Dear CFP Alumni,

This year, as we set about selecting our 10th cohort of outstanding principals, we traveled to schools across New York City, Newark and Chicago.

What we saw put into sharp relief the talent among us locally and “out there.” And just to give you a sense of our effort to find the best, more than 30 Cahn Alumni participated in the selection process of reading applications and visiting schools. A big thank you to them!

This is our second year of including principals from Newark in the program. We initially decided to do that because a RAND Corporation study indicated that participation in the program positively impacts students’ math, ELA scores and attendance rates.

This year’s Newark participants further proved to us that the kind of professional development that we offer is sorely needed and is put to great use by thoughtful leaders.

We ventured into Chicago because we saw that it would complement Schools

Superintendent Claude Brizzard’s efforts to identify, reward and develop school leaders there. Based on the response we’ve received, that intuition was on target.

With our strategic relationships, the size and profile of Chicago and the existence of superior institutions of higher education, we plan to pilot the program with Chicago participants here in New York and in 2013 the model will be a free-standing program in that city.

If all follows the current momentum, we will have a network of outstanding leaders to learn with across three major cities and a means to influence leadership development on a national level. Here are some highlights from the schools that I visited in January:

I saw student-created Public Service Announcements that were aired on the local cable channel;

I observed a grade-level teacher meeting aimed at deepening their interdisciplinary lessons by identifying common language and applications across subject areas and a metacognitive tool to help students make the connections explicit; I heard students talk about how their principal stands outside every morning, regardless of rain, snow or heat wave, to greet them.

My friends, I urge you to keep nominating and encouraging outstanding principals to apply for the program. If you know of an especially talented person, please email me right now with their name and email address and we’ll add them to our 2013 invitees.

Please stay in touch as our network grows. Each of you plays an integral part in our success. With gratitude,

Krista Dunbar, Program Director

CAHN FELLOWS PROGRAM 2012 COHORT
INCLUDES CHICAGO AND NEWARK EDUCATORS
Selected Principals to be Inducted April 24th at Teachers College

For the first time in the Cahn Fellows Program’s history, principals from Chicago, Illinois and Newark, New Jersey will join the 2012 Cohort. Twenty to twenty-five distinguished school leaders—representing the cities of New York, Newark and now Chicago—have been chosen by the Cahn Fellows Program Selection Committee.

At an official Welcome Reception on Tuesday, April 24th from 5 to 7pm at Teachers College, the program will induct selected principals into the program.

After a rigorous screening process including analyzing three years of Performance and Quality Review data, interviewing candidates and visiting schools, Selection Committee members identified exemplary school leaders from the states of Illinois, New York and New Jersey.

The 2012 Cohort will join 197 distinguished principals who have been awarded a Cahn Fellowship for their outstanding leadership since the program was founded in 2003.
This is the time of year that our energy starts to wane and everyone is under pressure and often not on their best behavior. We can try to ignore it or we can have honest conversations about what is bothering us and lighten the mood and the burden. The Books of the Month take a light-hearted approach to some of these issues and make great read alouds for both students and adults.

"What Are You So Grumpy About?" by Tom Lichtenheld. This book explores all the reasons children might be grumpy but can also be used to elicit adult conversation about their pouting. It encourages us to smile in spite of ourselves and focus on what is good about our world.

Reading this to staff while including personal stories of principal grumpiness (school report card, too many emails, etc.) helps everyone understand that a natural condition doesn’t need to stop our effectiveness.

"I'm Here" by Peter Reynolds. This book serves to remind us that all students want to be remembered for is themselves—not the data that they produce, or the academic qualities they represent. It is important for teachers to focus on the student that is in front of us in all their aspects, social, emotional and academic.

The moral of the story is; you can conquer your enemies if you see them in their true size and influence. Classroom teacher and school principal always trump outside organizations if you see them in their right light and create a collegial climate.

Choose to focus on the positive, begin all those important one-on-one conversations and plan a real special vacation for the upcoming holidays.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY FAIR TO BE HELD MARCH 21ST AT TEACHERS COLLEGE

Principals and Technology Vendors Highlight Effective School Programs and Applications

The Cahn Alumni Network (CAN) will sponsor the Third Annual Educational Technology Fair at Teachers College on March 21st from 4 to 7pm in Everett Lounge.

This year, the Technology Fair will highlight Cahn Fellows and Alumni whose schools have outstanding technology programs and have designed customized tech products for students and teachers.

From museum education to radio and television programming, to data systems for administrators, technology vendors and school principals will use the fair as any informative way to learn about different methods of school technology and the latest hardware and software available.

Educational technology vendors scheduled to participate in the event, include Apple, Tequipment, the Museum of Natural History, the Institute for Learning Technology, Google for Educators and the Center for Technology and School Change.

The Technology Fair will also feature live vendor demonstrations. Apple’s NYC educational technologist Scott Josephson will showcase the latest educational products and applications, including a session on Apple’s latest digital textbooks line as well as the iPad: “The iPad empowers children to speak with a universal device. It will also repeat what you say in to it. You not only can write or read a book on the iPad, students, especially those with special needs, can experience books on iPad.”

