



COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

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Perhaps unlike any other place I've lived, there is a powerful ethos of "micro-community" within the broader Pittsburgh community. In some ways, this feeling of community can be seen as an asset because people really care about what is happening in their neighborhoods. But when we focus most of our attention on our own particular neighborhood, we can sometimes forget or minimize the challenges and strengths of other areas. When we move to a mindset where we are concerned about every corner of the city, we truly will move to "a community of we."

One of the things I admire so much about this city is that there is such a strong, resounding ethos of community activism in education. So many individuals, organizations and institutions are committed to working toward justice. However, in some ways, it feels like they prefer operating independently. If we were able to figure out how to collaborate, so much more could happen on our journey to improve education for everyone. As we build synergy, we need to have real conversations about the difficult questions and issues.

At Pitt's Center for Urban Education, we're really trying to listen and work with others. We have moved many of our initiatives from the Ivory Tower into the community. Much of our programming, projects and initiatives are tied to broader Pittsburgh. Forums for residents and educators put decision-makers in direct communication with those most affected. A summer forum helped about 200 pre-K-12 educators learn how to be more culturally responsive in their classrooms. That's probably one of our best mechanisms to ensure that students get an equitable opportunity to learn.

Until we have truly moved the needle on ensuring that every child has a highly qualified, culturally responsive, transformative education, we can't be "a community of we."

— Interviewed by Eleanor Chute