



The Embassy of France Supports Unique New NYC Trilingual School

FRENCH-AMERICAN CHARTER SCHOOL ALSO LAUNCHES IN SEPTEMBER

New York, August 11, 2010— The French Embassy is very pleased to announce the opening, this fall, of two new schools that it actively supports: the **New American Academy**, a cutting edge trilingual public school, and the **French-American Charter School**. The Embassy has already provided thousands of **French-language books** and offered **grants for teacher training sessions** in France. It will continue to support these two initiatives, which come in addition to the 25 dual-language classes opening this fall in public schools throughout New York.

The **New American Academy**, a collaboration between the New York City Department of Education, the United Federation of Teachers, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education, will open its first school, **PS 770**, in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, on September 8. The school is built on an **innovative model developed at the Harvard Graduate School of Education** and awarded the 2009 Phi Delta Kappa award for innovation in education. New American Academy classes will consist of sixty students and four teachers (a 15-to-1 student-teacher ratio); teachers will stay with the same students from Kindergarten to 5th grade; and, crucially, **classes will be taught on a rotating, trilingual schedule (English, Spanish, French)**. The New American Academy will grow by one grade every year until the graduation of its first fifth grade class in Spring 2015.

The **French American Charter School** (NYFACS) is a **grassroots initiative by francophone parents** keen on giving their children the opportunity to study in French. As a public charter school, it will be run independently but will not charge parents fees, being financed in part by New York City, New York State and the federal government, provided it meets certain educational goals. NYFACS will open on September 8 in Harlem, with kindergarten, 1st grade and 2nd grade classes, under the leadership of principal **Katrine Watkins**, who founded the French-American school in Larchmont, New York. Most of the teaching (80%) will be carried out in French.

Kareen Rispal, Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy, says “we have always believed that learning foreign languages is critical, and we aren’t alone in this belief: the U.S. Government Accountability Office has just released a report calling for better foreign language skills among federal workers. Initiatives such as the New American Academy, the French-American Charter School and the dual-language program, which put foreign languages at the forefront of education, will help America thrive in a globalized world.”

Fabrice Jaumont, the Embassy’s Education Attaché in New York, has been an enthusiastic proponent of both initiatives, and of the highly successful dual-language program. “We were immediately attracted to the New American Academy’s innovative project, especially since it is led by Shimon Waronker, with whom we have excellent relations,” says Mr. Jaumont. “As for the French American Charter School, it is important to recognize the incredible grassroots’ work undertaken by parents, who have carried the project from beginning to end.”

According to New American Academy headmaster **Shimon Waronker**, “Our model addresses many of the problems facing our city’s schools and classrooms. Above all, the New American Academy emphasizes the importance of collaboration and strong relationships between teachers and students in unleashing their full potential.” A former intelligence officer in the U.S. military, Mr. Waronker was previously the principal of Bronx’s Jordan L. Mott school (CIS22), which, under his leadership, became one of the first three NYC public schools to offer a **French-English dual-language program**. He received the French government’s **Order of the Academic Palms** in October 2009 in recognition of his contribution to the teaching of French.

French-American Charter School website: www.nyfacs.net
New American Academy website: www.thenewamericanacademy.org

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ABOUT THE FRENCH-ENGLISH DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM www.frenchculture.org

The French-English dual language program consists of immersion classes in French and English which are geared toward mixed classes of Francophones, Anglophones and bilingual students. The first three French-English dual language programs were launched in 2007, at the initiative of Education Française à New York (EFNY), a grassroots parents' organization, and with the strong support of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy and the New York City Department of Education. The French Cultural Services provide French teaching materials, teacher training and other logistical and financial support. In the 2009-2010 school year, six New York City public schools offered French-English dual language classes: PS125 (Harlem), PS58 (Caroll Gardens - Brooklyn), PS73 (Bronx), CIS22 (Bronx), PS84 (Upper West Side) and PS151 (Astoria – Queens). In all, more than 500 students in 20 classes benefit from this program, six times more than in 2007-2008, the program's launch year.

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