Among the Cahn Alumni who will highlight their school’s technology programs are: Leon Goldstein High School Principal Joe Zaza (CF 06) who will exhibit live real time information systems to help teachers teach kids, a DOE partnership; Giselle McGee (CF 10), principal of The Carroll School Project Lab will showcase how animation and blogs help students realize their potential through project-based learning while studying media arts and technology. Harry Truman High School Principal Sana Nasser (CF 07) will highlight her school’s planetarium technology along with the Museum of Natural History’s online education program.

Kindly RSVP for the Educational Technology Fair at cahnfellows@tc.edu.

FROM THE BOARD: KEEPING CURRENT
THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH

By Carmen Farina
Cahn Fellows Program Board Member and Former New York City Deputy Chancellor of Schools

I'd Really Like to Eat A Child

"I'd Really Like to Eat A Child" by Sylviane Donnio. A silly book that looks at life from two perspectives. The

The Books of the Month

Grumpy About Everything: Stories of Principal Grumpiness by Carmen Fari

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The Books of the Month

Grumpy About Everything: Stories of Principal Grumpiness by Carmen Fari
After conducting my instructional rounds of teachers one week, I could not help but recall the visceral reaction I experienced when I saw the documentary “Waiting for Superman” a year ago.

The first thing I wanted to do after leaving the cinema in a huff that night was haul a documentary film crew to my public school, Millennium Art Academy, and make an immediate sequel that would depict a great number of public school “Supermen” and “Superwomen” inside one small Bronx Title 1 high school.

I thought about this again when I observed Richard Ouimet’s English class at my school. A tenured New York City public school teacher with over a decade of experience, Ouimet is able to transform the ethos of any high school classroom into a college one by simply combining the ingredients that all teachers with the “it” factor possess: intellect, passion, compassion, the ability to motivate and inspire and, most important, the ability to treat each student with intellectual dignity at all times—regardless of that student’s learning ability, plight or societal baggage.

All of his 34 students (the same students who had entered our school three years earlier below grade level), sat in a circle, entirely engaged in a sophisticated Socratic dialectic centering on psychoanalytic themes in Sophocles’ “Oedipus the King.” The group included students with disabilities and English Language Learners, and all were able to articulate their claims (and counterclaims) by finding textual evidence and making connections via multiple perspectives, as well as with other texts they recently read.

But Ouimet is not the only “Superhero” educator at our public school; the vast majority of our teachers immerse their students in critical thinking, and all of our staff members spend more time at school with our students than they do with their own families.

Our “Supermen” and “Superwomen” engage in relentless outreach, visiting students at home when they have missed too much school, providing counseling and solace to students who are homeless who might be leaving their fourth foster home, or who were raped by someone they know, all while simultaneously convincing these students that there are really good reasons for them to wake up each morning and take two or three buses to attend their courses, passing mandated state exams, and preparing for college will all lead to something—a different life script, perhaps.

In essence, our school’s public tenured “Supermen” and “Superwomen” are the ones who hold the hope and vision, the proverbial torch of life, for those students who need adults to believe in them and who are patient enough to wait for them and push them through the darkness until they realize their integral place in the world.

Over 65 renowned literacy researchers, thinkers and practitioners will be featured at the 39th Annual Conference on Dyslexia & Related Learning Disabilities March 12-13th at New York University’s Kimmel Center.

Conference sponsor Everyone Reading advances the lives of children and adults with dyslexia and related learning disabilities by providing the resources they need to learn to become successful.

Monday’s keynote presenter will be NYU Professor Dr. Perri Klass, National Medical Director of Reach Out and Read. Hunter Professor David Connor will discuss What Works in Co-Teaching: Fulfilling Promises, Forgoing Pitfalls during the March 12th morning session.

Tuesday’s Keynote Presenter will be Hunter College Special Education/Learning Disabilities Professor Kate Garnett. Founding Director Lydia Soifer of the Soifer Center for Learning & Child Development and WestEd Teacher Professional Development Program Director Aida Walqui will speak during the March 13th sessions.

To register for the conference or to preorder the conference web-access audio recording, visit Everyone Reading at www.everyonereading.org
Authentic professional learning, in which adults are learning and growing and experiencing as they participate, can make a tremendous difference for adults, children, schools, and school systems. For these reasons and more, Learning Forward’s new Learning Designs standard (2011) is an important reminder that shaping professional learning as opportunities for adults to learn and grow is essential and that our understanding of how adults learn is an essential component of this pressing goal.

Doing this work — shaping learning and growth-enhancing conditions in professional learning — will help us meet the adaptive challenges we encounter every day. This holds the promise of helping us to increase our personal and organizational capacities and resources.

