



My name is Justice Castañeda, and I am a graduate student of Housing Policy and Community/Economic Development at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The focus of my work is the intersection of economic/community development and violence as a public health concern, and the role this intersection plays in educational/life outcomes for youth.

A Madison, Wisconsin native, I did my undergraduate work at UC San Diego, and completed a Master's degree in Education Policy at Stanford University. Prior to graduate school, I taught at-risk, under-credited youth at an alternative high school in San Diego. Currently, in addition to research, I have also consulted with organizations/school districts on equitable economic development practices and issues relating to disparate outcomes between poor students/students of color and their white counterparts.

In addition to my work in Madison, I have also worked on large-scale community development projects in the South Bronx, NY, San Diego, CA., and New Orleans, LA. At different points, I have also worked with Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, the Dane County Juvenile Detention Center, and as an Intern for Mayor Paul Soglin. My career began, however, in the Marine Corps, where I spent eight years, most recently in Personnel & Operations (Personnel & Operations Chief) for the Special Operations Training Group at Camp Pendleton, CA.

Closing the achievement gap has been a very prominent education goal for the past decade; within Madison a variety of organizations have developed programs and services with this singular goal in mind. Speaking from both my experience and previous research, the achievement gap is often more of a symptom than the root of the problem. As part of the work for Mayor Soglin, I am working to analyze and evaluate services aimed at improving student performance and closing the achievement gap. With a large variety of services across the city, I examined the intersection between district, government (city, county, state & federal), non-profit, and private services, with a particular focus on at-risk youth and students of color. The primary focus of my analysis has been on resources—where they are directed, lacking or in abundance.

My analysis and evaluations are submitted to a team of readers, who fact-check and verify my findings. This team consists of three colleagues from Stanford Graduate School of Education, three colleagues from MIT focusing on the Economic Development piece, and two independent readers—professors at Stanford and the University of California at San Diego. In addition, my

advisor at MIT will also be monitoring and advising throughout the entire data collection, analysis and writing process.