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Harlem Children's Zone Visit Reflection

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WHAT AN EXPERIENCE! The Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Practitioners Institute was most interesting and very informative. All the presenters were very professional and engaging. It was an absolutely amazing experience! It was very impressive to learn of all the work they have accomplished in the matter of 20 years. It was exciting to see how it relates to the continuous engagement and work that may be needed with the Family Success Alliance (FSA).

I was impressed by the many things I came to know during the institute. I was impressed by the racial dynamics of the HCZ team. I found it was amazing to see all the groups unite and work towards a common goal (Blacks, African-Native Americans, Latinos, and Whites). As a black man, it was empowering to learn a black man was the founder of the HCZ, and is viewed as charismatic leader. Not only that, but many of those that were in managerial or supervisory positions were people of color.

Noting their approach on collaborative communication was very conducive as we move forward with the FSA. At HCZ, there was open communication between/amongst all levels of staff. What I found most interesting was they developed a HCZ common language, and this language was used by all the partners and schools they work with. They expressed the importance of having a common language when collaborating. It was very interesting that they prepare all information for families in several different languages.

The HCZ Practitioners Institute was so enriching. It was an unforgettable learning experience. This experience allowed me to reevaluate my role with the FSA and what I could do better. I believe that all with the FSA on this adventure took something of value away from this learning opportunity. As a group, FSA participants grew together and made a step towards our common goal.