

William Jamal Collins

Senior Director of School Partnerships, OneGoal

2017 Surge Fellow

William Jamal Collins is the senior director of secondary and postsecondary partnerships for OneGoal, Chicago, a college access and persistence organization working towards closing the college divide for young people across the country. As a senior director, William's focus is on establishing a long-term growth model, developing secondary and postsecondary partnerships and implementing strategic teacher and student recruitment campaigns in the effort of empowering more exceptional educators to lead students to and through college.

Beginning his career in corporate America, William's business acumen, strategic thinking and financial prowess allowed him to climb the ranks at several Fortune 500 companies, including Target and The Home Depot. Despite his corporate success, William constantly sought to fill a void in his life. It was in his decision to become an educator, following in the footsteps of his mother — an educator serving Chicago Public Schools for over three decades — when William knew he had found his calling.

William has always believed that life's most important and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?" To that end, William left a lucrative career in the corporate world in 2009 and pursued a career in teaching.

For six years, William taught economics and finance at the award-winning Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, of which he is an alumnus. While there, he made lifelong connections with his students through education and mentoring. In 2013, William received the Chicago Public Schools' Exemplary Teacher Award from the Office of College and Career Success, which recognized him for his demonstrated excellence in teaching and learning and for exceptional contributions to the profession.

William holds an Master of Education in curriculum studies and administration from DePaul University and a Bachelor of Science in economics from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, to which he received a full academic scholarship. In 2014, he was selected as an Education Pioneers Fellow, where he completed a strategic review of the resource allocation process for the Office of Diverse Learners Supports and Services at the Chicago Public Schools' Central Office. That same year, he also wrote a full-length essay entitled, "Education, Democracy and Social Discourse: A Contemporary Response to George S. Counts and Boyd H. Bode" in the *Schools: Studies in Education* journal, published by the University of Chicago. In 2016, he was named one of Chicago's Top 35 Under 35 Making an Impact by Chicago Scholars. During this same year, William was welcomed to the third cohort of Fellows for the Surge Institute, an elite leadership accelerator that was designed to identify and groom emerging talent in education and provide them with leadership development as well as access to networks and visibility, empowering them to bring new ideas, perspectives and solutions that change the landscape of education.

William is an authentic and passionate leader who has dedicated his career to moving the needle of college completion for the marginalized and oppressed. As a native of the South Side of Chicago, he saw the value of education as a means to escape adversity. He fundamentally believes that every student deserves the chance to attain a college degree and the life that comes with it. In his spare time, William volunteers as a member of the Chicago Scholars Associate Board, focusing on supporting ambitious students from under-resourced communities to complete college. He is also an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. and a committed mentor to many college students. William is a music enthusiast and an avid international traveler. He currently resides in Chicago, IL.