With new kinds of implicit and explicit demands placed on practicing and aspiring school leaders — principals, assistant principals, teachers, superintendents, district leaders, specialists, professional developers — who dedicate themselves to educating children and youth, we need to carefully consider how we can best design learning environments that are supportive of growth.

I define growth as increases in our cognitive, emotional or affective, intrapersonal (the way the self relates to the self), and interpersonal (the way the self relates to others) capacities to better manage leading, teaching, learning, and living.

More specifically, the three strands of the Learning Designs standard — apply learning theories, research, and models; select learning designs; and promote active engagement — point toward the promise of crafting professional learning as learning labs in which educators learn about content, learn by engaging with each other, and learn from the process of learning itself.

The first major idea in the Learning Designs standard focuses on the underlying beliefs and values that drive professional learning and the common features of robust learning environments that are informed by theories, research, and models. For example, the explanation of the standard names “active engagement, modeling, reflection, metacognition, application, feedback, ongoing support, and formative and summative assessment” as key components of many effective learning designs.

These elements are all very important. As a developmental psychologist and teacher who has worked with K-12 educators as well as aspiring and practicing leaders in university settings, I have studied how people learn and grow for more than 20 years. My work is closely aligned with this standard in that both seek to create conditions that enhance learning and growth for adults with what I would call very different developmental orientations — that is, varied ways of interpreting their experiences and the differentiated kinds of supports and challenges they need to grow and learn.

Cahn Faculty Advisor Terry Maltbia, who directs Teacher College’s Coaching Certification Program, notes a consistent growth in demand since 2007 for life coaches.

The practice of life coaching is nothing new. Janet Harvey, the incoming president of the International Coach Federation, one of the largest bodies vying to standardize accreditation, with over 19,000 members, traces it to the Human Potential Movement of the early 1970s and the teachings of Werner Erhard, whose “est Training” self-motivation workshops became wildly popular in the ‘70s and early ‘80s.

But the face of the profession is becoming increasingly fresh, with some clients receiving motivational guidance from coaches young enough to be their children. Harvey said that her program had experienced a large increase in young coaches, which she defined as ranging from ages 25 to 35.

At Columbia University, Terrence E. Maltbia, the director of the university’s Coaching Certification Program, is reporting a similar trend. “We’ve seen consistent growth in demand since 2007, across the board, but especially among younger people,” said Maltbia, who is developing a master’s program in leadership coaching as a joint initiative of the Teachers College’s Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation and the Executive Education unit of the Columbia Business School.

More than 30 American universities have introduced coaching programs, including Harvard, Yale, Duke, New York University, Georgetown, the University of California at Berkeley, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Texas at Dallas and George Washington University.

The universities are playing catch-up to scores of online training and accreditation programs that have flourished over the last five years, and increasingly advocate coaching over the phone or the Web.

For more information about Cahn Faculty Advisor Terry Maltbia’s Coaching Certification Program, visit the program website at www.tc.columbia.edu/coachingcertification/
Engaging students in learning and using questioning and discussion techniques are two competencies from Charlotte Danielson’s instructional domain that we, as the professional learning community of The Oliver Perry School: P.S. 34 in Brooklyn have been concentrating on this year for the purpose of strengthening and elevating instructional rigor.

As a Cahn Fellow (2010) and principal of a well-developed school with a long-standing record of high student achievement, I have had the professional luxury to “dig deeper” into our pedagogy with the long-term goal of developing student higher order thinking skills.

One of my school goals this year is to implement reciprocal teaching school-wide to engage all students in strategic, metacognitive reading.

Reciprocal teaching as an instructional strategy that supports students’ conscious and reflective comprehension of a text was introduced to us by an AUSSIE consultant, Louise Pertile, in response to our quest for developing rigorous instruction where students would take the lead and claim ownership of their learning.

While we are examining attributes of highly effective teaching in both of the above competencies, we realized that reciprocal teaching provided us with tools, approaches, and strategies that mirror the qualities of a highly effective teacher.

If you visited many of our classrooms, you would observe that our students, grouped flexibly, are fully engaged in a text discussion; the classrooms are buzzing with student exchanges focused on what they read.

Each group has a leader like our Assistant Principal Alain Beugoms (Cahn Ally 2010) whose responsibility is to move his or her peers along through the text by prompting them to predict, clarify, ask questions and summarize.

Every time I participate in a reciprocal teaching lesson, I am amazed at how this strategic reading supports strugglers, gives confidence to ELLs and pushes the thinking of high achievers. Students are able to carry out long conversations about their reading and respectfully respond to each other’s questions and opinions.

Our fifth-graders pictured here are teaching students about the successful use of higher order reading strategies, collaboration, leadership roles, respect and responsibility. When we surveyed them about this experience, the children told us: “I can share my ideas and it helps me in clarifying vocabulary,” “It helps me in comprehension when one person says something and others keep adding to it,” “You get to keep the conversation going.”

Teachers arrange for fishbowl activities and for student leaders coming to their peers in different classrooms to share their expertise. For the past several years, our teachers studied research on reciprocal teaching, engaged in intervisitations and learned from our AUSSIE consultant and each other.

