THE WILL TO
CHANGE

A Conversation About Schools and Learning

with

DR. JAMES COMER
and
DR. EDMOND GORDON

Comments by **Hugh Price**

Coalition
for
Community
Schools

ABOUT THE COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

An alliance of more than 170 national, state, and local organizations, the Coalition represents organizations engaged in community development and community building; education; family support and human services; government; health and mental health services; policy, training, and advocacy; philanthropy; school facilities planning; and youth development as well as local, state, and national networks of community schools.

The Coalition's mission is to mobilize the assets of schools, families, and communities to create a united movement for community schools. Community schools strengthen schools, families, and communities to improve student learning.

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The Coalition for Community Schools is staffed by the Institute for Educational Leadership.

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PREFACE

The Fifth National Forum of the Coalition for Community Schools provided a historic opportunity for participants to hear two of America's most distinguished educators, Drs. James Comer and Edmund Gordon. These giants in their fields engaged in an animated and thought-provoking exchange on the educational challenges and political inequities facing America's students, families, and schools.

Speaking candidly about their own upbringing, as well as reflecting on their research and that of other distinguished colleagues, Drs. Comer and Gordon describe the roots of a dangerously bifurcated American educational system. They argue that society has written off young people whose families and communities cannot compensate for schools' inability to help every child meet increasingly high academic standards. As a result, American democracy, predicated on the educated and informed consent of the governed, is seriously threatened and our national competitiveness is undermined.

Their wide-ranging conversation calls for a concerted movement among school, family, and community advocates to agree on a unified message, clear strategy, and long-term commitment to support the full development of every child. While frustrated that policymakers who already know what to do have done so little, they encourage efforts to connect the teaching and learning that occurs inside school with the complementary experiences and supports that occur outside of school. And they emphasize the critical importance of efforts like the Coalition for Community Schools to strategically use information, research, and continued pressure to build the political will for change.

The Coalition was privileged to sponsor this conversation and is very pleased to share it with you.

Ira Harkavy, *Chair*
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University of Pennsylvania

Lisa Villarreal, *Vice Chair*
Program Officer, Education
The San Francisco
Foundation

Martin J. Blank, *Director*
Coalition for Community
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JAMES P. COMER, M.D., M.P.H.

James P. Comer, M.D., M.P.H., the Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center, has been a Yale medical faculty member since 1968. During these years, his career promoted a focus on child development as a way of improving schools. His efforts in support of healthy development of young people are known internationally.

Dr. Comer is perhaps best known for the founding of the Comer School Development Program in 1968, which promotes the collaboration of parents, educators, and community to improve social, emotional, and academic outcomes for children. His concept of teamwork has improved the educational environment in more than 500 schools throughout America.

Dr. Comer has authored nine books, including *Beyond Black and White,* 1972; the autobiographical *Maggie's American Dream: The Life and Times of a Black Family,* 1988; *Rallying the Whole Village* (edited with Dr. Michael Ben-Avie, Dr. Norris M. Haynes, and Dr. Edward T. Joyner), 1996; *Waiting for a Miracle: Why Schools Can't Solve Our Problems, And How We Can,* 1997; *Child by Child* (edited with Dr. Michael Ben-Avie, Dr. Norris M. Haynes, and Dr. Edward T. Joyner), 1999; *The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action* (edited with Dr. Edward T. Joyner and Dr. Michael Ben-Avie), 2004; and *Leave No Child Behind: Preparing Today's Youth for Tomorrow's World,* 2004.

In addition to his writing, teaching, and research activities, Dr. Comer has served as a consultant to the Children's Television Workshop and the Public Committee on Mental Health. Dr. Comer is a member of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Dr. Comer has been awarded 42 honorary degrees and has been recognized by many organizations. In 2004, he received the John P. McGovern Behavioral Science Award from the Smithsonian. In 1996, he won both the prestigious Heinz Award on the Human Condition, for his profound influence on disadvantaged children.

A native of East Chicago, Indiana, Dr. Comer received an A.B. degree in 1956 from Indiana University, an M.D. degree in 1960 from Howard University College of Medicine, and an M.P.H. in 1964 from the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Between 1964 and 1967, he trained in psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine and its Child Study Center.

EDMUND W. GORDON, ED.D.

The New York Times cited Professor Edmund W. Gordon as, "Perhaps, the most distinguished African-American psychologist of his generation." Some have challenged this ethnic limitation and place him among the most distinguished behavioral and pedagogical scientists in our nation. His current appointments include the Richard March Hoe Professor of Psychology and Education, Emeritus, and Director of the Institute of Urban and Minority Education (IUME) at Teachers College, Columbia University; the John M. Musser Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, at Yale University; and the Senior Scholar in Residence at the College Board.

Professor Gordon's distinguished career spans professional practice and scholarly life as a minister, clinical and counseling psychologist, research scientist, author, editor, and professor at leading universities, including Howard, Yeshiva, Harvard, Columbia, Yale, The Educational Testing Service, and the City University of New York.

Dr. Gordon served for five years as Editor of the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* and for three years as Editor of the *Annual Review of Research in Education.* He is best known for his research on diverse human characteristics and pedagogy and the education of low-status populations. His book, *Compensatory Education: Preschool through College,* is the classic work in its field. *Education and Social Justice: A View from the Back of the Bus* was published in 1999 and his text *Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Academic Ability* was published in 2005. His most recent books, *The Affirmative Development of Academic Ability* and *Education, Excellence, and Equity,* are currently in press. Even in his ninth decade, Dr. Gordon is finishing another book, titled *Defiers: Black Male Achievers.*

At IUME, Dr. Gordon leads two programs of study and research. The first contends that academic ability is developed—some students are more likely to develop it because of life circumstances and others are less likely to develop it due to the absence of necessary life conditions and experiences. The second investigates personal, ecological, and institutional factors associated with high levels of academic achievement in ethnic minority students.

