Twitter Thread by ChicagoTeachersUnion

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@CTULocal1

The issue of Black families' trust is not only missing from school reopening plans, but also from many school reopening arguments.

But Black families make up more than 1/3 of our school district and many others, so it matters.

It absolutely matters.

Chicago Public Schools is the third-largest school district in the U.S. In the past 20 years, our classrooms have lost more than 5,000 Black educators, which has had a negative impact on many school communities.

Some of the direct causes of this loss are Rahm's 50 school closings, terminations in Black and Brown schools as a result of turnarounds, and annual layoffs targeting high-need schools with predominantly Black student populations.

CPS then failed to replace the Black teachers forced out of the system, and our district remains deeply segregated. So even as the Black workforce declined as Black schools were closed or turned around, educators were then seldom hired by schools outside of Black neighborhoods.

The decline of Black teachers has also been accelerated by CPS' chief policies of the last decade: student based-budgeting (SBB) and School Quality Ratings Policy (SQRP).

Both SBB and SQRP have decimated enrollment as funding and students flowed to better-resourced schools in neighborhoods experiencing increases in population and housing costs.

In 2001, there were about 10 schools where there were no Black teachers, and now, 20 years later, there are more than 60. This isn’t an accident.

We’ve had two decades of policy erase Black teachers at a time, when, due to high poverty, crime, unemployment and the lack of affordable housing, our students and their families needed Black teachers the most.

And this is their own school district doing this. It's inexcusable.

In 2015, @J1Ramann @DrRedeaux @brothajitu and nine other heroes went on a 34-day hunger strike just to save Dyett H.S.

In one of the most resourced cities, in one of the most resourced countries in the world, people starved themselves to save their school. #MakeItMakeSense

It continues...educators and families are still fighting efforts to close schools. Still fighting privatization. Still only four school libraries on the West Side. Black and Brown students are still overrepresented in special ed. We still need sustainable community schools.

So when the mayor and CPS leadership ask for trust, and talk about the role of equity in the need to return to in-person instruction, Black families look at the past 20 years and ask, "Equity for who?" Because their experience has been anything but trusting and equitable.

Equity can't be the argument for returning to in-person instruction, in a pandemic, when a) 80% of families — the majority of them Black and Brown — have chosen remote learning, b) COVID has hit these communities the hardest, and c) CPS has failed them for the past 20 years.

We can't build equity on the backs of Black and Brown students and families in a pandemic.