

July 25, 2008

Dear Friend,

After months of waiting for the results of the 2008 English Language Arts and Math exams, I am thrilled to be able to tell you that 100% of our third graders passed them both. No other charter school in the state had those results, and it goes without saying, we couldn't be happier. These scores far exceed the current District 1 scores of 61% passing the ELA exam, and 86% passing the math exam. Clearly, Manhattan Charter School has closed the achievement gap for our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.

Our children are a true reflection of the community we serve. Approximately 75% of students live below the poverty line, and more than 95% are minority. High achievement in rigorous, standards driven classrooms is the culture of our school. Every adult is responsible for every child and the expectation is that all children can and will learn.

Over this past school year, the efforts of many impacted our success. Students, parents, and teachers diligently worked towards a common goal. These efforts are school wide, not only on the testing grade. Each grade level contributes to school success by preparing our scholars in the same environment of high expectations and constant raising of the bar. The objective is to provide the same quality education that is taken for granted in affluent school districts where academic achievement is common place.

The goal of any charter school is high student achievement in a setting that is unique in its efforts to achieve that goal. We are no different. At Manhattan Charter School, music is our fifth core subject and we continue to be committed to daily music instruction for every student, beginning in Kindergarten. Foreign language and art will be added in August, 2008 as we continue to expand and enrich our curriculum. We are eagerly anticipating our first "art gallery" opening of student masterpieces to add to our remarkable Winter and Spring Concerts.

The initiative, and subsequent support of Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel Klein, to allow the sharing of space in underutilized public schools was broad thinking and courageous. Of course we applaud the initiative and in our particular case, the outcome has been very favorable. Our co-tenant arrangement at Amalia Castro Elementary School is one in which efforts to provide service to children and families in our community is collaborative. Joint application of grants, use of facilities, updating and upgrading of facilities, co-presentations to international visitors to showcase both schools, and most importantly, the education of all children is the universal goal at 100 Attorney Street.

We know there is always much to be improved as we continue to fight the good fight. There is no down time, no time to wait and see, no time to waste when we are responsible for the lives of children entrusted to us by parents who have searched for, and found what best meets the needs of their child.

The Manhattan Charter School leadership, faculty, and staff are excited by, and ready to meet each new challenge with energy, creativity, and dedication to our mission.

Thank you for believing in us, and for all your support.

Best regards,

Genie DePolo  
Principal, Manhattan Charter School