Residents of Rockland County, North Carolina, since 1954, the Gordons, together with their four children, founded the CEJJES Institute and Conference Center, which honors the important contributions of their parents' work.

THE WILL TO CHANGE

A CONVERSATION ABOUT SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

MR. BLANK: Let's start this conversation about schools and learning with some of the personal experiences that have brought each of you to where you are today. Dr. Gordon, is it true that you almost left school at some point?

DR. EDMUND W. GORDON: Well, more than that. I didn't just leave. They kicked me out for poor scholarship. I was busy doing other things than studying. Howard University had a rule that if you were on probation for two semesters and didn't get off the third semester, you had to leave, so I left.

My parents sent me up to Philadelphia where I had an uncle who had three daughters. Two of them had already achieved their Phi Beta Kappa keys and the third one went on to do so. It was clear that if I wanted to live there I had to study. When I came back to Howard I had the good fortune to come under the influence of Alain Locke, a former Rhodes Scholar and professor of philosophy, who really taught me how to be a student.

When I think about the things that have influenced my life, well, I was born with—maybe not with a silver spoon but say a bronze or copper one. It is unusual for people of color in this country to be able to trace back three and four generations of educated people. My mother, who was born in the nineteenth century, was an educated woman. So was her father. My father, who came from the Caribbean, had a father who had been educated in Scotland. He was obviously successful.

Then I had the opportunity of going to what was then called the capstone of Negro education, Howard University. My friend Jim [Dr. Comer] also attended Howard and I knew some remarkable people there: Ernest Just, Sterling Brown, Howard Thurman, and Benjamin Mays. And I met W.E.B. Dubois there for the first time. Later, I came to know him as a friend. Coming out of that kind of background, if I didn't make something of my life, I would really have to explain why. Fortunately, I have been able to contribute a bit.

MR. BLANK: Dr. Comer, what would you tell us about yourself?

DR. JAMES P. COMER: Well, first let me say thank you. I feel here the birth of a very important movement that we need in this country. I also thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk a bit with Ed. Although we have often been at the same place at the same time, we seldom get a chance to talk. So this is a pleasure.

When I was 25 years old, I had just finished medical school and I was planning to become a general practitioner in my hometown of East Chicago, Indiana. I was there working when I realized that my three best friends from high school were on a down-hill course even though they were as bright as any of our town's more successful people. Eventually one died early from alcoholism, one has spent a good part of his life in jail, the other was in and out of mental institutions.

I wondered what happened. Our families weren't that different. My mother had less than a second-grade education and a rural Mississippi background. She was the daughter of a sharecropper. My father was a steel-mill worker and had a sixth-grade, rural Alabama education. And yet the two of them gave the five of us children an experience at home that allowed us to collect 13 college degrees. (Applause)

Rather than go into medical practice, I went in the military service. Later, I did volunteer work where I saw more kids like my friends—going on a downhill course when the educational requirements to earn a living were going up. I saw a very serious problem for the larger society developing in the African-American community.

So the burning question for me became: "What should be done and what can I do?" My mother was a child of abuse. She had a cruel stepfather. She believed that education was the way to a better life. I eventually came to be doing the kinds of things I am doing today because I decided that addressing education would be the best way to help my friends and others like them.

MR. BLANK: Some of the problems that we see today were there when you both were growing up. In your view, Dr. Comer, how have the problems and the challenges that we face in educating all of our kids changed since then?

DR. COMER: I think the world began to change very dramatically after World War II, and increasingly so in later years as advances in science and technology affected every aspect of society. Many families whose members were prepared and functioned well prior to those changes were able to go from uneducated and unskilled in one generation, to moderately skilled in the next, and eventually to become highly educated, highly skilled, and participate in today's economy.

Other families, however, were closed out of this process as a result of the ill effects of slavery and the continued exclusion that came afterward. Many of these families have had three generations of downhill mobility, even though their children are bright and

able. There has been a very troublesome bifurcation and some families are not functioning as well as they need to.

Also, children today see more, hear more, know more at younger ages than ever before. For the first time in the history of the world, technological changes have made it possible for information to go directly to children through the media.

Let me quickly tell a story. Since my wife and I both worked, we had a housekeeper. She used to watch the soaps when the kids were around. My daughter, who is now a writer, but was then about four years of age, came into the room as I was packing to go away. She very solemnly shook her finger at me and said, "Now, don't you go and have an affair." She was only four! I was 16 before I knew what an affair was. Maybe it's not so surprising that her first job in Hollywood was on "Days of Our Lives!"

The point I'm making is that children are constantly bombarded with information of all kinds and they need more guidance, not less. Yet because of downward mobility, the little communities of parents and friends that used to protect and support the development of children are no longer able to do so. We must recreate a community that supports the development of young people from birth to maturity. What the Coalition for Community Schools is doing now is really what we must do.

MR. BLANK: Dr. Gordon, what would you add? Do you agree that the challenges children and families face today have changed in recent years?

DR. GORDON: My own experience emphasizes the importance of family and other networks of competent adults to the healthy development of kids—and I agree that the strong families that were available to many of us who have made it are increasingly unavailable to today's kids. The changes in the economy are such that when all of the adults in the household have to go out of the household to work in order to support the family financially, they are not available to support their children developmentally. This is a major challenge. The work of the Coalition for Community Schools is so very, very important because it is not simply about strengthening the school and its function, it is also about strengthening a variety of adult networks that support the wholesome development of kids.

A second challenge I see is that the academic bar children must surmount continues to rise. In my latest book, *The Affirmative Development of Academic Ability,* I discuss something I call intellective competence. The competence to function well intellectually is increasingly the universal currency throughout the world—to be literate, deal with numbers, reason logically. These are the products of good academic development. They can be learned in other contexts, but schools are intended to help make sure students acquire them.