This year, many of them are building on this professional knowledge by creating and sharing their own reciprocal teaching formative assessment tools and by expanding it to teaching science and history.

As a faculty, we are all in agreement: reciprocal teaching provides an instructional environment where highly effective teaching attributes are implemented and achieved with all students intellectually engaged in learning.

OUTSTANDING PROGRESS REPORT AND TEACHING AT THOMAS EDISON HIGH SCHOOL IN QUEENS

Thomas Edison High School
Principal and Assistant Principal
Anthony Barbetta and Adam Boxer
2011 Cahn Fellow and Ally

The faculty and staff of Thomas Edison High School in Queens
SAFEGUARDING SOUND BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE
MARCH 13TH AT TEACHERS COLLEGE

By CEE Executive Director Michael Rebell

The Campaign for Educational Equity is convening a citywide forum at Teachers College on March 13th from 9 to 1pm. The conference is for educators, parents, advocates, school officials, public officials and CBOs to come together for an important conversation about how to safeguard student rights to a sound basic education even during times official constraint.

The forum will introduce the Campaign’s current approach to safeguarding sound basic education, which includes (1) Preparing an in-depth legal examination of the extent to which the state’s recent budgetary actions violate the state constitution; (2) analyzing the extent of resource shortfalls in 12 high needs schools in New York City and 21 schools in seven other high needs districts throughout the state; (3) pressing for stronger student protections by calling on the state to create a set of “sound basic education requirements” that spells out what resources, services and supports schools meet current state standards and expectations; (4) promoting cost effectiveness and (5) creating a new cost-out methodology.

At small group and plenary conference sessions, we hope that you will lend your voice as we address these issues as well as the gap in current state policy and budgetary analyses.

To attend the conference, please RSVP to www.tc.edu/events/10621.

For more conference information, please contact CEE event coordinator Sara Peters at 646-745-8280. Visit our website at www.equitycampaign.org

PRINCIPAL STUNNED BY GINGRICH REMARKS ABOUT POOR KIDS, WORK AND SCHOOLS

Cahn Fellow Melessa Avery Celebrates P.S. 273 Students Progress During Black History Month

Excerpts and Photos from The Ed Show on MSNBC

As part of its Black History Month celebration, P.S. 273 Principal and 2010 Cahn Fellow Melessa Avery will highlight the outstanding progress of her elementary students with Congressman Edolphus Towns on February 27th at 9:30am.

The Worton School principal was recently interviewed by MSNBC anchor Ed Schultz during a segment of his nationally syndicated show. Avery was participating in a weekend march against voter suppression when Schultz asked her to respond to GOP presidential candidate Newt Gingrich’s recommendation to put kids in poverty-stricken neighborhoods to work in public schools.

Dumbfounded when Gingrich said poor kids should be allowed to work as janitors in their school in order to learn a work ethic, Avery said her family history made her respond to his political remarks in a personal way: “I was informed of the march by my two sisters in Atlanta. I was compelled to participate because of my experiences growing up in the south. Voting was big to all of the generations before me. The need to protect the free vote was my motivation.”

Principal Avery added, “I also marched for all of my students whose futures hang in limbo. I marched to show support for everyone threatened who simply could not be here! I met people from all walks of life. They drilled me for information about schools and our daily struggles. They expressed concern and support for the job we (principals) do every day.”
2011 BLACKBOARD AWARDS
OUTSTANDING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BRONX CHARTER SCHOOL FOR EXCELLENCE
2011 Cahn Fellow Charlene Reid Named Principal of the Year

The Blackboard Awards for principals, sponsored by the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, has named Bronx Charter School of Excellence Principal and 2011 Cahn Fellow Charlene Reid as Principal of the Year.

Founded in 2004 in the working class neighborhood of Parkchester in the East Bronx, Bronx Charter School for Excellence (BCSE) was struggling. In 2007, Charlene Reid was hired to turn it around. She began by revamping the staff. She promoted high standards as the norm, set performance goals for teachers and students, and instilled a culture of communication, support and accountability.

Within a year, BCSE was truly living up to its name. Under Reid, its 440 students (K through 7) have consistently averaged at or near the top among all New York state schools in English and math proficiency. With a dual focus on academics and character development, BCSE is now widely recognized as a top 10 charter school.

“We really function as a team,” Reid says. “We gain power from each other. Your success is based on other people’s success. Typically, schools can be very isolating. Teachers go in their classroom, close the door and teach. But the successful schools are team-oriented.”

Reid is accustomed to leading the pack, and her team approach to the “individual sport” of teaching comes as no surprise. A star sprinter at James Logan High School in her native Union City, California, she was recruited by UCLA and named to the NCAA All-America team there. She earned a master’s schools for a charter foundation in Elementary Education at UCLA while teaching first grade in Watts.

