

What led you to Stanford and the GSE?

In my first jobs out of college, I worked with schools and at schools in various capacities, and I knew that my career path would always involve K–12 education. As an elementary and secondary student, I loved school, and as an adult, I felt that the others I met in K–12 settings were clearly “my people.” Given my interests and skills, the research and policy world seemed like the best fit for me within the K–12 universe; I believed (and still believe) I would find impactful work that would never feel stale. When I submitted my application to the GSE, I also applied to a handful of similar programs at other universities. But the more I did my homework about these programs, the more I realized they were not actually all that similar. Stanford offered a completely different experience: a small, tight-knit program with the resources of a large research university, a required research paper, and a thoughtful structure that included meaningful advising and mentorship from faculty. The GSE quickly became my top choice.

How did your education and time at the GSE inform your career and life path?

My GSE experience provided me with concrete skills I use constantly in my current role, particularly with regard to research design, research ethics, data analysis, and data visualization. Just as important, my experience convinced me that my chosen path was the right one. Before enrolling at the GSE, I worked at the central office of Boston Public Schools; by the time I finished the program, I felt certain that I would continue to spend my career working for (or with) public K–12 districts. That certainty arose largely from partnering with a local high school to collect and analyze qualitative data for my master’s paper.

Separate from work, I am also grateful for the friends I made during my time at the GSE. We had an awesome cohort!

Who were the key stakeholders or mentors in your journey?

The people were the best part of my time at Stanford. In particular, my program director, Christine Min Wotipka, and my advisor, Francisco (Chiqui) Ramirez, were beyond generous with their time and ideas. I learned a ton from Soyoung Park, a PhD student at the time who tirelessly trained our cohort in qualitative research methods. Laura Wentworth, the director of the Stanford-SFUSD Partnership, was an invaluable source of wisdom on all things Stanford, K–12 districts, and partnered research, and I continue to work with Laura on a variety of projects in my current role.

What key events or memories have shaped your experience to date?

For my master's paper, I spent many, many hours at a local high school, codesigning my study with the principal, conducting student and staff interviews and classroom observations, and volunteering as a teacher's aide. Doing that work while taking relevant methods classes at the GSE and having multiple experts weigh in on my project specifically – I can't imagine a better learning experience.

What are you doing now and/or what is next in your career path?

Earlier this month, I hit my 10-year anniversary at SFUSD (same department, though the role has evolved). At the moment, I am focused on debuting a new series of data dashboards for community-based organizations that serve SFUSD students and pushing forward efforts to elevate student voice in district decision-making. These projects are funded by a grant I applied for from [UPenn's Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy](#), which leads fantastic work related to responsible public sector data sharing – check them out.

What advice or message would you like to share with your alumni peers, future graduates, and aspiring GSE students?

There are a million and one ways to create and maintain connections with the Stanford community, and in my experience it is truly worth the time to explore the possibilities and figure out where your interests align. As a GSE student, I joined the GSE Student Guild as a delegate; co-chaired a committee that launched a new student research conference ([SWAYWO](#)), and served as an Admissions Student Ambassador. In the years since, I have met with Global and Comparative Education students for career chats, attended many GSE events (e.g., AERA receptions, a Giants game, a Career Pathways dinner event on campus), and, just recently, joined the Alumni Award Nominating Committee. At work, I launched a collaboration with Stanford's Program in Data Science to codesign a capstone project for data science BS majors who are graduating this year, and I continue to proudly support the [Stanford-SFUSD Partnership](#). These personal and professional connections with Stanford have been a continuous source of fulfillment and an easy way to meet interesting people doing interesting work.