

Nicole Beechum

Doctoral Candidate and Research Assistant

Nicole Beechum is an advocate for youth in urban schools. Over the course of the last decade, she has combined research, school practice, and social work principles to help schools better support youth of color from urban communities. She is a doctoral candidate at the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. Nicole previously created and implemented social emotional programming, curricula, and teacher professional development for Umoja Student Development Corporation through its Partnership Development team. While at Umoja, she also established a new charter school's College and Career office. These experiences were foundational in Nicole's decision to focus her work on key student academic experiences, particularly the transitions to high school and college.



As a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago, Nicole has worked collaboratively with the Postsecondary Transition Project at the Consortium on Chicago School Research, to research the effects of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program in neighborhood schools in Chicago, understand college match among CPS graduates, design a teacher learning network to implement noncognitive practices in 8th and 9th grade classrooms, and track the rise in On-Track among freshmen in Chicago Public Schools. These last two projects led to work facilitating professional development with schools in the Network for College Success. Her dissertation research uses quantitative and qualitative methods to explore academic engagement for African-American adolescent males in the transition to high school.

She received her AM from School of Social Service Administration in 2006 and a BA in Political Science from Mount Saint Mary's University in Los Angeles in 2001. Nicole was previously a McCormick-Tribune Urban and Community Leadership Fellow (2004 – 2006), an Institute for Education Sciences Fellow (2009 – 2013), received a Milgrom/Successful Pathways from School to Work grant for the 2015 – 2016 academic year, and just recently was selected as one of thirteen 2016 Surge Fellows. After leaving Umoja to pursue her doctoral studies, Nicole was invited to serve on the Board of Directors for Umoja Student Development Corporation. This is her fifth school year as a member of Umoja's Board of Directors.