

Speaker 1: So just real quick, Courtney, what did you hear? Did you hear anything inspiring? Anything unexpected? Anything especially disconcerting or concerning or ... ? What did you hear?

Courtney: I think this was a great cross-section of what Chicago parents are dealing with. We have a lot of choices for education, but within those choices are a lot of miscommunications, a lot of bad information being passed around by parents with good intentions, but who don't necessarily have all the facts about every aspect of the system that we're all stuck in. I think it really speaks to the fact that we're not being given true, transparent options by the city. And whether that be through the public school system, charter school, private school, the information just isn't being put out in a way that can be digested by every parent. So I think this was a real cross-section of folks who have invested in the public school system, people who tried to and it failed for them, and folks who have now moved on to this hardened stance on what education in Chicago looks like.

Speaker 1: And this conversation, is this a little unusual for you to have a parent group, parents in this room like this with all the cameras?

Courtney: Right. For me personally, no. I was a stay-at-home mom for over five years before my son entered school, and so, as a part of that, you're on the playground, you're at science class, you're at art class, and this is all we do all day. "Where are you going to put your kid in school?" "Are you on the wait list yet for the school that you want?" "Have you talked to anyone at this school?" "What about your neighborhood school?"

It's an obsessive topic from the moment you get pregnant until the moment your child is old enough to go to school, at least in this city. I don't know if it's like that in other places, but in Chicago, it's constant and it's a battle and people fight it out. It's unfortunate that literally every time it comes up you really do have these factions and there's no way that we can all agree that all of our children are getting what they need.

Speaker 1: Thanks, Courtney.

Courtney: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Appreciate it.

Courtney: No problem.

Speaker 3: Why don't you and me prepare then?

Speaker 4: Okay. Perfect. So ...

Speaker 3: One second. Let me get my headphones on.

Speaker 4: Op. Sorry.

Speaker 3: Just get set. All set. Go ahead.

Speaker 4: All right, so I had just wanted to the last question that was asked that you can't skip the tough conversations. You have to have the hard talks. You have to make room for both black pain and black grief as well as black joy. In our urban schools right now, there's a big push for the black joy, for black-girl magic, black-boy joy, and that is really important, because we haven't been uplifted in the educational context for so long.

But if there's no room for black grief, we can't get to the black joy. We have to give our children an opportunity to talk about all of the things that they're bringing into the classroom with them before we begin to celebrate the victories that they're going to make in that room. And that's it.

Speaker 3: Great. Thank you.

Speaker 4: Thank you.