Enamored of New York City’s “educational reform movement,” she enrolled at Teachers College. After a rocky start—her first day of teaching at P.S. 46 in Harlem was September 11, 2001—things started to work out. She met her husband-to-be, fellow Columbia student Denniston Reid; switched from studying policy to leadership; completed her second masters and was hired as an assistant principal in the Bronx. In 2007, after five years at the Board of Ed, she was ready to move on. Encouraged by her husband, who supervises five there. She earned a master’s schools for a charter foundation in Elementary Education at UCLA while teaching first grade in Watts.

Charlene has the rare ability to see the big picture and be reflective” said Krista Dunbar, Program Director of the Cahn Fellows Program, where Reid was one of 20 school leaders selected in 2011. “She reflects on the impact she has on others. She sees herself as a coach and approaches her work from a performance perspective. How can each person be at the top of his or her game?”

The Tapestry Project is recruiting talented individuals to design, found and lead elementary charter schools in New York City. The Project is a collaborative effort by school choice advocates and proponents of racial and economic integration.

The organization is incubating several elementary charter schools in Northern Brooklyn that will have educational programs of sufficiently high quality to attract and meet the needs of students from families across the full economic spectrum. Tapestry assists leaders in all aspects of the charter school founding process: drafting an application, recruiting board members, raising funds, meeting legal requirements and obtaining facilities.

The principal qualifications for the founding leader positions are zeal and competence. There is no litmus test for experience or educational background. Applications should be submitted by email by February 27th to apply@tapestryproject.org.

You can learn more about the program at tapestryproject.org. Inquiries can be made to the Project’s Executive Director, Eric Grannis at egrannis@tapestryproject.org.

THE TAPESTRY PROJECT SEEKING CHARTER SCHOOL FOUNDERS
By Tapestry Project Executive Director Eric Grannis
POLICY BRIEFS:
JANUARY PRINCIPAL EVALUATIONS POLICY FORUM
Cahn Fellows and Alumni Debate Proposed City, State and Union Policy Changes

Over 80 Cahn Fellows and Alumni attended the Cahn Alumni Network’s first Policy Forum on Principal Evaluations on January 25th at Teachers College.

Moderated by Bob Monson, Cahn Faculty Advisor and Director of the Education Policy Leaders Program at Teachers College, the panel discussion featured New York State Regent Kathleen Cashin, New York City Department of Education Deputy Chancellor David Weiner and Council of Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) Executive Vice President Peter McNally.

Each panelist gave an overview on proposed city, state and union policies involving principal evaluations, followed by roundtable discussions and a reception with school leaders.
Since the School Leaders Network (SLN) began its first New York City Cohort in 2005, 42 Cahn Fellows have become members. In fact, there have been SLN members in every cohort of Cahn Fellows since 2003.

Mary Padilla, Louise Alfano and Betty Gonzales-Soto (Cahn Fellows 2004) remain charter members of SLN Cohort #1 today.

School Leaders Network (SLN) provides high quality learning communities for established principals to build strong collegial relationships, examine current research on effective leadership practice and become change agents who create school communities capable of the relentless pursuit of high achievement for all students.

SLN Principals meet once per month in cohorts of 12-15 members with a facilitator who supports the community in sharing best practices and collaboratively solving challenges related to their work.

What is the secret sauce that both of these organizations possess that compel principals to commit their own time to continued learning? “Principals want an opportunity to be with other smart principals. We learn from each other. We support and care about each other. This is one of the few times we have to slow down, reflect on our practices, engage in dialogue about the current issues that impact our work and walk away with answers” said Gonzales-Soto, Principal of P.S. 211, Bronx.

Both SLN and Cahn target established school leaders who have experienced some success and can benefit from the motivation, inspiration and leadership development to take their school communities to the next level. Both programs have given principals a strong, trusting community of leaders who they can depend upon for support.

P.S. 5 Principal Mary Padilla appreciates that community, “Both programs do a remarkable job of creating the right community. The cohorts all have great diversity and provide opportunities for networking. Our bond goes beyond districts, neighborhoods and boroughs. They are an extension of my family.”

P.S. 112 Principal Louise Alfano found a perfect match between the two leadership experiences. “It was the rich experiences and strong bonds that we developed as Cahn Fellows that have kept the core members of our SLN group together.”

She added, “SLN offers a great opportunity to continue the relationships we developed as Cahn Fellows through monthly meetings with people you care about, trust and respect. When we as Cahn Fellows joined SLN Network together we created greater sustainability for our learning and growth.”

This year, the synergy between the organizations has continued with 2010 Cahn Fellow Linda Beal-Benigno, 2011 Cahn Fellows April Leong (SLN Cohort#6), Magalie Alexis (SLN Cohort#6) and Franca Conti (SLN Cohort#1).
Cahn Alumni attended many national principals who attended the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) Principals Conference in December. The day began with a breakfast conference entitled, What’s Going Well and Less Well: How Can the Project Tackle What’s Coming Down the Pike?, hosted by TCRWP Director Lucy Calkins and Laurie Pessah.

