

## KIPP School Breaks Ground in Lynn

By David Liscio / The Daily Item  
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LYNN - A ground-breaking ceremony for the new KIPP Academy Lynn (KAL) brought a large crowd of educators, city and state officials, parents and students to the construction site Monday in the Highlands.

"It's not about the building, but what goes on inside the building," said KAL board Chairman Thomas Fredell. "One can only imagine what we will accomplish in this new facility."

Principal Josh Zoia's appearance at the podium under the white tent at 90 High Rock St. overlooking the city was accompanied by hardy applause from academic colleagues and the entire KIPP eighth-grade class.

The eighth-graders will be among the first to enter the 850-student, \$26 million middle school and high school when it is completed in 2012.

"It has been a really long journey," said Zoia.

He added that the morning's celebration "is really about our kids and our families, not about teachers or the building."

Zoia said the school will be a community facility, open daily until 9 p.m.

"It will be there to serve anybody in Lynn who wants to be part of the extended KIPP family," he said. "The school is going to be open every night."

Shutting down schools at 2 p.m. "is going absolutely in the wrong direction," he said.

Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy, state Rep. Robert Fennell and Police Chief Kevin Coppinger were among the dignitaries at the ground-breaking. The mayor commended privately funded KIPP for accomplishing so much in six years, from concept to shovels in the ground.

"I wish the public schools had such a bright outlook," she said.



**KIPP eighth-graders check out the plans for the new building at the KIPP Academy ground-breaking ceremony on High Rock Avenue in Lynn Monday.**



**KAL Parent Rose Egbuiwe**

Rose Egbuiwe, a single mother with three children, two of whom are KIPP students, was introduced as the epitome of someone who works hard while being nice and achieving success.

Sending both daughters to KIPP was the wisest decision of her life, said Egbuiwe, recalling Zoia's contract promise that her children "would climb the mountain to college."

Egbuiwe said her 70-year-old mother takes evening Spanish language classes through the KIPP middle school and, as a result of her continuing education, recently purchased her first computer.

"Ladies and gentlemen, KIPP works," she said.

Eighth-grade student Amie Mendoza wasn't so sure when she enrolled at the KIPP middle school three years ago.

"The long hours were hard. I wasn't used to being in school that long," she said. "And I didn't realize how important school was. KIPP made me realize school is an important thing in my life and that I should go to college."

Mendoza said she hopes to become a lawyer.



**Eighth grader Amie Mendoza**

When the speeches were over, Zoia enthusiastically reminded the audience of why they had come. "It's time for putting the shovel into dirt," he said as KIPP staffers handed out shiny shovels to the mayor, board members and others who played key roles in making the project a reality.

Steve Mancini, a national KIPP spokesman, said the KIPP Academy Lynn is the largest facility of its kind undertaken in KIPP's 16-year history. "It's really designed as a community center," he said, noting that 180 parents are part of the KIPP family in Lynn. "It's for the whole community."

**KAL Board President Thomas Fredell, Founder and Executive Director Josh Zoia, and Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy**

