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**Superintendent**

Shannon Benson  
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Kelly Siddharta  
**Interim Principal  
Elementary School**  
245 West 129<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027  
Tel 212.360.3232

LaRen Bierria  
**Interim Principal  
Middle School**  
245 West 129<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027  
Tel 212.360.3233

Amy Deal  
**Principal  
High School**  
245 West 129<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10027  
Tel 212.360.3234

AGENDA

Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy I  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Wednesday, March 18, 2026  
at  
245 West 129<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY

- I. Acceptance of the Minutes
- II. Superintendent's Updates (*Saskia Brown*)
- III. HCZ Promise Academy I Updates
  - i. Elementary School (*Kelly Siddharta*)
  - ii. Middle School (*LaRen Bierria*)
  - iii. High School (*Amy Deal*)
- IV. Financial Report (*Ralph Stefano*)

**Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy I Charter School  
Board Meeting  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026  
245 West 129th Street**

*Attendees: Geoffrey Canada, Kwame Owusu-Kesse, Mitch Kurz, Stan Druckenmiller, Willie Mae Lewis, Lisa McNear, Candice Ashby, Shannon Benson, LaRen Bierria, Saskia Brown, Ari Browne, Amy Deal, Veroniqua Delva, LaKiesha George, Jenn Klein, Jazmine Lewis, Stephanie Lilavois, John Macapagal, Katherine Martinez, Shannon Ortiz-Wong, Kelly Siddharta, Meredith Peckosh-Soffrin, Ralph Stefano, Sean Sullivan, Toya Stilley, and Tarik Ward.*

**Acceptance of Minutes (Geoffrey Canada)**

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM. The board unanimously approved the meeting minutes from January 14, 2026.

**Superintendent's Update (Dr. Saskia Brown)**

Superintendent Dr. Saskia Brown reported that as of February 1, enrollment for HCZ Promise Academy I is 1,136, and 958 for HCZ Promise Academy II.

Dr. Brown invited Assistant Principal of Promise Academy I High School Dr. Natasha Gutierrez, Literacy Coach Katherine Aguero, and K-5 Math Coach Shernice Johnson to briefly greet the Board. Dr. Brown and the Board thanked them for stepping in as lead teachers while continuing their primary roles and responsibilities.

Dr. Brown thanked Director of Compliance Candice Ashby and Director of Business Administration Ari Browne for the completion and submission of the Annual Comprehensive Review, a New York City Department of Education reporting requirement that includes school data and self-evaluations for the 2024-2025 school year. She also thanked Chief Financial Officer Ralph Stefano and the Finance Team for their contributions.

Leadership teams participated in a Data to Action Lab on January 30, reviewed Quarter 2 academic data, and developed action plans for the remainder of the calendar year. Dr. Brown thanked Mr. Canada for attending.

Dr. Brown, Deputy Superintendent Shannon Benson, and the Teaching and Learning Team conducted instructional walkthroughs during the week of February 2 and observed strong scholar engagement and teacher preparedness.

The Elementary and Middle Schools are preparing scholars for upcoming computer-based testing with mock tests scheduled in February and March.

The Schools continue to expand and monitor the HeyTutor program to ensure scholars receive additional academic support when needed. Dr. Brown recognized the schools for increasing scholar participation in the program.

### **HCZ Promise Academy I Elementary School (Kelly Siddharta)**

Interim Principal Kelly Siddharta reported the Elementary School's attendance was 91% for January.

Approximately 40 scholars regularly participated in the HeyTutor program, and attendance increased from 69% to 75% over the past month. School leaders continue to conduct family outreach and provide incentives to increase participation.

The Elementary School hosted its first enrollment Open House of the year and welcomed more than 40 prospective families.

The Elementary School welcomed a new Learning Specialist and a Teaching Assistant in January.

Staff participated in professional development sessions focused on verbal de-escalation strategies, supporting scholars who leave the classroom without permission, and increasing opportunities for scholar participation and input in instruction.

The Elementary School achieved a 100% technology scorecard rating in January.

