

Amanda Paz

Campus Director, High Jump

2018 Surge Fellow

As the daughter of immigrants and a first-generation college student, Amanda Paz sees tremendous power in education as a lever for change. She is currently a Campus Director at High Jump Chicago, a nonprofit organization working to equalize access to excellent high schools for determined middle school students from families with limited financial means through enrichment programming.

Hoping to combine her passion for social justice and commitment to educational equity, she joined Teach For America soon after earning her bachelor's degree. Upon identifying obstacles that her students faced in obtaining their education – poverty, violence, and trauma, among other things – Amanda pursued a master's degree in social work. Equipped with additional training and resources, like social-emotional interventions, she returned to the classroom as a founding middle school teacher at Erie Elementary. While there, Amanda was elected to represent teachers on the Erie School Board. She initiated and coached the school's first robotics team along with creating and coordinating the annual school science fair. As the founding seventh grade science teacher and department chair at KIPP: Bloom, Amanda led her students to achieve an average of three years' growth in a single school year – the largest growth seen in science in the KIPP: Chicago network in the previous four years.

Amanda is currently a fellow at the Surge Institute, where she works with other leaders of color to transform our education system. She holds an MA from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, and a BA from Illinois Wesleyan University. Amanda is also an Associate Board member of Urban Gateways and a resume coach at the Posse Foundation.

Outside of working with students and families in Chicago, Amanda enjoys traveling across the nation to fulfill her goal of visiting all Major League Baseball parks.

