Minutes of the Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy I Charter School
Board Meeting
January 26th, 2011
35 East 125th Street, New York, NY 10035

In attendance: Geoffrey Canada, Stan Druckenmiller, Mitch Kurz, Arlene Gibson via telephone, O’Donna Hue Osborne, Hope Williams, Aisha Tomilson, Kathleen Fernald, Sheryl Ragland, Dennis McKesey, Tonya White, Marquitta Speller, Shakira Petit, Anne Williams-Isom, Mindy Miller, Marlene Fox, Debbie Gonzalez, Tracey Costello, George Khaldun, Betina Jean-Louis, Katie Shoemaker, Conrad Pinnock, Latasha Johnson-Morgan, Lauren Scopaz, Margo Wright, Michelle Germaine, Bessie Wilkerson, Brian McClendon, Shana Brodnax, Tiffany Fountain, Sharleen Morris, Jenny Lai

Mr. Canada’s report

School Building

The new school building is running under budget and according to the timeline. A closing date is still needed and Mr. Canada will be speaking with City Hall, the Mayor, and Chairman of NYCHA to set a final date. The ground breaking will be in April.

Promise Academy I Elementary

Promise Academy I reached the attendance goals. Ms. White sent letters home to students who were absent 7 or more times and met with their families. Due to these efforts, attendance has improved, however, Ms. White noted that attendance on December 23rd, 2010 was low.

Ms. White’s goal is for all Grade 3 students earn a 3 or 4 on the State Exam. Currently, the school is focused on the ELA. More class time and Saturday School have been dedicated to reading and math instruction. Ms. White notes that assessment tools provided by McGraw Hill including Acuity and the Treasures Program help the school to meet each student’s individual needs.

Ms. White highlighted the improvement that Promise Academy I Elementary students made on their F & P reading scores. In Grade 3, 88% of students are reading at Level O; previously Level O was the end of year reading goal for Grade 4 students. The 10 students that did not reach the reading goal are enrolled in Bridging the Gap, an after-school program focusing on learning needs identified during the school day.

Ms. White reports that there has been no staff turnover amongst classroom teachers, but one teacher from the specials program has left.

Promise Academy I Upper Elementary/Middle

Mr. McKesey reported that attendance remains high. He also noted that although attendance was low the day before Christmas break, it was better than it has been in the past.
In preparation for the ELA State Exam, Promise Academy Upper Elementary ran a 3-day mock state test this week. The tests were created by Test Ready and reflected the rigor and structure of the actual State exams.

Additionally, the highest performing teachers at Promise Academy Upper Elementary School are staying after school to tutor 20 of their lowest achieving students for 1.5 hours a day. His administrative team has also created an accelerated program for high achieving students including a program focused on engineering.

There has been no staff turnover at Promise Academy Upper Elementary School.

**Promise Academy I Junior High School**

Ms. Petit reported that attendance has been strong. Parents are called after three absences and meetings are scheduled with the school.

Morning, midday, and afternoon intervention programs have been put into place for low-performing students. There are 40 students enrolled in the morning intervention program which runs between 7:30-8:00 am; about 60% of the students attend consistently Monday through Friday. During the midday, 44 of the lowest performing students practice basic phonetic skills for an hour a day. Lastly, all Grade 7 teachers stay after school Monday through Thursday to teach an additional 60 minutes of Math and ELA. Ms. Petit noted that the results of the predictive tests created by Acuity are promising.

Promise Academy I Junior High School has been taking proactive steps to prepare students for the 8th Grade. Since December 20th, 2010, students have been transitioning between classes to prepare for high school transitions. Also, students participate in 90 minutes of ELA and Math and 60 minutes of Science and History.

Additionally, high school students have met with Grade 7 students to talk about peer pressure and the stress of being a high school student.

**Promise Academy I High School**

Ms. Speller introduced Promise Academy I High School's College Success Team. This team comprises of Mr. Amino Areel, Mr. Joseph and Ms. Rhoner.

Mr. Joseph, who works predominately with 10th Grade students, reported that Promise Academy students scored below the National and New York State average in math, critical reading and writing. The College Success Team has developed a comprehensive plan to improve test scores. The plan includes an individualized plan for every student and meetings with parents, advocates, and the student to discuss future goals. Additionally, all students will be registered with the College Board so they can access their test results and practice test questions. Princeton Review will continue working with 11th grade students and Revolution Prep will be supporting 10th Grade students. Moreover, English classes have been restructured to focus on critical reading and writing skills.
Ms. Rhoner is continuing to build a network that connects students to colleges. Mr. Alfonso Wyatt will invite college graduates from his church to Promise Academy events in March. This will give college graduates from his church an opportunity to share their experiences with Promise Academy high school students.

The Promise Academy I High School Math Department then discussed the positive affect that increasing math instruction has had on students. Mr. Harrell, a Promise Academy High School Math Teacher, stated that last year 97% of students passed the Math Regents exam. Additionally, all 12 honors math students passed the Algebra 2 Trigonometry Regents this year. The plan is to transition these students into a Calculus class next year. He attributes the students' success to teachers working together and individualized instruction for students.

Financials

Tracy Costello reported that Promise Academy I continues to run under budget by 6%.

Fringe benefits are running high at 62% because there are now more employees with families, who have elected medical coverage, and expenses are much higher for families than for single employees.

The telephone service is running at 110% but when the eRate grant is approved, the telephone service will be reimbursed by 90%. Given the late approval for this grant last year, it is expected that approval will be given late this year as well.

Meeting adjoned at 7:45 a.m.