vacation, I was lucky because I was able to attend some meetings in his absence. Although I did not contribute as much as I would have liked, I found myself understanding the legal jargon that was used and able to write comprehensive notes that can be used upon his return. I also have continued supporting the community Justice fellow with some projects she is working on that have tangible impacts and deliverables for the local community. One of my favorite part of my job, particularly as I continue with this internship, is understanding how my legal research has direct implications and applications for families affected by the public school system.

Final Reflection:

I feel truly privileged to have been able to spend my 1L summer working at the Boston Center for Law and Education. Despite knowing for many years that I wanted to work in public interest law, before this internship, I had found myself primarily drawn to immigration work. However, as I worked with asylum applicants, I repeatedly encountered the ways that their lives intersected with the United States educational system. While education has always been a liberatory space for me, it was striking how the public school system was perceived as a place of fear and likely entrapment for these families. Recognizing this intersection, I decided to apply for education law internships for my 1L summer, thinking that it would be important to understand the carcerality of an institution purportedly for the public good – but working at CLE with the support of EJA in fact exposed me to an entirely new career trajectory I am excited to continue exploring. While I did not directly provide support on an individual case this summer, my research contributed to the creation of resources and memorandums that have a far-reaching social impact in Massachusetts. As a nonprofit primarily doing impact litigation, CLE's clients are low-income individuals with a variety of other marginalized identities that interact with and are often harmed by the public education system. When I began working there, my biggest challenge was reframing my 1L legal mindset – one biased towards case law analysis and more sterile research – to creatively interpreting legislation and exploring administrative decisions. Although I have little background in disability studies, I found myself pouring over state and federal legislation to draft memoranda advocating for different approaches to advocacy for disabled students in areas that public schools had been long successful in controlling. While it was difficult for me to learn to interpret statutes, my supervising attorney was patient with me and willing to support as much as I needed. As I continued through the internship, I was grateful for the way that my voice and opinions were valued through the team, and I saw each assignment as a personal victory as the increasing responsibility demonstrated the nonprofit's trust in my work.



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Working at CLE has shaped me professionally because it has changed the trajectory of my career path. While I am still interested in immigration work, I now find myself interested in education and government work; these areas will both allow me to continue supporting immigrant populations while thinking more broadly about the structural conditions that shape people's access to opportunity, safety, and belonging. Personally, I am grateful to the CLE staff, who have been a strong support network that I am hopeful to continue working with into my Boston legal career.