



First Philadelphia Charter School Partners with Women’s Campaign International to Launch Girls Advocacy and Leadership Series (GALS)

Philadelphia, PA – Sept. 15, 2025 – First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School is launching the Girls Advocacy and Leadership Series (GALS), an empowerment program developed by Women’s Campaign International (WCI) to equip young girls with the tools to become confident leaders and agents of change in their communities.

The GALS initiative at First Philadelphia will run weekly on Tuesdays from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. beginning September 16 and culminating November 10, 2025, serving as an extension of the school’s existing Temple University Conflict Coaching program, which has proven effective in significantly reducing behavioral incidents on campus.

“We’ve seen incredible transformations through conflict coaching over the last two years,” said Dr. Erina Pearlstein, Principal (Grades 9-12) of First Philadelphia and GALS initiative leader. “By implementing GALS, we’re deepening our students’ capacity for advocacy, leadership, and self-empowerment.”

Created specifically to serve girls in Philadelphia facing socio-economic challenges, the GALS program helps participants develop leadership skills, confidence, and real-world tools to navigate conflict, express themselves, and plan for future success. Over the course of 10 sessions, students explore topics such as communication, mindfulness, healthy relationships, and self-esteem. Each session is designed to build upon the last, culminating in a personal blueprint for leadership and social change.

Notably, past GALS programs in Philadelphia have demonstrated measurable impact. Pre- and post-series evaluations revealed a 100% increase in participants identifying as leaders, along with major gains in confidence, financial literacy, and civic engagement. Participants have launched campaigns ranging from homelessness awareness drives to community health and education reform.

“Programs like GALS have the power to transform individual lives and uplift entire communities,” said Marjorie Margolies, Founder and President of Women’s Campaign International (WCI). “We’re thrilled to bring this curriculum to First Philadelphia and support the next generation of powerful young women.”

GALS is a collaborative effort between WCI, the School District of Philadelphia, and the broader community. At First Philadelphia, the program will be facilitated by a team of WCI educators supported by school staff, who serve as coaches and mentors throughout the series.

For more information, please visit www.ap-schools.org/First-Phila-Prep.

About First Philadelphia Charter School

First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School is a kindergarten through twelfth grade school located in the Bridesburg neighborhood of Philadelphia that creates life-long learners and leaders of the global community by providing a well-balanced literacy-based education. For more information, visit <http://www.ap-schools.org/First-Phila-Prep/>.

About American Paradigm Schools

American Paradigm Schools (APS) is a nonprofit charter management organization that supports and serves four charter schools in North and Northeast Philadelphia. These schools are: First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School; Lindley Academy Charter School; Memphis Street Academy; and Tacony Academy Charter School. For more information, visit www.ap-schools.org.

About Women's Campaign International

Women's Campaign International's (WCI) mission is to empower women around the world to actively participate and fill leadership roles in community development, the economy, civil society and peacebuilding efforts. Implementing a proven curriculum focused on sustainable capacity-building and community engagement, WCI's programs have equipped more than 500,000 individuals with skills in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, community engagement, political participation, and conflict mitigation. Operating at local, national, and global levels since 1998, WCI has worked to establish and cultivate a leadership development pipeline for girls and women to effect change in more than 45 countries worldwide.

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