If intellective competence is the criterion for meaningful participation in society, but schools are questionable in their capacity to develop these skills and home and community are not contributing, then it seems to me that the young people who are expected to meet such standards are almost lost from the beginning. What these students need are both in-school and out-of-school learning experiences that can bring them to high levels of intellective competence.

MR. BLANK: Sometimes the public and policymakers in today's environment don't seem to recognize that we need to bring together the assets of school, family, and community to help young people develop the kind of competencies you are describing. How do we explain this to people?

DR. GORDON: I think many of our leaders already know what we must do. The real problem is that a successful education is no longer viewed by this society as essential for large numbers of kids. We have written off many kids of color. As a society, we have accepted an underclass of folks, no matter what their color, that society thinks it doesn't need.

I can't conceive that we would permit our schools to be as under-resourced and as inefficient as they are if we really thought they were essential to the survival of this nation. What's needed is for more of us to step forward and work to change the will of the society to support the development of all its young people. I don't think that it's a matter of not understanding that school is important; I think it's a matter of deciding that these young people are important and that we have got to make school and family and community work for them. (Applause)

DR. COMER: I agree that we need to change the minds of those people who are not committed to all children. But we also need to pay attention to inertia and traditional attitudes about schooling. There is a tradition, a way of thinking about schooling, that defines it as information that you transmit to kids. It says that they are either smart enough to get it—or they're not. And the ones who don't get it are considered dumb or bad.

That attitude pervades our schools of education. Our teachers and administrators, through no fault of their own, have not dealt with that traditional way of teaching, organizing, managing schools. As a result, schools do not work for all children. In the past, the children who did not have the kind of experiences and support we've talked about left school and went to work—and most were able to take care of themselves and their families without an education.

Today, however, we need a school program that better recognizes the developmental needs of our children. We need to recreate the essential elements of community that are

missing now in school. All of that means change. There are people out there who would like to change but don't understand how. There are others—administrators, teachers, parents—who really don't understand that you have to raise children differently today and that we need to provide better supports.

That is the group we really have to work on. We have to provide the research evidence that you can make a difference and keep up the pressure. Creating a movement is important because that it is the only way to change that group of people who don't want to change and who think they don't need to change. But if they did change, they could be the most powerful people in the country.

This combination of helping people understand, providing the research, and keeping up the pressure is very much like what happened in smoking. Forty years ago, this room would have been filled with smoke, but there is no smoke out there today because of those three things: information, research, and pressure. And those are the elements of a movement that can really change schools.

MR. BLANK: In this conference we have tried to talk about the conditions for learning that the typical parent, the typical citizen would understand are necessary for kids to succeed. How do we help convince parents and policymakers who intuitively see the value of these conditions for their own children, understand the importance of providing them for all children?

DR. GORDON: When we talk about the conditions of schooling, I immediately think of the French philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu. He talks about the forms of "capital" that people need to succeed—commonsense things like good health and nutrition. He also talks about human capital—having access to informed adults, people who have succeeded themselves and can help you find your way. And he talks about cultural capital—exposure to family and community traditions and expectations that encourage academic and personal development.

According to Bourdieu, as interpreted by Scott Miller, one of the most important forms of capital is polity capital—a sense of membership. "If I sense that I belong to a group, that I am a member of it, then its standards are important to me. If I don't think I'm a part of it, then I don't give a damn. Members of the group can do what they want and I'll do what I want. If the group itself doesn't think I belong, it won't want to pay taxes for my education. It doesn't care what happens to me. If members don't sense that I'm needed as a part of this group, they can just dispense with me."

Bourdieu reminds us that people need all these forms of capital to do well in school and in work. In 1965, James Coleman's equality of education study showed the high correlation between socioeconomic status and school achievement. Achievement wasn't

just associated with money; it was associated with all the things that come to be associated with higher status in our society. Since then, other research—Jane Mercer and Richard Wolf—has shown that in families where there is active support for academic development, the differences between rich and poor, black and white disappear with respect to academic achievement. Having access to the kinds of capital that achievement rests upon makes education much easier.

But, as I've already suggested, society is not ready to equally distribute access to such capital. If it were, the first thing it would do is to make sure there were no hungry kids, no homeless kids, and no neglected kids. Now, we would still have some educational problems to deal with. But the mass failure of kids in our society would be eliminated within the next generation if the quality of life for all of us were adequately elevated. A variety of studies—from a UNESCO study of families in India to research on blue-collar workers in New York—show that as quality of life elevates, so too do family aspirations, expectations, and self-efficacy, the sense that they can do something to improve their lives.

DR. COMER: I can understand these problems because of my own background. My family was as low-income as the families of the three friends I spoke about who went on that downhill course. Our parents' jobs paid about the same, their education level was the same, and we were in the same school. I realized that the difference between us was in the quality of developmental experiences that I received at home. My mother worked as a domestic for very successful families and she wanted her own children to do as well. This interaction also provided us with some access to jobs and other opportunities. Yet my friends—and many of today's low-income families—had no contact with mainstream people or similar access to opportunities and support.

So I began to wonder how to provide better experiences to other young people living in families that were not functioning well or whose upward mobility was blocked by lack of access and opportunity. Where else could young people find the help and motivation to succeed? I realized that it had to be through schools and in the organizations around them that can help people feel they belong, that they have ability, and provide them with the kind of exposure, skills, and opportunities needed to enter the mainstream. Our entire School Development Program was developed with that notion in mind and we have been able to demonstrate that it works.

