

Liam Bird

Postsecondary Coach,
Network for College Success, The University of Chicago
2018 Surge Fellow

Liam Bird is a coach and facilitator with the Network for College Success (NCS) at the University of Chicago. He is passionate about working with educators to create transformative learning opportunities for high schools through coaching and facilitation of professional learning.

In an effort to broaden equity conversations at the national level, Liam is in a national professional learning community with the San Francisco Coalition for Essential Small Schools. He works to bridge practice, policy, and research to disrupt the legacy of white supremacy. Liam believes this is best accomplished by learning around adult beliefs and mindsets and shifting the discourse toward an inquiry-based and student centered approach to the postsecondary process.



Along with directly supporting postsecondary leadership teams, educators and administrators in eight high schools, Liam facilitates professional learning communities, including the Counselor & Coach Collaborative, Equity-Based PLC, and the High School Institute. At NCS, Liam also supports policy solutions through co-developing a national Postsecondary Toolkit and representing Illinois at White House Reach Higher convenings. The goal is to create collaborative learning communities elevating the voices of counselors and coaches along with teacher leaders and administrators.

Before his time at NCS, Liam served at Umoja Student Development Corporation for four years. While there, he managed the integration of postsecondary and social-emotional learning supports into school-wide initiatives—such as Advisory and Seminar—in various Chicago Public Schools high schools. During his time at Umoja, he also developed skills as a partnership specialist, instructional designer, and data strategist.

Liam earned a Bachelor's from UIUC in philosophy and psychology. During this time, he mentored students in the Upward Bound program from Manley High School. He went on to earn a Master's from Northwestern University in public policy. His thesis on repurposing shuttered schools in Chicago was presented by his Advisor at the University of Huddersfield's 2017 Conference of Regional Urbanism in the United Kingdom. In his free time, Liam is currently the President of the Knowledge Speakers Toastmasters Club at IIT Kent Law School where he provides supportive leadership focused on public speaking.