The keynote address was delivered in Milbank Chapel by author Elin Keene who discussed professional development residencies in partnership with Heinemann as well as her books, To Understand and the second edition of Assessing Comprehension Thinking Strategies and Comprehension Going Forward and Mosaic of Thought. Keene shared her research results around how teachers’ language, behavior and responses to students enhances or inhibits student understanding and learning.

During study groups, we discussed current thinking on components of the TCRWP and how teachers can vary the delivery of mini-lessons in order to engage students in complex cognitive work. We also looked at how we can help our teachers support students to be critical of how authors’ craft and aware of how craft affects perspective.

The challenge was clear.

If you ask West Prep Academy Principal Roberto Padilla what does “Opere Omnim” mean, he repeats, referring to the school motto, proudly displayed on the wall of his office. “With the work of all, we build a capable, caring and inspired community.” Our students can articulate that. They can speak to it. They can tell you what it means to them.”

It wasn’t always this way. When Padilla stepped into the position in February 2011, West Prep was a very different place. Just two years into its existence, it was the picture of an unsuccessful school, with regular fights, poor attendance and only 8.6% of students performing on grade level.

“I would describe the culture as toxic” says Padilla. “I know that sounds pretty harsh, but that’s certainly how it felt.” Not the type of place you’d want to send your children and many parents agreed. Of the 140 students that had started that fall, only 111 were enrolled when Padilla stepped in.

Padilla immediately began seeking partnerships for support with progressive instruction and integration of the school’s Magnet theme of Youth Voice through Media. The search quickly led him to World Savvy, a global education non-profit which employs media and real world learning to educate and engage youth in community and world affairs.

The challenge was clear. “I knew that this is not the school I’m going to leave,” he remarks “that we needed to dig deep and really start to transform this place right away.” The path forward, however, was littered with questions. “How do we get kids back in classrooms? How do we engage them in lessons that matter? The school didn’t feel like it had direction.”

World Savvy got to work right away, helping the team re-vamp the curriculum and develop new, project-based learning units to launch the school year. The projects, which integrated content across all the subject areas and focused on community issues, let the students connect their learning to their lives and let Padilla know he’d found the right partner. He said, “If we’re encouraging students to be change agents, we have to give them things they can really tackle that will make a difference.

It’s working. The attendance rate is up nearly 10 points from a year ago. Padilla describes a culture of care pervading the school on every level and it hasn’t gone unnoticed. “Parents say ‘I’m starting to see a difference. My children are coming home and already speaking differently about the school. ’” He credits the change to three pillars: new curriculum, new culture and new expectations.

This, he says, is ultimately the goal of the school and of the partnership with World Savvy; together they are creating an environment where rigorous and relevant instruction is making students feel differently about their school and themselves. Padilla says the World Savvy partnership which includes and empowers the students “Opere Omnim” truly is the work of all.
The Quarterly CAN-Tainer

By Christina Tettonis (CF 07)
and Maureen Campbell (CF 05)
New York City Charter School Principals and Alumni Committee Members

THE PAIDEIA SEMINAR
Active Thinking Through Dialogue at Hellenic Classical Charter School in Brooklyn

What is the Paideia Philosophy?

Paideia is the Greek word for the proper upbringing of children. Paideia is a teaching philosophy proposed by Mortimer Adler based on the belief that all children can learn and that all children are entitled to the best education possible.

What is The Paideia Seminar?

The National Paideia Center defines the seminar as a collaborative, intellectual dialogue facilitated with open-ended questions about a text. The purpose of the seminar is to increase understanding of the textual ideas and values as well as understanding of the self and others.

The Paideia Seminar at HCCS

Students at HCCS have been participating in seminars since the school’s inception. All grades (K – 8) have been participating in seminars, usually as a culminating activity after a unit of study, once a month. This year, as part of our efforts to increase vigor in our classrooms, seminars will be conducted twice a month. HCCS students learn how to set individual goals for themselves as seminar participants. Students are also asked to reflect on their seminar performance, giving them the opportunity to improve themselves in upcoming seminars.

The Paideia Seminar and its intellectual rigor paves the road for college and career readiness.

As Regional Director of Recruitment and Outreach for the Hebrew Charter School Center, I am engaged in networking nationwide with persons motivated to develop quality dual language charter schools focused on the Hebrew language. This is an opportunity to share the joy of learning by expanding opportunities for children with policymakers, school leaders and stakeholders in the field.

The National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) recently held its 39th Annual Conference in New Orleans. NABSE was founded in 1970, and its mission is to improve the educational experiences and accomplishments for African-American youth in our nation.

The NABSE conference was a forum for the exchange of ideas and strategies like the session pictured above with Newark Mayor Cory Booker. The agenda included multiple quality and specialized sessions in Conference Strands for Parents, Teachers, Principals, aspiring Superintendents, Superintendents, Higher Education Professionals and the School Board. Given our national effort to ‘give back’ as well as local recovery efforts, this conference was a lens to see the education system in New Orleans and understand the overall vision for the education system after Hurricane Katrina. Before Katrina the school system was burdened by years of academic failure and corruption. After the devastation, the State took over the school system with collaborative and systemic reform efforts.