I believe society has known what to do to help all children succeed for many, many years. What I'm worried about is why we aren't doing it and what we can do to change things. This is where we have to focus—on figuring out how to minimize the power of the people who either don't care or who won't do what is necessary for all children to learn. That is why movements are so important. Collecting evidence is essential and we have a lot of it.

MR. BLANK: Some would argue that the focus of No Child Left Behind has defined and measured student learning in a very narrow way. What is your critique of where we are now and how should we use the evidence we already have to help move people toward a broader way of thinking about what needs to happen in our schools and communities?

DR. COMER: While many policymakers are narrowing education, there are lots of people, like the people involved in community schools who are here today, who say that that approach is not working. There are competing views out there; we have to battle to make our point of view the dominant one. And I think we can win that one because we have the children on our side. (Applause) When you see the children in our schools do so well, it is difficult to keep on arguing that other children, just like them, cannot do the same.

We have strong arguments to make the case for change. First, we are not going to be competitive as a country in 50 years with China, India, and others unless we make it possible for all of our children to be successful. Nor will this country remain a democracy if we have growing numbers of people who don't make it and end up in the drug culture or otherwise out of the mainstream. The actions that will be necessary to control and punish the people who are acting up and acting out will decrease the quality of life for everyone. When we realize this, the pressure for change will grow. When that happens, we have to be ready with models that show that if you support the development of children and give them the skills they need, they can be successful in the mainstream. (Applause)

DR. GORDON: I believe that the argument for education as essential to the survival of our democracy is stronger than saying that education is essential to our competitiveness. The people who control policy in our country are no longer looking to education to support the future economic survival of the country. Just last week IBM announced that it was investing $6 billion in India. That investment will create jobs for people in India, not here. Certainly, one of the political problems we will have to face soon is how we will survive as a society when it is no longer either necessary, or maybe even possible, to employ all of us because we've moved our productive capacity abroad.

But I think that we might stand a better chance of rallying support for educational change if we promoted it as supporting a democratic society. Governance with the consent of the governed depends on informed consent. In a democracy everyone is challenged to understand the issues that we must vote on. If we are not educating people capable of participating in democracy, democracy itself is threatened.

DR. COMER: To some extent, I agree that the need to safeguard democracy makes a stronger argument for improving education than does society's need for a more competi-

tive workforce. On the other hand, whether you're employed, unemployed, under-employed, living a decent life is possible and important. It is what really makes democracy possible.

But it is difficult to live a decent life if you haven't had the socializing and preparatory experiences that schools and other supportive organizations can provide. So let's say that we really don't need a lot of people to maintain our competitive edge. We still have got to have a society where people are motivated to function well and can live together in a reasonable way.

MR. BLANK: We were talking earlier about the importance of motivating and engaging young people in their own learning as a crucial aspect of preparing them for democracy. What are your views on using real-world learning in the community as a way to meet schools' academic and democracy-building goals?

DR. GORDON: We know that involving young people in their own learning, in deciding what forms it will take, and having it relate to real-world problem-solving is very effective pedagogy. Policymakers are not failing to promote the model because it's wrong—or that there isn't agreement that it is a preferable approach. What I am saying is that society doesn't feel the need to promote it.

My oldest son, an anthropologist who studies the development of young, black males, is interested in the politicization of their learning experiences. He became engaged in his own high school experience when he saw the connection between what was happening in school and his own political agenda.

The late John Ogbu, an anthropologist at the University of Berkeley and a path-breaking scholar in the field of minority education and cultural identity, reported that minority kids as young as 10, 11, and 12 understood that, if they completed school, they would have a better chance of being employed. But they also realized that their chance of being employed would only be about 50 percent as good as that of majority kids—and, if they were lucky enough to get employed, they would earn about a third less.

What Ogbu was arguing was that schools need to involve kids in understanding the politics of changing their life chances and prepare them for the political activity that would improve them. Now, I'm not sure that the institutions that are supported by the status quo, existing social structures in our society, are prepared to develop revolutionaries who are going to change that society. (Applause)

DR. COMER: Again, I agree that our children are not being well prepared. But it can be done. In the field, we are creating programs for children that help them gain the skills they need to be successful academically *and* to participate in the political and economic activities of their world.

I remember a unit we developed that integrated academic learning, social skills and appreciation of the arts with political, economic, health and nutrition, spiritual, and leisure time activities. We were working on all of that with elementary school kids. We saw dramatic academic improvement and kids who could function in all kinds of settings. And I argue that is what all schools have to do, from the very beginning. The more we demonstrate success, the more we can pressure people to change. The problem right now is that we don't have enough organizations and people—a movement—to keep the pressure on and inform people of what is already being done.

If you look you can find old-fashioned public schools where there are outstanding teachers and outstanding achievement. What is it that those successful schools are doing? They have teachers, administrators, and parents who are focusing on the development and support of their children. Whenever we get lost in this struggle and try to figure out what we should do, we should go back to ask: "What is it that children need most of all?" They need support in the whole process of development. That is what their lives are really about. Academic learning is a part of development. The focus ought to be on development first and academic learning as an aspect of that. (Applause)

MR. BLANK: I want to ask you one more question and then invite folks in the audience into the conversation.

DR. GORDON: Before you ask that question, Jim has been making a point to which I think we have not paid sufficient attention. Jim, when you bring us back to the process of development, which is so crucial, you used the term *movement* about six times today. (Laughter)

MR. BLANK: We like that term.

DR. GORDON: We need to take the idea of a movement seriously because the kinds of things we're talking about are not going to occur unless there is the political force out there in our society to make them happen. I think we have got to begin to think about a movement in defense of children and the families and communities that support them. So when Jim talks about creating a movement we ought not to just say "yes" and move on; we need to talk about how we can organize ourselves to achieve its purposes. (Applause)

MR. BLANK: When I look out at the world everyone is using movement language, but everybody has a slightly different focus:—a community schools movement, a family support movement, a youth development movement. What are the two or three things you think are most important for all of us to be doing to build a *united* movement?

