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FLAMBOYAN FOUNDATION CONVENES HOME VISIT TRAININGS FOR D.C. TEACHERS AS PART OF ONGOING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

DCPS and D.C. Charter Teachers Participate in Training Facilitated by Award-Winning Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project

Washington, D.C. –As part of its ongoing partnership with D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) and D.C. Charter Schools, Flamboyant Foundation today announced its home visit teacher training program for the 2011-2012 school year. Flamboyant is holding eight professional development training sessions Aug. 11-18, which are expected to teach 300 D.C. educators about building trusting relationships and accelerating their students' learning through home visits.

Home visits focus on building relationships by giving teachers a greater understanding of families' dreams for their children and their children's background, strengths and interests. Through an initial meeting in the home that allows teachers to develop a trusting relationship with families, teachers build the foundation for developing strong parent allies who monitor children's academic progress and knowledgeably support their child's schoolwork.

"The home visit program gives teachers and parents the opportunity to get to know one another, share expectations, and create a collaborative partnership," Kristin Ehrgood, President of Flamboyant Foundation. "By building trust and developing relationships of mutual respect from the beginning of the year, teachers and parents are able to work together to help students succeed at the highest levels."

The training sessions will be facilitated by parents and teachers from the award-winning Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project (PTHVP), which was launched in Sacramento, Ca. in 1998 through a partnership between a faith-based community organizing group, a local teachers union and a school district. Since the program's founding in 1998, PTHVP has been adopted by the state of California and invited by over a dozen states to help train teachers on home visits. In 2010, PTHVP was recognized as a "Bright Idea," program by Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

The home visit trainings will be part of professional development for teachers at Perry Street Preparatory Public Charter School, E.L. Haynes Public Charter School, Wheatley Education Campus, E.W. Stokes Public Charter School, Oyster-Adams Bilingual Elementary School, Bruce Monroe Elementary and with all DCPS early childhood teachers who choose to participate. PTHVP has already trained over 70 teachers in Washington, D.C. during the last school year, including most teachers from Garfield Elementary and Stanton Elementary and many teachers from Orr Elementary and Oyster-Adams Bilingual School. Participants' responses were unanimously positive with 99 percent of teacher participates rating the training "helpful" or "very helpful." Ninety-seven percent of the teachers trained last year said that they planned to conduct home visits after taking the training.

“Our model of family engagement has been proven to end the cycle of blame between families and school staff by building trust and respect, instilling cultural competency and increasing personal and professional capacity for all involved,” Carrie Rose, Executive Director of PTHVP, said. “The increased communication, trust and support between families and teachers via home visits result in increased attendance rates and test scores and decreased suspension and expulsion rates.”

Teachers participating in the training will receive information about research regarding effective parent engagement and home visits, engage in an interactive session that provides a step by step guide to conduct a successful home visit, discuss common barriers and challenges to implementing home visits and ask questions and receive advice from seasoned home visiting teachers and parents.

A strong body of research shows that students do better in school and in life when their parents are engaged in their education. Evaluations of home visits demonstrate a range of positive outcomes, including improved home-school communication, improved teacher relationships with students, and improved student motivation and learning.

“The key is getting parents on board because they are the key to success,” Christine Rey, Garfield Elementary teacher, said. “Home visits help create an equal partnership between the teacher and parent and allow teachers to really understand the student and set goals that are not just academic, but focus on the hopes and dream of parents for their child.”

Teachers typically conduct two home visits per year per student. The first visit in the summer/fall focuses on building relationships with families, and the second visit in the spring emphasizes student goals and progress. Participation for schools and individual teachers, as well as families, is voluntary and teachers are compensated for their time. Teachers conduct home visits in pairs, and schedule the visits in advance at an agreed-upon time and location.

By the end of this school year, Flamboyan estimates that approximately 500 D.C. teachers will be trained in the home visit model. PTHVP will deliver a training to select D.C. parents and teachers in spring 2012 on how to be trainers for the home visit model in order to build local capacity to deliver trainings.

Flamboyan offers support to teachers to conduct home visits by working with principals to lay out clear guidelines for the home visiting pilot, convening periodic meetings for teachers to share findings from the home visits, and providing tracking tools and technical assistance as needed.

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About Flamboyan Foundation

Flamboyan Foundation is a private, family foundation focused on improving educational outcomes for children in Pre-K-12 public schools in Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico.