

Student: Torrey Hata

Placement: Department of Education

Program: Palantir Privacy Scholar in Public Service

Without the support of the Silicon Flatirons Center and Palantir, I would not have had the privilege to work at the office of Privacy, Information, and Records Management Services (PIRMS) within the Department of Education. I worked under the Department's chief privacy officer, the head of the Family Policy Compliance Office, and the head of their FOIA Service Center. Working under these agency officials, I gained a valuable understanding of governmental privacy work and issues concerning information privacy in the education setting. I spent much of my time working with complex issues relating to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment. My research dealt with legal and policy issues surrounding topics such as student privacy, big data in education, the collection and use of students' personally identifiable information by education apps, and the transfer of sensitive student records between schools.

While at the Department of Education, I spent some of my time doing traditional legal research, analysis of proposed legislation, and memorandum writing. In addition to legal research and writing, I also drafted practical documents. For example, I drafted a compliance letter that may be used by the Family Policy Compliance Office as the basis for letters they issue in order to ensure that stakeholders continue to sufficiently protect student privacy while still ensuring innovation in education. I also participated in policy formation and implementation at PIRMS. I took part in working groups and meetings with other offices in the Department of Education as well as with attorneys from other agencies and school officials from a number of school districts.

I found spending time in Washington to be an invaluable experience. It is home to brilliant subject matter experts some of whom I had the good fortune of meeting. I had the opportunity to learn from several of them when I attended several education and privacy conferences. Thanks to the summer scholar is DC Seminar Program I met many more. The speakers in the seminar program were very engaging, inspirational, and provided beneficial insights into many aspects of legal practice.