DR. COMER: It is difficult to articulate because it's not here yet, but there is a developing convergence that is going to lead us all. All of these organizations that you've mentioned—we're going to eventually converge. When that happens, we will realize that we must have some formal structures and then figure out how to pull together all of our resources, thinking and evidence together, and direct it on an ongoing basis.

But the point I want to get at again, is that—while we work—we have to keep in mind the question, "To what end?" It is too easy, as we all get involved in our particular organizations, to forget. The end is to help all children grow and develop so that they can function well as adults—for their own economic well-being, their own community well-being, and the well-being of the democracy. That's why we have to organize. Convergence is on the way. It will happen.

DR. GORDON: Hugh Price, a past president of the Urban League and now a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, is here today. He was talking at least five years ago about the way in which the religious right organized itself around a political agenda and created a movement that effectively changed the direction of our country. We don't have that kind of movement for our children and families. I wish Hugh were up here because he could tell you some of the strategies that they used in order to create it.

MR. BLANK: Please, Mr. Price, if you'd like to share two or three points about movement-building, we'd love to hear them.

HUGH B. PRICE: Thank you. First, let me say just how thrilled I am to be here. This matters very much to all of us.

I think there are a number of things to do. First, you've got to understand that having a clear strategy is essential if you want to impact peoples' thought and behavior. When I was heading the Urban League, we spent a lot of time reading about movements and how they are formed. One of the most important books I've read on the subject is called *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* by Sara Diamond. It's a book on the evolution, the intellectual and strategic odyssey of the right wing beginning back when Goldwater was defeated in '64. It tells how, over the course of the ensuing 30 or 40 years, the right figured out how to marry a military war-gaming strategy with Madison Avenue marketing, philanthropic, communication, and think-tank strategies. Without getting ideological, just being clinical, it gives you a glimpse of the depth of strategic thinking that undergirds a successful movement.

Second, you need glacial patience and determination. When I was heading the National Urban League, we set out to create a movement called the Campaign for African-

American Achievement around the whole idea of promoting the achievement, development, and literacy of kids—that whole bundle of things. We reached out to fraternities and sororities. We reached out to the churches. We reached out to a broad panoply of organizations that would be considered the social infrastructure—the social capital—of the community.

As is the case with any such effort, we had hits; and we had misses. But I was struck through all that work by how hard it is and how long it takes and how much patience we needed. Even though you may understand and believe and be passionate about the perspective and the outcomes that you want, it takes a long time for other people to get it.

When I was an editorial writer with the *New York Times,* I told Max Frankel, our boss, I was sick of writing the same editorial ten times. He said to me, "What makes you think that after the seventh reading they altered their view of the issue? What makes you think after the tenth reading that they have changed their behavior? Go back and write it ten more times." In advertising, too. How many times have you seen the same ad over and over?

The conservative movement that we see today began in the mid-60s. There was a long view to dominate the politics of the country—school district by school district, councilmanic district by councilmanic district—building toward Congress, toward the White House, and getting there when they were ready. You have to have a strategic plan and you can't get frustrated.

You also need to get people to agree on what the subject should be. We would often have conversations in the civil rights community about creating a twenty-first century movement. And then we would stall out and wrestle about what the focus should be. These were tough and unresolved conversations. Maybe AIDS? Why not health? Or criminal justice? What about the achievement of our kids?

Galvanizing attention and getting people to invest energy in an issue that is more than their own is quite a challenge. Just think of all the issues these distinguished gentlemen have mentioned—economic issues, housing affordability, higher education. You need to think about how to help people sublimate the thing that they care about in order to rally around something else larger.

I agree with everything that has been said about the imperative to create a movement. We just need to know that it isn't simply a matter of saying to people: "We should and thou shalt" and then it happens. It doesn't work that way. Crafting the message, building the infrastructure to drive it, and having patience are all critical. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. BLANK: Thank you, Mr. Price. This echoes some of the comments Ralph Smith, Vice President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, made in his earlier keynote address. He called on us to focus on our own work and integrate it more effectively with others. Many of us believe that the school is an essential institution and that connecting it with the work of people in health and social services, in youth development, community development, and with other partners is a pivotal piece of the changes in learning that need to happen.

But he also charged us to think about being part of an even larger kind of movement around poverty—how our work can strengthen efforts to change the dynamics, politics, and thinking about the economy that are taking place across the country.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Annette Anderson, and I am the principal of The Widener Partnership Charter School in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Gordon, you mentioned Ogbu's work in California, but I wanted to turn to his work in Shaker Heights, a suburb of Cleveland, and in Prince George's County, Maryland. He looked at African-American communities there that were very well resourced—where both of the parents tended to work and to be highly educated; where access to childcare, healthcare, and those kinds of issues were not deterrents to high socioeconomic status or to education. Yet the achievement levels for the African-American students in both of those school districts tended to be on par with more under-resourced communities.

I'm curious about what both of you have to say about the consequences of this pattern of underachievement that persists even in our very wealthy economic communities for middle-class African Americans and what this means for our going forward. If even when the parents are highly educated, their children still have high rates of truancy, high rates of dropping out, high rates of unemployment, what is it that we need to do to be able to ensure a strong African-American middle class? (Applause)

DR. COMER: Well, one of the problems in a society with a history like ours is that there is a sense of exclusion from the community even when you gain some of the material things and opportunities within the society. A positive counterculture—a culture that counters some of the negative messages from the larger society—must develop. Otherwise children can be pulled into non-mainstream thinking.

