Minutes of the Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy II Charter School
Board Meeting
March 23rd, 2011
35 East 125th Street, New York, NY 10035

In attendance: Geoffrey Canada, Ken Langone, Mitch Kurz, Arlene Gibson, O'Donna Hue Osborne, Hope Williams, Aisha Tomlinson, Kathleen Fernald, Sheryl Ragland, Dennis McKesey, Tonya White, Marquitta Speller, Shakira Petitt, Anne Williams-Isom, Mindy Miller, Marlene Fox, Debbie Gonzalez, Tracey Costello, George Kahlun, Betina Jean-Louis, Kate Shoemaker, Conrad Pinnock, Latasha Johnson-Morgan, Lauren Scopaz, Margo Wright, Michelle Germaine, Bessie Wilkerson, Brian McClendon, Shana Brodnax, Tiffany Fountain, Sharleen Morris, Jenny Lai, Alfonso Wyatt (via telephone).

Promise Academy II Elementary

Ms. Ragland stated that attendance has consistently averaged between 90% and 93%. There are 15-17 students with chronic absences. The staff has doubled their efforts to contact the parents of tardy and absent students.

Ms. Ragland also reported that she met with teachers from every grade. With the school’s strong focus on reading and ELA, more students are moving into accelerated groups and out of intervention groups. The “Read to the Principal” program has been highly successful; one hundred fifty students have read to Ms. Ragland in her office so far. These reading sessions have given her a snapshot of each student’s reading ability and the chance to get to know each family.

Ms. Ragland reported that 200 out of the 274 families participated in the last parent teacher conference. Teachers have since met with the remaining 74 families during their prep periods.

Promise Academy II Upper Elementary

Ms. Fernald reported that attendance has been consistently high. Attendance was low on the day before February break and on the day of the snow storm. Ms. Fernald also noted that attendance has increased as they approach the day of the New York State Exam.

Ms. Fernald recognized 44 students who earned a special trip this month with their families by achieving a 4 on their ELA or Math New York State Exam. As a special event for the rest of her students, she and the gym teachers organized a faculty vs. students basketball tournament. Every 4th, 5th, and 6th grade student participated in the event. Ms. Fernald also played in the tournament.

Ms. Fernald noted her team’s deep sense of urgency. The last practice test did not demonstrate the growth her team expected and they are modifying their approach. With more emphasis on reading and writing, teachers are exposing students to many different genre both fiction and non fiction.
Last Monday, a hearing was held to give the public an opportunity to voice their opinion about allocating more classrooms in Choir Academy to Promise Academy as Promise Academy grows. The final decision will be made this evening.

Ms. Fernald then introduced Mr. Tyler Sanders and Ms. Jane Luceno, the two teachers who lead the Promise Academy II Science Fair. The students who won the first, second and third place were invited to the Board meeting to present their work.

Mr. Dijion Brooks, first place winner of the Promise Academy II Science Fair, presented his findings on evolution. Second place winners, Ms. Odyssey Martin, Ms. Xaviah Martin, Ms. Gabriella Forbes and Ms. Laneisha Smith presented their Harlem beautification project. They have worked with many vendors to ensure new plants and flowers will be planted around Harlem. Tahvis Magruder, the third place winner, presented his product analysis of gum. The results of his study showed that Solstice Five gum has the longest lasting flavor.

Financials

Ms. Tracy Costello reported that PAII budget has remained consistent and is currently under budget.

Mr. Canada's Conclusion

Mr. Canada has met with all the principals and reiterated the importance of leading by example. He emphasized the significance of instruction and the need for administrators to engage in modeling excellent instruction by working directly with students. He also emphasized the need to focus on building a strong connection between Harlem Gems and our kindergarten program. Ms. Ragland and Ms. White are strategically supporting K-2 instruction so students in Grade 3 are ready for an academically rigorous program.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 a.m.