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Dear Parent/Guardian

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is our country's most important federal education law. This law has been reauthorized and is now called Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA was designed to make changes in teaching and learning that will help increase academic achievement in our schools.

The law requires that all schools receiving Title I funds must inform parents of their right to ask schools about the qualifications of their child's teachers. Our schools receive Title I funding and we are happy to share this information with you at your request.

We believe that nothing is more important to your child's education at school than having a well-prepared and highly qualified teacher. The law requires that all teachers who teach in core content areas must meet a specific legal definition of "highly qualified" in order to teach in schools that receive Title I funding. The legal definition of a "highly qualified teacher" has three parts. It states that the teacher must have the following:

1. A four-year college degree
2. A regular teaching certificate/license
3. Proof of his/her knowledge in the subject they teach.

New Jersey has some of the most qualified teachers in the country and we are extremely proud of the quality of the teaching staff in The Academy for Urban Leadership Charter School. All our regular teachers have college degrees and many have advanced degrees. The state of New Jersey has always required a teaching certificate/license for all teachers. In addition, every teacher continues learning through professional development activities and our teachers are evaluated each year to make sure that their teaching skills remain at the highest possible level.

A highly qualified teacher knows what to teach, how to teach, and has a full understanding of the subject matter being taught. We know that every teacher in our school is fully qualified and dedicated to teaching your child and we will do everything possible to help our teachers who may not yet meet the legal definition required by the federal government.

An Equal Opportunity Employer: The Academy for Urban Leadership is an Employer that offers Equal Employment Opportunity regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, nationality, age, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, religion or disability.

I encourage you to support your child's education and communicate with your child's teacher(s) on a regular basis. For more information on ESEA-ESSA, and the role of parents, please visit the United States Department of Education (USDOE) website at: www.ed.gov/nclb.

Most teachers already meet this legal definition of highly qualified. Teachers in the state of New Jersey are required to meet this definition.

To ensure that every child in every classroom has a highly qualified teacher, the state of New Jersey and our school district are working together to help teachers meet the requirements of the federal law by providing several options. Teachers may take a content Praxis test, or they can demonstrate their expertise through a college major in the content.

By partnering, families and educators can provide your child with the best education possible.

Sincerely,

Dr. Néstor Collazo
Chief School Administrator