



Monday, November 19:

**SENATOR JOHN McCAIN TO KEYNOTE OPENING  
OF ESPERANZA ACADEMY'S SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**

*\$2 million facility to serve high school students  
in North Philadelphia's Latino corridor*

Presidential candidate Senator John McCain will keynote the official opening of The School of the Arts at Esperanza Academy, a charter school serving the educational needs of children in the Latino corridor of North Philadelphia.

The opening event is Monday, November 19, with ceremonies scheduled for 4:30 pm at the school, 301 West Hunting Park Avenue. Joining Senator McCain for the ceremonies are Rev. Luis Cortés Jr., president of Esperanza, Rev. Danny Cortés, the school's founder and chairman of the board, and David Rossi, the Academy's CEO.

While most school districts are experiencing massive cuts in funding for arts education, Esperanza Academy is investing \$2 million in the new facility specifically designed to teach the arts.

Esperanza Academy is an educational initiative of Esperanza, one of the largest Latino faith-based community development corporations in the nation. The charter school offers a college preparatory four-year program with an enrollment of 700 students in grades nine through twelve.

The School of the Arts offers students opportunities to major in dance, drama, film, instrumental music, voice and visual arts. The curriculum also offers career tracks in informational technology, journalism, entrepreneurship and teacher education.

"At Esperanza, we view the arts as a universal language," Rossi said. "In addition to enhancing their life skills, the study of the arts provides students with opportunities to make clear connections between schoolwork and the world outside the classroom."

With a staff of six full-time instructors, Esperanza's School of the Arts will maintain the unique student-teacher ratio of 14 to 1 that differentiates the Academy from other public schools in the district. The Academy also boasts a dropout rate of only .3% (2 of 630 students last year), while the Philadelphia School District has a 43% Latino dropout rate – higher than any other ethnic group in the city.

Another key to the Academy's success is the school's strong code of conduct, which includes a zero tolerance fighting policy, strict use of uniforms and exacting standards for advancement to the next grade.

"Parents support our school and its standards," Rev. Danny Cortés said. "They feel secure knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing, clean and modern environment where they receive a quality education that is aimed at providing them with valuable college and career opportunities." To validate the school's success, he said 91% of last year's graduates were accepted to higher learning institutions, and that the Academy has a waiting list of 500 students.

Rev. Cortés characterizes Esperanza Academy as "giving our students the confidence to believe that their hopes (*esperanza*) and dreams can become realities."

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