Harlem Children's Zone
Promise Academy II®

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AGENDA

Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy II
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, November 18, 2026
at
245 West 129th Street
New York, NY

I. Acceptance of the Minutes

II. CEO Report *(Kwame Owusu-Kesse)*

III. Superintendent's Updates *(Saskia Brown)*

IV. HCZ Promise Academy II Updates
  i. Elementary School *(LaKiesha George)*
  ii. Middle School *(Veroniqua Delva)*
  iii. High School *(Shannon Ortiz-Wong)*

V. Financial Report *(Ralph Stefano)*

Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy II Charter School
Board Meeting
Tuesday, October 20, 2026
Location: 245 West 129th Street

Attendees: Geoffrey Canada, Mitch Kurz, Stan Druckenmiller, Lisa McNear, Keith Meister, Candice Ashby, Shannon Benson, LaRen Bierria, Saskia Brown, Ari Browne, Celines Castro, Veroniqua Delva, Kevin Dougherty, LaKiesha George, Alicia Junor, Jenn Klein, Jazmine Lewis, Stephanie Lilavois, John Macapagal, Katherine Martinez, Shannon Ortiz-Wong, Kelly Siddharta, Meredith Peckosh-Soffrin, Ralph Stefano, and Sean Sullivan.

Acceptance of Minutes (Geoffrey Canada)

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM. The board unanimously approved the meeting minutes from September 30.

Superintendent's Update (Dr. Saskia Brown)

Superintendent Dr. Saskia Brown reported that, as of October 1, enrollment for HCZ Promise Academy I was 1,165 and 944 for HCZ Promise Academy II.

Promise Academy leaders attended the HCZ's fifth annual Power of Place: Rooted in Purpose convening in New York City, where they connected with educators advancing place-based, cradle-to-career work.

Dr. Brown reported that increasing the teacher sign-on bonus from $6,000 to $10,000 helped strengthen recruitment efforts and attract candidates.

HCZ Promise Academy I and II launched tutoring the week of September 22 , with 18 tutors serving 303 scholars. Each Elementary School has six tutors, and each middle school has three. The revised model provides tutoring during the school day, supplemented by additional after-school support at the elementary level.

Dr. Brown also reported that the schools completed a comprehensive review of state assessment results and developed an improvement plan identifying priorities, goals, and strategies.

HCZ Promise Academy II Elementary School (LaKiesha George)

Principal LaKiesha George reported that Elementary School attendance was 93% for September.

The Elementary School used Google Gemini to develop differentiated reading homework passages aligned with grade-level learning objectives.

The Elementary School welcomed two new Lead Teachers in September. Ms. George thanked the Talent & Recruitment team for their partnership.

To strengthen family engagement, the Elementary School transitioned its Conversations with Principal George sessions to a virtual format and established a Teacher Action Task

Force to develop additional family engagement opportunities. The Elementary School scheduled parent-teacher conferences for October 22 and a fall festival for November 5.

The Elementary School also introduced an attendance outreach protocol requiring lead teachers to contact families shortly after the school day begins when scholars are absent. The Elementary School also reached 95% daily attendance two consecutive days in September.

The Elementary School launched HeyTutor, Academic Hour, and Saturday Academy. The school also planned to distribute books during parent-teacher conferences to encourage reading at home.

School leaders established weekly instructional planning meetings to review assessment alignment, identify learning gaps, and develop targeted interventions. Fifth-grade ELA and mathematics teachers received additional instructional coaching and support, including collaborative planning and targeted intervention strategies.

HCZ Promise Academy II Middle School (Dr. Veroniqua Delva)

Principal Dr. Veroniqua Delva reported that Middle School attendance was 93% for September.

The Middle School reached full staffing after onboarding a Teaching Assistant to support its Spanish program. The Titans Joy Committee also introduced staff appreciation activities to strengthen morale and retention.

The Middle School held parent-teacher conferences with more than 100 families participating.

The Middle School launched Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), using its mobile library to promote literacy during weekly reading sessions and Saturday Academy.

The Middle School implemented Helping Young People Excel (HYPE), providing targeted small-group instruction in ELA and mathematics. Teachers used i-Ready and classroom assessment data to identify skill gaps and differentiate instruction.