### **HCZ Promise Academy I Middle School (LaRen Bierria)**

Interim Principal LaRen Bierria reported the Middle School's attendance was 94% for January.

Participation in the HeyTutor program increased from 57% to 66% over the past month, and the school recently added an additional tutor. Ms. Bierria thanked Assistant Principal Dr. Joye for leading parent and scholar outreach for the program .

The Middle School conducted professional development sessions on the ELA curriculum, emphasizing scholar-centered writing and discussion.

The Middle School conducted computer-based testing simulations to prepare for mock exams. Ms. Bierria thanked Data and Assessment Manager Dr. Angie Eugenio for supporting preparation.

The Middle School increased its focus on writing instruction. Scholars completed full argumentative and informational essays to strengthen readiness for high school academic expectations.

The Middle School also hosted Math Mania Night, where families participated in math activities and learned strategies to support scholars at home.

### **HCZ Promise Academy I High School (Dr. Amy Deal)**

Principal Dr. Amy Deal reported the High School's attendance was 93% for January.

The High School increased its focus on short-answer and critical-response writing in response to updates to New York State assessments. Teachers are incorporating writing across subject areas and monitoring scholar progress through shared data systems.

The High School is preparing for the next instructional cycle on March 11.

The Teaching and Learning Team partnered with the Metropolitan Opera to bring scholars to a dress rehearsal of *Madame Butterfly*.

### **Financial Update (Ralph Stefano)**

Chief Financial Officer Ralph Stefano reported that HCZ Promise Academy I's December 31 enrollment is 1,143, which is 11 favorable versus the budget. The school's revenue through December is on budget at \$13.0M. Expenses are \$1.1M favorable, at \$11.8M. HCZ has not made a contribution through six months of FY26.

## Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy I February 2026 Attendance Report

Date	HCZ PAI Elementary School			HCZ PAI Middle School			HCZ PAI High School		
	Number of Students		% of Students	Number of Students		% of Students	Number of Students		% of Students
	Absent	Enrollment	Present	Absent	Enrollment	Present	Absent	Enrollment	Present
2/2	32	615	95%	21	264	92%	14	256	95%
2/3	24	615	96%	16	264	94%	20	256	92%
2/4	31	614	95%	11	264	96%	21	256	92%
2/5	39	614	94%	17	264	94%	18	256	93%
2/6	68	614	89%	15	264	94%	23	256	91%
2/9	73	614	88%	18	264	93%	26	256	90%
2/10	34	614	94%	13	264	95%	17	256	93%
2/11	43	614	93%	11	264	96%	20	256	92%
2/12	47	614	92%	16	264	94%	29	256	89%
2/13	63	614	90%	12	264	95%	24	256	91%
2/23	86	614	86%	35	264	87%	11	256	96%
2/24	171	614	72%	45	264	83%	56	256	78%
2/25	102	613	83%	25	264	91%	32	256	88%
2/26	38	612	94%	10	264	96%	13	256	95%
2/27	52	612	92%	10	264	96%	21	256	92%
<b>Average</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>91%</b>



## Promise Academy I

### FY 2026 January YTD Budget vs. Actual

		Revised Budget	Actual	Fav/(Unfav)	Revised Full Year Budget
Enrollment @ Jan 31	(a)	1,132	1,136	4	1,132
DOE and other gov't funding		\$ 15.2	\$ 15.2	\$ -	\$ 26.0
<b>Expenses:</b>					
Salaries		10.9	10.1	0.8	19.2
Benefits		2.8	2.6	0.2	4.7
OTPS		2.1	2.0	0.1	3.6
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(b)</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>27.5</b>
Expenses in excess of public funding	(c)	-	-	-	1.5
<b>Contribution Components:</b>					
HCZ Contribution		-	-	-	-
<b>per student (whole \$)</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

*(a) Enrollment as of Mar 1: 1,132*

*(b) Excludes PA Initiatives, bonus, growth fund, & other HCZ allocations.*

*(c) Projected deficit is being funded out of accumulated prior year reserves.*