

# Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference Schools Committee May 21, 2014 Biennial Thank You Dinner

## Talk by Dr. Charles Payne, University of Chicago SSA

Dr. Payne's thesis is that **trust is more important in schools than and at the heart of "parental involvement and that trust has to reach across all parties**, within each and between—parents-teachers, students-teachers, teachers-administrators, building-wide, and these plus communities with the district. **Trust means mutual respect and collaboration** (vs. being and feeling vulnerable and the overall atmosphere being toxicity) and has to be built building by building. **It's really toxic if a cohort, such as the teachers, say they don't trust the majority of their colleagues. He demonstrated a clear correlation between trust and low or high performance---** fix trust and create collective responsibility and even the poorest schools get better.

Where do teachers most trust parents and there is trust as whole? In schools that are most integrated (80%). Less in Spanish (50%), worst in Black schools (one-third). Other correlations to trust are people knowing their neighbors—and people outside their neighborhood, social cohesion, people work together, and going to church.

Another strong predictor is between trust and school absences and failures—kids who say the trust their teachers attend classes up to a week more of schools where students say they don't.

High schools do less well than elementary schools on trust, and have been sliding since 2003. It may have a connection to kids attending high schools outside their neighborhood.

**Principal voice, power, leadership matters.** (He called attention to recent letters and articles from principals saying they can't trust CPS and are disrespected regularly by administrators. This has been true a long time and may reflect "this town's boss-culture." Plus the degree of being or feeling vulnerable shapes degree of trust.

The attendees were invited to testify and agree or disagree based on their experiences.

One with a long life in area neighborhoods and human relations agreed mistrust, and cultural- and class- goes back a really long ways.

Another said that they experienced trust all the way until going out town to college and that there is trust at her school (Robinson) between teachers, principal and lsc despite being almost entirely Black. She agreed that people carry a lot of baggage; getting beyond that takes work.

A parent with children in several schools and lscs and a schools activist said school families and schools experience too much change and churn, seemingly without logic, from CPS – it's not just cultural.

Another pointed to teachers (especially young, white) coming into schools with little experience and on a short timeframe, no one vested in administration, lack of trust from the top town, principals being hog-tied, parents not welcome to advocate, people who won't get past race, fighting over resources which results in that getting personal.

A teacher- trust is a core need but hard when the community feels under threat.

Matters are well researched—we know what is needed, why don't we do it? What is your suggestion? Payne replied that CPS gets plenty of money for research and plenty of research, but people there DON'T know it. He also said that once an entity can really talk about race they can they can deal with anything else and learn not to personalize differences.

Examples of where a culture of trust has been created (they worked on it) and the schools improved: Montgomery County and Baltimore in Maryland, Logan Square in Chicago (where Youth Guidance has gotten hundreds of parents volunteering in schools). How did they do it? By communication with and really listening to parents on policy, budget and closures—**taking and acting on parent input**. And this boils down to the **leadership**. Example: they saw that it was black kids who were in detention- one thing they did in the schools was discussion and training on race. And once parents felt respected and part of the school, there is change. CPS and some school administrations act like the problem is parents—it's not, its respect.

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