While the New Orleans Public Schools serves the entire city, the schools within the system are governed by a multitude of entities. The majority of students attending public schools attend independent public charter schools. New Orleans is recognized as the only city in the United States where more than half of all public school children attend charter schools. It was thrilling to visit the Algiers Charter School Association District and see evidence of best practices in action in “The Big Easy.”

CHARTER SCHOOL CHAT

NETWORKING NATIONWIDE
National Alliance of Black School Educators
39th Annual Conference in New Orleans

Christina Tettonis
Maureen Campbell
It's New York's attempt to reinvent an inner-city school. They're being told to find new ways to provide a more individualized education, to change the shape of the school day, explore what technology can offer and even ask whether pupils need to be in school at all.

“The challenge we face is nothing less than transforming our schools from assembly-line factories into centres of innovation,” said the city’s mayor, Michael Bloomberg, who warns that the U.S. school system is falling behind international rivals.

If the state schools are not improved, the fear is that the city will be entering the twilight zone rather than the iZone.

The iZone project is a living experiment in how to confront some of the big questions facing school systems in major cities around the world.

In intensely diverse cities, with pupils from such a wide spectrum of ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds, how can a school serve individual pupils?

What are the skills that are going to be needed in an unpredictable, fast-moving modern economy? And when teenagers' lives are so suffused in information and technology, how should a lesson be delivered?

There are few more extreme examples of the global city than Manhattan in New York. Among the schools taking part in the iZone is the New York City Lab School for Collaborative Studies, a secondary school in Chelsea.

Principal and 2011 Cahn Fellow Brooke Jackson is part of what she calls this “pioneering vanguard.” “The fundamental problem, as the iZone sees it, is that most schools are not organized around individual student’s needs,” she says.

“We’re supposed to push against some of the seemingly fixed boundaries. We’re experimenting on behalf of the wider system. I like the idea of “seat time,” in which schools are seen as places where children spend a fixed number of hours each week, credited just for being there.

Her radical plan is to get away from the idea of students going through the school day in fixed blocks of lessons, divided by age groups, and to create customized programs based on individual needs and abilities.

“We have students who are ready for graduate level work now—and we have students who will not make progress unless they’re in a three to one staff situation. Having them in a class of 30 is not going to get results.”

Brooke Jackson has ambitions for an alternative pattern, with many different schedules operating within the school, using it more like a college-style campus with staff able to give lectures or teach in small specialized groups.

Apart from challenges, such as making sure that academic rigor isn’t lost in such an experiment, there are practical barriers. The most immediate is lack of physical space.

“Manhattan isn’t getting any bigger,” Jackson said. The school, oversubscribed and overcrowded, has no playground. It shares a gym, canteen and library with two other schools.

“It’s very hard to have 600 high school students in teenagers bodies on one small floor of a concrete block, with tiny chairs and small rooms made for middle school students.” Sharing facilities makes it even more difficult to make changes to the timetable.

This is a sought-after academically-selective school with parents’ websites talking about its “stellar” results in getting students into college. But the principal emphasizes the bigger picture of creating a positive environment and promoting values of “social justice.”

There is also an interesting point made about technology. The school is working with near neighbors Google and Apple laptops are visible in the classrooms, but Jackson is keen that modernization shouldn’t be equated with technology.

“Throwing a laptop at a problem” isn’t the way to improve school standards,” she says. Instead she says what really matters in her school is the quality of the teachers.

“What students like most about this school is access to teachers. They know they would to the ends of the Earth for them. They come before school to talk and we have to usher them out at the end of the day. They want to be near adults who are caring,” she says.

The NYC Lab School is part of an initial group of 81 schools taking part in the iZone experiment, which has expanded to 160 schools and will grow to 400 schools in 2014. Schools will have a three-year roadmap to develop and implement their plans.
The arts and sciences have always been an integral part of the C.S. 211 curriculum.

In Ballroom Dancing, which involves our fourth, fifth and eighth graders, students research the various dances they are learning. Besides dancing, our children learn to focus, to be disciplined, to treat others with respect, and to have a good time!

We nurture this same attitude with ENCORE! In Schools, which allows kids, in partnership with City Center, to participate in musical revivals there. Recently, we attended an Alvin Ailey Dance performance. In the spring, we will study Flamenco dancing.

Our classes visit the Metropolitan and other local museums. For the past 20 years, seventh graders have made an annual overnight pilgrimage to the Plymouth Plantation Museum in Massachusetts that allows students to learn about pilgrims and their relationship with Native Americans.

We also participate in the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum in NYC and visit Constitution Center in Philadelphia annually. Our special education students are part of the New York City Global Partners program for the first time this year.

