



Sterling Strategic Advisor Education Equity

Why is educational equity such an important cause for you, and what motivates you to make it your life's work?

After graduating from college in 1992, I joined Teach For America and taught at Rusk Elementary in Houston. My students, primarily first-generation Latino immigrants, faced a disparity between their dreams and the education they received. This mismatch drove me to establish YES Prep, fueled by the belief that quality education is crucial for racial and socioeconomic equity. Seeing what kids can achieve with access to quality education led me to believe that quality schools are crucial for creating the racial and socioeconomic equity necessary for keeping the American dream alive and accessible to all.

Reflecting back on your time spent launching and leading YES Prep, what achievements are you especially proud of?

I take immense pride in what the first graduating class of 2001 achieved at YES Prep. Every student met the graduation requirement of acceptance to a four-year college, and our valedictorian earned a full scholarship to Stanford University, this set a precedent for future YES Prep students and showed the potential that exists across all socioeconomic levels when there is equal access to educational opportunities and resource. I am also especially proud of the founding families and staff who tirelessly believed in and worked towards turning the vision into a reality for our students.

What are the main goals of your work at The City Fund, and how many cities or communities are you currently working with?

The City Fund's goal is to ensure that public schools contribute to moving children out of poverty and into thriving adult lives. We believe this is possible when all children have access to quality schools, educators have the flexibility to meet diverse student needs, leaders reflect the communities they serve, and families who are impacted by the system have the power to change it. We are currently working with twenty partner cities across the country, supporting local leaders' efforts to create innovative public school systems.

What do you hope Houston will be able to do over the next 5-10 years in the K-12 public education realm?

I hope that Houston will be a national exemplar for an innovative and high-performing public education system, as it was in the late 1990s and 2000s.

What are you looking forward to in your role as a Sterling Strategic Advisor?

As a Strategic Advisor, I look forward to collaborating with local leaders to expand access to quality public schools. I'm especially interested in promoting community representation in education leadership, empowering families that are significantly affected by the system to drive positive change, and supporting educators in adapting to diverse student needs.