I think many African-American children from middle-income, well-educated families aren't doing as well as they could because part of their understanding of what it means to be African American is based on what the media transmits back to them, what their friends transmit back to them. When we were young, we were told in church and a variety of other places, "You can't be as good; you've got to be better." There were a

whole lot of messages like that which countered the negative mainstream message. But that support from churches and families and other organizations isn't there anymore. As a result, our young people are not making the efforts that some of us made in an earlier generation—when learning and being successful and being a high achiever was the message transmitted throughout the African-American community. At church, on the street corner, in a whole variety of places—that was the message.

But that message has been lost, bombarded by social and economic changes and other messages that come through the media. And so, a sizeable group of very intelligent, vibrant young people has been closed out of the mainstream. They've created a subculture, and that subculture has been taken over by the media. It has become the mainstream's entertainment, but positive messages about the young people who created it aren't sent back. Persistently negative feedback is. That is part of what I think Ogbu was picking up on and part of what the African-American community is going to have to organize to counter.

DR. GORDON: My anthropologist son talks about the concept of subaltern cultures and how it applies to African-American males. It is a term that originated in the study of colonialism in India. It refers to how people who experience cultural subordination adapt to oppression by embracing some of the culture's dominant forms while developing other behaviors that resist it.

This may help explain anti-intellectualism among young, African-American males. It is not unlike the anti-intellectualism of the society in general. However, it is more dysfunctional for a young, black kid to be anti-intellectual than it is for a rich, white kid because the social networks that are available to the rich, white kid can help him at some later point compensate for his earlier resistant behavior. The poor, black kid who is anti-intellectual and misses out educationally is going to have a lot more trouble recovering from it than will someone who is white.

This anti-intellectualism gets played out in middle-class, African-American families, too. It points to one of the things that frightens me most about our current day situation—that even as African-American income levels and even achievement levels go up, the gap between white and black folk gets bigger. I've got a grandson who went through this period. Fortunately, he has recovered. But here was a kid who is bright enough to do anything he wants to do, acting as if he was turned off from school. I remember his telling Susan, my wife, one night that he had to identify with his gang friends in order to survive. I think this subaltern concept is related to Ogbu's findings in Shaker Heights and points to serious cultural conflicts. Now we have to figure out how to intervene so we can do something about it.

DR. COMER: There is a wonderful commercial that picks up part of what Ed was saying. Three young, well-educated, white businessmen are in their car. They're listening to the radio and they're all into hip hop. The boss calls on the phone. And they go right out of hip hop into mainstream behavior. They speak in the expected style with the boss; he hangs up; they go right back into the hip hop. (Laughter)

It would be nice if all kids could do that. Many white, young people during their adolescence and young adulthood can play that hip-hop game—it's their entertainment. But they have other skills that many black kids don't have. African-American kids who don't have those skills are trapped in a kind of adolescence that will not allow them to make it into the mainstream. On top of that, their lack of skills is used by mainstream institutions as an excuse to close them out permanently.

DR. GORDON: It's harder for African-American kids to make those switches because the hip hop for the black kid has emotional meaning. The hip hop for the white kid is a kind of recreation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I am Jane Quinn, Assistant Executive Director of the Children's Aid Society. I feel like I could listen to these two giants forever. Thank you so much. (Applause) Dr. Comer spoke earlier about the three elements of an organizing strategy that have to do with communicating information, conducting research, and applying pressure. We've talked a little bit about the pressure and the whole idea of a political movement, but I wanted to pick up on the information and research elements. Given what we know, could you help us think about what are the most important messages we need to communicate? And, given what we don't know, what are the most important research gaps we need to fill?

DR. COMER: Okay. I guess I've been frustrated by the fact that we have had successes now for a long time—with a lot of people in many places. But it's been here and there with the media sometimes reporting that success and sometimes not. We need to pull all the evidence together and present it in a way that is indisputable—that makes it impossible to argue that poor kids can't learn. So part of the message is collecting what we know.

We also need to emphasize that academic reports and research are now showing what we already know works and are describing the implications of that work. I think current work in neuroscience and brain research is going to make a big difference. Yet very few people are aware of that new knowledge. And so we have to develop more knew knowledge and we have to transmit it.

DR. GORDON: I think that we may make a mistake by focusing too sharply on knowledge itself. My friend W. E. B. DuBois spent all of his life trying to better understand both the history and the social experiences of this country. If he could communicate information to society, if he could help them understand it, he thought we could do something about it.

In his final years he was beginning to doubt that. Not that he thought knowledge and understanding were unimportant. But he had become much more worried about society's will to do something about the problem. It may be that, without abdicating our responsibilities as professionals and as scholars to continue to try to understand problems better and to explain them to other people, we may need to give more of our attention to our non-professional, non-academic responsibilities as citizens to try and change the will of the society.

I have been looking at what happened in this country after World War II with the GI Bill in connection with my book on affirmative development—a kind of amplification of affirmative action. The GI Bill began as an affirmative action idea designed to reward people who had served in the military. But it evolved into an affirmative development program.

We took farm boys and street kids and a lot of folk who never thought of going to school. We did something about their health. We gave them economic opportunity. We gave them education opportunity. We really cultivated the intellectual and social and political capacities of these people. I think we figured out how to do this because of society's conviction that this pool of people, number one, deserved our gratitude and an opportunity and, number two, that the nation needed this huge group of undeveloped talent.

I think that when a society or when a group decides that they need something, or that they've got a problem to solve, they do it. So maybe as we continue to work on our professional front, we've also got to work on the political front.

MR. BLANK: A last, quick comment, Dr. Gordon, and then perhaps Dr. Comer can have the last word.

DR. GORDON: One thing I've not had a chance to talk about is another area of my work—supplementary education, namely the complementarities between the learning and teaching that occur outside of school with what occurs inside school.