Our eighth grade students have taken the Earth Science Regents, enabling them to advance in the high school science curriculum. Classes from Pre-K to eighth grade regularly attend the Museum of Natural History and the Planetarium. We are also associated with the New York Botanical Garden and with their staffs’ help, our students have helped to establish and maintain our school garden.

Students have also built solar ovens as well as learned about the importance and preservation of our water supplies. Annually students display their projects at our Science Fair.

We recently became a part of Studio In A School where kids learn about healthy eating and use the arts to emphasize what they have learned. The culminating activity will be an art exhibit in our school lobby.

Auditorium programs are regularly featured at C.S. 211, and through music and drama, we maintain and support various cultures. We also use literature and arts to recognize all ethnic groups in our school.

MAGNET MASTERS CLUB PROGRAM ATTRACTS AND ENRICHES P.S. 217 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

By P.S. 217 Principal Franca Conti and Assistant Principal Roseanne Riccardelli

It’s 1:20 on a Friday afternoon. The much-anticipated announcement is broadcast over the loudspeaker at P.S. 217 in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn: “It’s Magnet Masters Club time—all 4th and 5th graders please proceed in an orderly fashion to your clubs.”

Around 440 students find their way to 23 different clubs designed around the theme of “International Arts & Letters.” For 45 minutes children like Parveena and Muhlisa pictured here trying out the violin are immersed in: writing and producing a documentary; exploring great art though the ages, singing, dancing; and rehearsing for a musical production of Robin Hood. The Magnet Masters club program was developed with my Assistant Principal and 2011 Cahn Ally Roseanne Riccardelli pictured above as part of P.S. 217’s four-year federal magnet grant.

The program is an integral part of sustaining the school’s Magnet theme post-funding. The classes draw mostly on the skills and talents of teachers and arts specialists, as well as parent volunteers. “These clubs are key to helping us reach our mission of providing high-interest enrichment in the arts to all of our students,” said Principal and 2011 Cahn Fellow Franca Conti. “We are addressing every learning style imaginable, and giving every child an opportunity to succeed.”

C.S. 211 Principal and 2004 Cahn Fellow Betty Gonzales-Soto shares an award with her Ballroom Dancing Program students.
IN THE NEWS

2012 SOFTWARE & INFORMATION EXPO
Presenting The Newest Tools, Tips and Demonstrations
By DataCation Director and Cahn Fellows Program Sponsor Paul LoBoen

DataCation, sponsors of the Cahn Fellows Program, invites all Fellows and Alumni to attend its first Software and Information EXPO on March 26th from 9am to 3pm at Digital Sandbox (55 Broad Street, NYC).

Meet DataCation staff and attend workshops led by education specialists and experts. The workshops will focus on using data for all levels of school improvement. Sit one-on-one with lead developers and discuss out your own product ideas. Try out new techniques, ask questions and learn methods to make better use of our modules.

Because of your feedback and continuous support, DataCation is now in over 350 schools in NYC and 1,000 around the country. We want to thank you for being with us from the start – or for those who are just joining us—we want to show you what makes our DataCation community the best choice for you and your school! Cahn Fellows and Alumni may bring as many guests as you like, Turn-Key Teachers, Lead-Teachers, Administrative & Guidance Counselors or Data-Support Staff. Breakfast and lunch will be provided along with door prizes and giveaways!

Don’t miss out on this rare opportunity to be part of the growing community of customers and staff who help make DataCation the best choice for you and your school! Cahn Fellows and Alumni may bring as many guests as you like, Turn-Key Teachers, Lead-Teachers, Administrative & Guidance Counselors or Data-Support Staff. Breakfast and lunch will be provided along with door prizes and giveaways!

To register for the EXPO, go to www.casenex.com
Enter your answer to win a 64GB iPad2:

How has DataCation helped your school or an individual in your school?
Or, What is the most creative way you’ve used DataCation tools to achieve results?

SEVENTH ANNUAL WNET/CHANNEL 13 CELEBRATION OF TEACHING & LEARNING MARCH 16-17 AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

Join the 2012 Celebration of Teaching & Learning, hosted by THIRTEEN & WLIW21- New York’s flagship public television stations - on March 16-17th at Fordham University’s Graduate School of Education.

The Seventh Annual Celebration will once again bring together global experts, advocates, practitioners and academics with K-12 educators to create a unique professional development experience where knowledge meets inspiration.

Speakers include Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and his new series, Finding Our Roots; Yul Kwon, host of America Revealed (also known as the winner of the 2006 season of Survivor!); History Detectives; Antiques Road-show, which will make its first appearance; Mission US, the run-away hit online computer game for middle schoolers.

Many more will address the Arts, English Language Arts, Global Awareness, Health & Wellness, Instruction Technology Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), Social Studies, Special Education Leadership and Whole School Issues.

This year, the Celebration also includes a special focus on the education of Black and Latino males.

You can register for the conference, access resources and find the latest information and speaker lineup at
Thirteencelebration.org
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