

## KIPP Houston, Better Results Using Proven Methods

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In response to high demand and because 2,500 students await entry to one of ten Houston area that serve 1,700 students in Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Charter schools, the KIPP Foundation has raised \$65 million to build 34 additional schools in the next 10 years to serve some 21,000 greater Houston area students in pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Houston Independent School District expects to add 40,000 to 60,000 new students in the next decade, said Mike Feinberg, founder of KIPP, and said, "when the 42 KIPP academies are fully operational we will be serving half of the expected growth of school age children in Houston."

According its website, Houston ISD is the largest district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the US with 306 campuses in a 301-square-mile area. HISD educates almost 209,000 students and is the largest employer in the Houston metro area with 29,000 professional and support personnel.

"We hope to create a situation where both KIPP and Houston ISD benefit from healthy competition," said Feinberg, "We will push each other to improve, and in the end, the children and families of Houston will benefit."



Photo courtesy of KIPP Houston

### KIPP Credo

If there is a problem,  
we look for a solution.  
If there is a better way,  
we find it.  
If a teammate needs help,  
we give.  
If we need help,  
we ask.

During the expansion, quality will remain important to Feinberg, who created the first KIPP academy in Houston 13 years ago. New KIPP Academies will maintain the same high KIPP standards, said Feinberg, because before their charter opens, KIPP principals—called school leaders—participate in a yearlong training prior to their schools opening that includes six weeks at Stanford University Educational Leadership Institute followed by a residency at a well-established KIPP Academy.

School leaders tap "their entrepreneurial spirit to open and run great public schools in educationally underserved communities," so the summer prior to opening they are required to recruit students door to door to increase community and parental involvement.

Parents value KIPP said Shawn Hardnett, school leader for one of two Houston area KIPP Charters opening in the Fall 2007 because students are challenged to work hard. Students attend school for nine hours daily with four hours each Saturday and extend longer into Summer, leaving little time for kids to find trouble, he said.

Hardnett will make a difference in the Houston community that is made up of more than 80 percent low-income students, he said, "through the use of KIPP's signature, engaging, college preparatory curriculum that really makes school fun." Nationwide, nearly 80 percent of KIPP alumni have gone on to college, he said, they plan the same for Houston KIPP students.

"The KIPP expansion will provide more high-quality public school choices in Houston, and will serve as an example for the nation about how we can increase the number of great public schools in our cities for those most often left behind particularly low-income and minority students," said Todd Ziebarth, senior policy analyst for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. There is a cap of 215 on the number of open-enrollment charter schools that can be granted by the Texas State Board of Education. However, an unlimited number can be granted to charter schools operated by institutions of higher education.

Donors are eager to help KIPP expand said Leo Linbeck III, chief growth architect for KIPP. The KIPP Foundation is working to raise the additional \$45 million needed for the expansion. The Gates Foundation, Houston Endowment, Hines Interests Limited Partnership, John and Laura Arnold, Don and Doris Fisher, and the Walton Family Foundation and "countless others have contributed to help make the expansion successful", he said.

Since KIPP "has a proven track record of success," students are lining up for a KIPP education he said. Expansion of KIPP Houston is urgently needed, he said, to help more students get in. Since enrollment is determined by lottery from the waiting list, KIPP cannot help all of the students asking for their help. Linbeck concluded that there is a "fundamental injustice in deciding who gets a great education on the basis of a random-number generator."

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Go to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools *Charter School Database* to compare each state's charter school policies  
<http://www.ecs.org/html/offsite.asp?document=educationIssues%2FCharterSchools%2FCHDB%5Fin tro%2Easp>

Find the *Number of Charter Schools and Students in the 2006-07 School Year* go to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools  
<http://www.publiccharters.org/content/publication/detail/2182/> and view their *2007 Charter Dashboard*  
<http://www.publiccharters.org/content/publication/detail/2147/>