

The Mind Trust's Community Conversations

Community Conversation: Summer Learning – Closing the Gap

In June 2019, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted a community conversation on the topic of “Summer Learning: Closing the Gap”, that explored the ways summer programs are mitigating learning loss. The conversation featured panelists Nia Black, Associate Director of Recruitment for Phalen Leadership Academies; Tami Edminster, Program Specialist at Indianapolis Marion County Public Library; and LeeAnn Harris, Senior Director of Club Operations for Boys & Girls Clubs of Indianapolis. [View the conversation at UNCF's Facebook page.](#)

Community Conversation: Community Support for Student Success

In May 2019, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted a community conversation on the topic of “Community Support for Student Success”, with a specific emphasis on the educational inequities faced by foster youth in Indiana. The conversation featured panelists Brent Kent, President and CEO of Foster Success; Carmelita Allen, foster parent; Charie Gibson, McKinney-Vento Liaison/Foster Care Point of Contact for IPS; Dr. Demetress Hutchins, Founder and CEO Hutchins Consulting LLC; and Dylan Puckett, recent graduate of Arsenal Technical High School and a former foster youth. [View the conversation at UNCF's Facebook page.](#)

Community Conversation: Whole Child Development and the Benefits of Play

In January 2019, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted a community conversation around whole child development and the benefits of play. The topic featured conversations with Karen Hastings, Positive School Culture & Climate Coordinator, Indianapolis Public Schools; Edward Rangel, Principal, Tindley Genesis Academy; Dr. Eric Yancy, Pediatrician; and Jo Bender Yocum, Executive Director, Playworks, a local nonprofit that partners with schools to offer social-emotional learning experiences for students through play. [View the conversation at UNCF's Facebook page.](#)

Community Conversation: Student & Family Perspectives

In September 2018, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted an engaging conversation around student and family perspectives. Over the last five years, we have worked to amplify the need to improve outcomes for African American students and shift the narrative of what is possible for all students. This community conversation served as a discussion point for the exploration of the African American student and family perspective on various education reform efforts.

Community Conversation: Teacher Retention

Teacher shortage is national news. But what's happening in Indianapolis? In March 2018, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted an engaging conversation around teacher recruitment and retention efforts in Indianapolis. The topic featured conversations with Taylor Brown, Director of Talent Strategy, Indianapolis Public Schools; Jackie Gantzer, Director of Talent Strategy, The Mind Trust; and John Franklin Hay, Executive Director, Near East Area Renewal.

Community Conversation: Navigating School Enrollment

In January 2018, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted an engaging conversation around navigating public school enrollment options. The topic featured conversations with Dan Clerget, Manager of Operations and Technology, Enroll Indy; Patrick Herrel, Enrollment and Options Director, IPS; Lauren Peterson, Manager of Community Engagement and Outreach, Enroll Indy; and Andy Seibert, Chief of Staff, KIPP-Indy Public Schools.

Community Conversation: Creating Diverse School Communities: Why it Matters

In September 2017, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted an engaging conversation around the importance of creating diverse school communities. The topic featured conversations with Scott Bess, Head of School at Purdue Polytechnic High School, Tavonna Harris-Askew, Chief of Staff & General Counsel at Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County, Bonnie Kulenkamp, Director of Exceptional Learners & Inclusion at Global Preparatory Academy @ Riverside 44 and a parent, DeMeita Vincent.

Community Conversation: Engagement & Education Policy

In June 2017, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted an engaging conversation with elected officials about education policy. The topic featured conversations with City-County Councilor Maggie Lewis, Representative Bob Behning, and Senator Greg Taylor. Thanks to the local community's questions and interest, there was much information shared, along with useful tips from the panelists about civic engagement and making your voice heard to your elected officials.

Community Conversation: School Finance

In March 2017, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted a “community conversation” on the topic of “School Finance,” which engaged the local community in conversations about how schools are funded and how funding varies across school type and based on the population of students served. The topic featured conversations with educational leaders, Melissa Ambre, Joseph Heidt, Kelli Marshall, and Weston Young.

Community Conversation: Human Capital & Teacher Diversity

In January 2017, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted a “community conversation” on the topic of “Human Capital & Teacher Diversity,” which engaged the local community in conversations about the ways local organizations are attracting and recruiting excellent teachers and school leaders of color and others from diverse backgrounds to serve in and lead local schools. The topic featured conversations with educational leaders, Dr. Kenith Britt, Sara Marshall, Amar Patel, and Joe White.

Community Conversation: Who’s Running Our Schools?

In November 2016, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted another in a series of “community conversations” which engaged the local community in conversations around improving education in Indianapolis. The topic featured conversations with school leaders of three Innovation Network Schools within the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS).

Community Conversation: School Equity

In February 2016, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted a “community conversation” on the topic of “School Equity,” during which community stakeholders discussed ways to ensure that every child in Indianapolis has equitable educational opportunities and experiences. [View a video from the event.](#)

Community Conversation: Parent Choice

In October 2015, The Mind Trust and UNCF engaged Indianapolis community leaders and members in a conversation about “Parent Choice,” featuring a discussion about the education choice landscape in Indianapolis and how families can navigate the sometimes complex system to access more educational opportunities for their kids. [View a video of the event.](#)

Community Conversation: What Makes A Great School?

In August 2015, The Mind Trust and UNCF hosted a conversation with local education leaders to discuss the conditions, educators, and practices that “make a great school” and suggestions to inject more positive academic conditions into schools across the city.