Teachers focused on scholar autonomy, meaningful peer interactions, and real-world connections across core subjects. In ELA and history, teachers emphasized text analysis, evidence-based responses, and written explanations.

The Middle School strengthened Academic Hour and Saturday Academy participation through family outreach and targeted incentives. School leaders held town hall meetings for scholars to reinforce academic expectations and encourage participation in academic support programs.

Teacher coaching and professional development focused on Tier 1 instruction, inquiry-based learning, independent thinking, and academic discourse.

HCZ Promise Academy II High School (Shannon Ortiz-Wong)

Principal Shannon Ortiz-Wong reported that High School attendance was 93% for September.

The High School implemented a schoolwide instructional framework that combines classroom observations, scholar feedback, assessment results, and teacher evaluations to strengthen instructional practices. The High School continued Tier 1 teacher coaching and planned additional professional development for November.

Scholars began campaigning for student government positions in September. A group of sophomores visited New York University for a United Nations youth discussion on mental health and well-being. Scholars also participated in a discussion with Ariel Investments Founder John Rogers.

In partnership with the College Success Office, the High School hosted a FAFSA information session to help families navigate the college financial aid process. Six scholars advanced to the second round of the Posse Foundation Scholarship selection process and participated in interview preparation.

A representative from Farmingdale State College visited the High School to discuss college opportunities with seniors.

All seniors have begun their SUNY and CUNY college applications.

Financial Update (Ralph Stefano)

Chief Financial Officer Ralph Stefano reported that HCZ Promise Academy II's preliminary October 1 enrollment is 944, which is 27 favorable versus the budget. The school's revenue through August is $0.1M favorable at $4.0M. Expenses are $0.4M favorable, at $3.6M. HCZ has not made a contribution through two months of FY27.

Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy II
October 2026 Attendance Report

	HCZ PAII Elementary School			HCZ PAII Middle School			HCZ PAII High School		
Date	Number of Students Absent	Enrollment	% of Students Present	Number of Students Absent	Enrollment	% of Students Present	Number of Students Absent	Enrollment	% of Students Present
10/1	39	469	92%	21	261	92%	7	211	97%
10/2	46	469	90%	25	261	90%	18	211	91%
10/5	36	469	92%	21	261	92%	17	211	92%
10/6	32	467	93%	14	260	95%	17	211	92%
10/7	43	466	91%	14	260	95%	14	211	93%
10/8	36	466	92%	10	260	96%	6	211	97%
10/9	47	466	90%	16	260	94%	12	211	94%
10/13	35	465	92%	11	260	96%	18	211	91%
10/14	38	463	92%	9	260	97%	9	211	96%
10/15	21	463	95%	12	260	95%	9	211	96%
10/16	43	465	91%	15	260	94%	14	211	93%
10/19	44	465	91%	23	260	91%	12	211	94%
10/20	38	463	92%	16	260	94%	15	211	93%
10/21	38	463	92%	16	260	94%	14	211	93%
10/22	42	464	91%	13	260	95%	10	211	95%
10/23	50	464	89%	22	260	92%	4	211	98%
10/26	30	463	94%	20	259	92%	20	211	91%
10/27	32	464	93%	14	259	95%	10	211	95%
10/28	28	464	94%	15	259	94%	10	211	95%
10/29	27	464	94%	13	259	95%	12	211	94%
10/30	42	462	91%	19	258	93%	21	211	90%
Average	**37**	**465**	**92%**	**16**	**260**	**94%**	**13**	**211**	**94%**

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Promise Academy II®

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FY 2027 Sep YTD Budget vs. Actual

		YTD Budget	YTD Actual	Fav/(Unfav)	Full Year Budget
YTD Average Enrollment	(a)		941		917
DOE and other gov't funding		$ 5.9	$ 5.7	$ (0.2)	$ 23.4
Expenses:					
Salaries		3.9	3.7	0.2	17.7
Benefits		1.2	0.9	0.3	4.9
OTPS		0.9	0.7	0.2	3.5
Total Expenses	(b)	6.0	5.3	0.7	26.1
Expenses in excess of public funding		-	-	-	2.7
Contribution Components:					
HCZ Contribution	(c)	-	-	-	2.7
per student (whole $)		$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 2,944

(a) Enrollment as of Nov 1: 931

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

(c) Anticipated deficits are to be funded with HCZ Board-approved contribution.