



#

Ne-Yo Encourages Attendance and Education During School Visit

February 28, 2012

Grammy Award winner Ne-Yo surprised 588 students with a mini-concert and acted as the “Principal for the Day” at Aki Kurose Middle School Academy in south Seattle, the most diverse zip code in the country, yesterday.

Ne-Yo performed live for the Aki Kurose student body to celebrate their win in the 2011 Get Schooled Fall Attendance Challenge – a seven week competition to improve daily attendance rates nationwide.

Sponsored by the Get Schooled Foundation, the friendly competition included nearly 80,000 students at 73 schools in 17 states between Oct. 3 and Nov. 18. Aki Kurose improved its attendance by a remarkable 3.7 percent and succeeded in engaging more than 70 percent of its students in the various components of the challenge. Students who connect with their schools are more likely to attend schools. Over the course of the challenge, active schools improved their attendance by an average of 2.8 percent and an additional 1,000 students came to school during that time, with some schools increasing their attendance as much as eight percent. On average, schools see less than a two percent annual gain in attendance.

As ‘principal for a day’, Ne-Yo co-taught a math class, encouraging the students to stay focused on their education and stay open to how all subjects – math, science, art, can support them in reaching their goals. Ne-Yo is a high school graduate of Rancho High in Las Vegas.

“I am happy to partner with the Get Schooled Foundation to encourage attendance and education. It’s so important to show up, be present and pay attention so your dream becomes a successful reality,” said Ne-Yo.

Ne-Yo also joined KUBE radio hosts Karen Wild and Eddie Francis from The Wake Up Show at an all-school event, sponsored in part by Boeing, to recognize the students’ and staff accomplishments. They were joined on stage by Tuskegee Airman, Lt. Colonel Ed Drummond, as Ne-Yo talked about his starring role in Red Tails, a George Lucas production about the Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American military aviators in the United States armed forces.

The students were treated to a sneak peek from the movie and heard about both the real events and what went into bringing this piece of American history to the big screen.

“Ne-Yo’s performance and being in the presence of a historical figure such as Lt. Colonel Drummond is a once in a lifetime experience for the students,” said Mia Williams, Principal of Aki Kurose Middle School Academy. “I’m extremely proud of the students, staff and the Aki Kurose community for winning the Get Schooled Fall Attendance Challenge National Championship. The Get Schooled Attendance challenge has been great for us. We’re using the momentum, school spirit and the increase in student engagement from the challenge to focus on improving academic achievement school-wide.”

Aki students and staff were helped during the challenge by seven City Corps members, who helped keep the students focused on the goal of improving attendance and winning the challenge. To claim the national title, students completed 900 Sporcle quizzes on science, geography and hip-hop stars real names; wrote 430 nominations about teachers who inspire them to get to school every day; provided 450 individual responses to a poll about what leads to good attendance; and signed up for wake up calls from their favorite celebrities (only those 13 and older were eligible for this component – 60 students signed up).

“During this challenge, students, teachers, administrators and communities from across the country came together through a tremendous level of student engagement and commitment to support the future of our young people,” said Marie Groark, Executive Director of the Get Schooled Foundation. “Thanks to all the hard work of the students and staff, these students are on the right path to graduation.”

Attendance is the greatest predictor of graduation and a significant driver of student achievement. Research shows that just missing ten days a year can lead to academic problems. Roughly half of public school students miss that much school. Students who miss 20 days a year (or about one month) have less than a one in five chance of graduating from high school. Few districts report these chronic truancy numbers despite their correlation to low graduation rates.

“Seattle should be proud of the combined effort of the faculty, staff, students and parents of Aki Kurose students. I hope that their outstanding effort and increased attendance inspires others to strive to improve attendance and ramp up for the second half of our Be Here Get There attendance campaign,” said Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn.

Read more: <http://www.looktothestars.org/news/7932-ne-yo-encourages-attendance-and-education-during-school-visit#ixzz1ssTjmvuw>