I was prompted to begin this line of work by my friend Jim's [Dr Comer's] book, *Waiting for a Miracle: Why Our Schools Can't Solve Our Problems and How We Can,* and my own research on defiance of negative predictions for success. When I first started talking about out-of-school learning experiences, my school-board-president wife jumped on me because she thought I was saying schooling is not important. Instead, I

was arguing that schooling is very important, but that schools can't do it all alone. We've got to provide positive experiences and support around school in order to make schooling work and to achieve the holistic development of young people. That should happen in communities and at home.

DR. COMER: Ed just talked about what he hadn't talked about. I'm going to talk about what I always talk about and never miss a chance to talk about—the overall development of the student in preparation for life. Whenever we get lost—and it's easy to get lost in organizational activities and responsibilities—I go back to what kids need to grow. They need opportunities to live in an environment that is supportive; to have caretakers they can imitate, identify with, and whose attitudes, values, and ways they can internalize; and they need support to grow along the critical developmental pathways that are necessary to be successful in life. These include the physical, the socially interactive, the psycho-emotional, the moral-ethical, the linguistic, the intellectual, and the cognitive.

If we keep our eye on those developmental areas, we can shape all of our organizations and efforts to make it possible for all children to achieve their goals. (Applause)

MR. BLANK: When we began, we celebrated Dr. Gordon's eighty-fifth birthday. Tonight, Dr. Comer will receive the John Hope Franklin Award at a Symposium at Duke University for his years of achievement. Congratulations! (Applause) Thank you both for coming and for inspiring us in such important and powerful ways.

MS. LISA VILLAREAL (Vice Chair, Coalition for Community Schools): We all want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your wisdom, for your grace, for your information, and for your charge to us.

DR. IRA HARKAVY (Chair, Coalition for Community Schools): I cannot think of a more superb session with which to end this meeting or a more superb session to capture the work that the Coalition for Community Schools is engaged in. We will work harder than ever to translate your wisdom and take the next steps forward and, with greater diligence than ever, to continue building the movement necessary for all children and all Americans to succeed. Thank you very, very much. (Applause)

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INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Coalition for Community Schools is staffed by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). Since 1964, IEL has been at the heart of an impartial, dynamic, nationwide network of people and organizations from many walks of life who share a passionate conviction that excellent education is critical to nurturing healthy individuals, families, and communities. Our mission is to help build the capacity of people and organizations in education and related fields to work together across policies, programs, and sectors to achieve better futures for all children and youth. To that end, we work to:

- Build the capacity to lead
- Share promising practices
- Translate our own and others' research into suggestions for improvement
- Share results in print and in person.

IEL believes that all children and youth have a birth right: the opportunity and the support to grow, learn, and become contributing members of our democratic society. Through our work, we enable stakeholders to learn from one another and to collaborate closely—across boundaries of race and culture, discipline, economic interest, political stance, unit of government, or any other area of difference—to achieve better results for every youngster from pre-K through high school and on into postsecondary education. IEL sparks, then helps to build and nurture, networks that pursue dialogue and take action on educational problems.

We provide services in three program areas:

- Developing and Supporting Leaders
- Strengthening School-Family-Community Connections
- Connecting and Improving Policies and Systems that Serve Children and Youth.

Please visit our Web site at *www.iel.org* to learn more about IEL and its work.

COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of national, state, and local organizations in education, K–16, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government, and philanthropy as well as national, state, and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as the vehicle for strengthening schools, families, and communities so that together they can improve student learning.

Our mission is to mobilize the assets of schools, families, and communities to create a united movement for community schools. Community schools strengthen schools, families, and communities so that together they are better able to improve student learning.

The Coalition for Community Schools partners include the following organizations:

Community Development/Community Building
Asset-Based Community Development Institute
Center for Community Change
Development Training Institute
National Community Building Network
National Congress for Community Economic Development
National Council of La Raza
National Neighborhood Coalition
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Urban League
Police Executive Research Forum
The Harwood Institute

Education
American Association for Higher Education
American Association of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
American School Counselor Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of the Great City Schools
Developmental Studies Center
Learning First Alliance
National Association for Bilingual Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Community Education
National Education Association
National PTA
National School Boards Association
National Service Learning Partnership
Pacific Oaks College, CA

Family Support / Human Services
Alliance for Children and Families
American Public Human Services Association
Child Welfare League of America

Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, University of Illinois at Chicago
Family Support America
National Center for Family Literacy
The Educational Alliance
United Way of America

Local And State Government
National Association of Counties
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governors' Association
National League of Cities
US Conference of Mayors

Federal Government
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Learn and Serve America Twenty-First Century Learning Centers

Health And Mental Health
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Mental Health Association
Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education National and Recreation
UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools

Local Community School Networks
Achievement Plus Community Learning Centers, St. Paul, MN
Alliance for Families and Children, Hennepin County, MN
Baltimore Coalition for Community Schools, MD
Bates College/ Lewiston Public Schools, ME
Birmingham Public Schools, AL
Boston Excels, MA
Boston Full Service Schools Roundtable, MA
Bridges to Success, United Way of Central Indiana, Indianapolis, IN
Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater Greensboro, NC
Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater High Point, NC
Bridges to the Future, United Way of Genesse County, MI
Chatham—Savannah Youth Futures Authority, GA
Chelsea Community Schools, MA

