

THE KIPP!
ACADEMY LYNN
There Are No Shortcuts



COLLEGE BOUND

Denise Bedoya, a sophomore at St. Mary's High School, gets help in chemistry from KIPP science teacher Jessica Nakajima, right.

KIPP Academy Lynn keeps alumni on the right path

BY PAUL HALLORAN

KIPP Through College is more than just a catchy slogan: It's a mission, and the name of KIPP Academy Lynn's (KAL) alumni program.

Nationally, only 8 percent of students from low-income communities graduate from college as compared to 82 percent from affluent communities. KAL's goal is for 82 percent of its students to graduate from college. The KIPP Through College alumni program is a critical element to achieving that goal.

Founded in 2004, KIPP Academy Lynn has graduated three classes of alumni, the oldest of whom are currently juniors in high school. Although they have been away from KIPP for three years, they have never really left. That's where Alexis Rosado, Director of Alumni Support, and her team come in.

KAL offers a comprehensive program geared to ensuring that its alumni have the support they need to succeed in high school and college. The program currently supports the 115 alumni attending Lynn Public Schools and 70 alumni attending private and parochial schools.

"We want to make sure they are staying on the path to and through college," said Rosado, a graduate of the first KIPP charter school, KIPP Bronx. After KIPP, Rosado received a scholarship to Deerfield Academy and Brown University. She was a summer intern for the KIPP national organization and joined KAL in 2009 when she launched the KIPP Through College program.

The program has several components including tutoring, mentoring, work study, counseling, and scholarships. The Choosing to Honor and Achieve My Potential for Success (CHAMPS) program is for alumni attending Lynn Public Schools. Participants receive tutoring, homework support, and financial incentives for fulfilling requirements during a 12-week period, and for making the Honor Roll or Principal's List. These stipends, which reward hard work and high achievement, are meant to help alleviate financial pressure students may feel to get a job, so they can

remain focused on their studies.

"It's a very structured program," Rosado said. "The kids make a commitment to complete a certain amount of hours per week. It helps them remain engaged and doing positive things with



Malden Catholic sophomore Leandro Diaz, left, helps Curtis Anderson, a sixth-grader at KIPP Academy Lynn, with a poetry assignment.

their time after school."

KAL alumni who earn admission to private schools – with the help of High School Placement Counselor Sheila McKay – can apply to receive scholarship support from KIPP. In exchange for these merit-based scholarships, students complete four work-study hours per week at KAL.

Emotional support also plays an important role in a successful transition from middle school to high school. KAL Guidance Counselor Joan Stein visits KIPP alumni on their high school campuses regularly, and a KAL social worker meets with each group monthly to track their academic progress in preparing for college.

Another element of the program, the Passionate Professionals Speaker Series, is an interactive monthly enrichment program in which professionals from various fields and backgrounds come to KIPP to speak with alumni about their chosen careers. "They share with our kids how their education has played a significant role helping them to achieve success. It's inspiring for our kids," Rosado said.

Rosado is particularly excited about a new element that will be added in 2011 – the Alumni Career Exploration (ACE) program. KAL will match 25 current juniors with career professionals on the North Shore and in Boston. The students will participate in a 4-week paid summer internship, earning about \$8 an hour.

"We want our kids to be prepared for meaningful internships when they are in college," Rosado said. "ACE will train them on job etiquette, proper dress, and technology. We're looking for members of the community who would be willing to take on one of our interns. It's a win-win."

KIPP Massachusetts has plans to grow into a network of schools serving students in grades K-12 in the next several years. With the expansion of the region, the KIPP Through College program will eventually support nearly one thousand middle school and high school alumni on the path to and through college.

For more information about KIPP Academy visit www.kipplynn.org or call 781-592-1937.