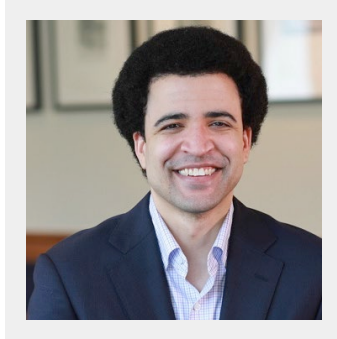




## Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Chris Yarrell

**Law School:** University of Virginia

**Organization:** National Center for Youth Law

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### Week of June 14<sup>th</sup>:

This summer, I have the opportunity to serve as a Summer Law Clerk at the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL), a non-profit law firm that works to hold accountable the government systems charged with serving children. I will be working on a variety of projects as a member of NCYL's Education Civil Rights Alliance (ECRA), a national convening of civil rights organizations, educator associations, and community groups whose primary charge is to help better protect the civil rights of marginalized students.

My first assignment involves an analysis of state-based education funding plans. As part of the recently-enacted American Rescue Plan—which provides nearly \$200 billion in federal relief to help stabilize states' education budgets in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic—each state that elects to accept this funding is required to meet certain statutory requirements. One such requirement is the submission of a spending plan, where a given state must provide details into how it will, among other things, use these federal funds to better address the needs of disadvantaged students. My primary charge is to review each spending plan's focus on equity, highlighting areas of improvement from both a legal and policy standpoint.

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### Week of June 28<sup>th</sup>:

My analysis of the state ARP plans is due this Friday! Given the scope of this project, I am excited to submit my findings and receive feedback from my colleagues. This feedback is expected by next Wednesday, which allows me ample time to review and incorporate any amendments prior to deadline.

This feedback will not only help guide my revisions, but may also help address a few residual questions that have stuck with me. One particular question pertains to the tension between our current model of education federalism—which affords states and localities virtually unfettered decision-making power within the province of public K-12 education—and our national pursuit of a more equitable system of education. Specifically, I



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wonder whether ARP dollars could have been more effectively managed and allocated if federal influence over education was more meaningfully expanded—especially in light of prevailing evidence that supports such an expansion.

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### **Week of July 12:**

This week was a big week! After finishing my initial review of state ARP plans, I presented my findings to the Education Civil Rights Alliance member organizations. The presentation went well, and ultimately led to a fruitful discussion regarding next steps. Since the initial review included only the state plans that were made publicly available, the next phase of my work will include analyzing the remaining state plans as they are made available.

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### **Week of August 2:**

As the summer comes to a close, I am left with a deep sense of gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve as an EJA Fellow. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to my NCYL colleagues for their immense generosity and kindness. Thank you all for showing me the ropes, and for leading a truly meaningful of service.