Chicago Coalition for Community Schools, IL
Chicago Public Schools, The Campaign to Expand Community Schools in Chicago
 Community Agencies Corporation of New Jersey
Community College of Aurora/Aurora Public Schools, CO
Community–School Connections, NY
Community Schools Rhode Island, RI
Evansville–Vanderburgh Corporation School Community Council, IN
Jacksonville Children's Commission, FLKidsCAN!
Lincoln Community Learning Centers Initiative, NE
Linkages to Learning, Montgomery County, MD
Local Investment Commission, Kansas City, MO
Mesa United Way, Mesa, AZ
Minneapolis Beacons Project, MN
New Paradigm Partners, Turtle Lake, WI
New Vision for Public Schools, NY
Project Success, IL
Rockland Twenty-First Century Collaborative for Children and Youth, NY
School Linked Services, Inc., Kansas City, KS
SCOPE, Central Falls, RI
St. Louis Park Schools, MN
St. Louis Public Schools, Office of Community Education, MO
Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN), Portland, OR
United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania/First Doors to the Future, Philadelphia, PA
University of Alabama–Birmingham/Birmingham Public Schools, AL
University of Dayton/Dayton Public Schools, OH
University of Denver/Denver Public Schools, CO
University of New Mexico/United South Broadway Corp/Albuquerque Public Schools, NM
University of Rhode Island/Pawtucket Public Schools
West Philadelphia Improvement Corps, PA

National Community School Networks
Beacon Schools Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York
Children's Aid Society
Collaborative for Integrated School Services, Harvard Graduate School of Education
Communities in Schools
Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania
National Community Education Association
School of the Twenty-First Century, Bush Center, Yale University

Policy, Training, And Advocacy
American Youth Policy Forum
Children's Defense Fund
Cross Cities Campaign for Urban School Reform
Education Development Center
Eureka Communities
Family Friendly Schools, VA
Foundations, Inc.
Institute for Responsive Education
Institute for Social and Education Policy, New York University
National Center for Community Education
National Center for Schools and Communities, Fordham University
John Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford University
Joy Dryfoos, Independent Researcher
National Child Labor Committee
National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
National Youth Employment Coalition
Parents United for Child Care, Boston, MA
Public Education Network
The Finance Project
RMC Research
The Rural School and Community Trust

Philanthropy
Carnegie Corporation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
KnowledgeWorks Foundation
Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation
Polk Bros. Foundation
Rose Community Foundation
The After School Corporation
Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds

School Facilities Planning
Concordia, LLC
Council of Education Facilities Planners International
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
New Schools/Better Neighborhoods
Smart Growth America
Twenty-First Century School Fund

State Entities
California Department of Education
California Center for Community–School Partnerships
California Healthy Start Field Office
Child and Family Policy Center, IA
Children First, OH
Community Schools, Rhode Island
Colorado Foundation for Families and Children
University of Kentucky/Lexington Public Schools
Illinois Community School Partnership
Education Leadership Beyond Excellence
Foundation Consortium, CA
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
New Jersey School-Based Youth Services/Department of Human Services
Office of Family Resource and Youth Services Center, KY
Ohio Department of Education
State Education and Environment Roundtable
Tennessee Consortium for Full-Service Schools
Washington State Readiness-to-Learn Initiative
Voices for Illinois Children

Youth Development
Academy for Educational Development
AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
America's Promise
Association of New York State Youth Bureaus
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
California After School Partnership/Center for Collaborative Solutions
Camp Fire USA
Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth
Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund
Forum on Youth Investment
National Collaboration for Youth
National Institute for Out-of-School Time
National School-Age Care Alliance
After School Resource Network
Partnership for After School Education
YMCA of the USA

PUBLICATIONS BY THE COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Community and Family Engagement: Principals Share What Works

Amy Berg, Atelia Melaville, and Martin J. Blank

Principals share six keys of community engagement and explore how these keys relate to engaging families, staff, partners, and the public.

Growing Community Schools: The Role of Cross-Boundary Leadership

Martin J. Blank, Amy Berg, and Atelia Melaville

This Coalition report highlights work in 11 communities where leaders are working together in new ways to "grow" community schools.

Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship

Atelia Melaville, Amy Berg and Martin J. Blank

Discover how community schools are using real-world, hands-on problem solving to ignite the imagination and the intellect of our young people.

Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools

Atelia Melaville, Bela P. Shah, and Martin J. Blank

Evaluation data from 20 different community school initiatives and a synthesis of their combined results.

Community Schools: Partnerships for Excellence

Atelia Melaville

Relationships among educators, families, community volunteers, business, health and social service agencies, and youth development organizations are changing the educational landscape by transforming schools into partnerships for excellence.

Evaluation of Community Schools: An Early Look

Joy Dryfoos

What a community school looks like and what we know about the impact of community schools on a range of results. Highlights three recent evaluations of community school initiatives.

Evaluation of Community Schools: Findings to Date

Joy Dryfoos

A summary of data from available evaluations of community school initiatives.

COMMENTARIES

Creating a Culture of Attachment: A Community-as-Text Approach to Learning

Milbrey McLaughlin and Martin J. Blank (2004)

This commentary reflects the Coalition's perspective that engaging and motivating young people to learn is essential for their academic and life success.

Community Schools: A Vision of Learning that Goes Beyond Testing, *Education Week*

Martin J. Blank and Ira Harkavy (2002)

Research and experience confirm what common sense suggests: What happens outside the classroom is as important as what happens inside.

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Martin J. Blank and Dan Cady (2004)

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How Community Schools Make a Difference, *Educational Leadership Magazine*

Martin J. Blank (2004)

Because community schools link school and community resources, they offer additional resources, thereby reducing the non-instructional demands on school staff.

POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS

A Policy Approach to Create and Sustain Community Schools

Coalition for Community Schools

A template for individuals considering policy options for community schools, including a discussion of relationships between schools and communities.

A Handbook for State Policy Leaders—Community Schools: Improving Student Learning/Strengthening Schools, Families, and Communities

Coalition for Community Schools (2002)

Designed to guide state leaders in forming vital connections between schools and communities that improve student learning, this handbook will also be helpful to policy leaders in cities, counties, local school districts, and philanthropy.

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