



together Juntos

The quarterly newsletter of KIPP Massachusetts

KIPP:MA
MASSACHUSETTS

FALL 2012

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CALEB DOLAN

Dear Friends,

As the new academic year begins and our KIPPsters continue the **climb the mountain to and through college**, it is our honor to offer not only more hours of KIPP education, but also provide all of our KIPPsters with more of the tools they need to prepare them for their journey.

Our new KIPP Academy Lynn facility at 90 High Rock Street is the building our students, families, and staff deserve. I hope you will visit to see not only the facility, but what continues to happen inside it: a laser focus on student outcomes built upon a curriculum of academic readiness, character development, college knowledge and social skills, and K-16 support to and through college. This year also marks KIPP:MA's expansion beyond our home in Lynn to the city of Boston where we are now serving **72 founding KIPPsters** and their families. As of August 20, 2012, our first day of school, KIPP Massachusetts includes a team and family of **660 KIPPsters and 93 staff members**.

Though the physical foundations of our new schools are freshly laid, the founding principles that guide our students, teachers and staff through their daily actions are long-standing. When KIPP was in its early stages, eight character strengths based on the works of psychologists Martin E. P. Seligman and Christopher Peterson were identified as the core principles for students to be successful to and through college. Unlike character traits which are fixed, character strengths are fostered and honed like a love of math or enthusiasm for reading. They are: Grit, Zest, Courage, Team & Family, Excellence, Enthusiasm, Perseverance and Community.

In this issue of Juntos we celebrate the value of grit. Grit is defined as unyielding courage in the face of hardship and we are lucky to witness this everyday in our kids – like **Yvonne Biselele** a founding member of KIPP Academy Lynn, or our founding principal of KIPP Academy Boston **Christine Barford**, who displays grit by expertly adapting to the daily changes in a brand new school, or **Natasha Megie**, mother of Sasha Megie who watches her daughter independently power through her homework every night.

With the help of supportive community members such as you, our KIPPsters continue to overcome obstacles and build their grit both inside and outside of the classroom. In this issue we focus on **grit** and how the stick-to-itiveness of our team and family plays out in their lives.

Many thanks, much love,



Executive Director Caleb Dolan with KIPPsters

grit
noun \grit\: firmness
of mind or spirit: un-
yielding courage in the
face of hardship or
danger



90 High Rock Street
Lynn, MA 01902
781.598.1609



90 High Rock Street
Lynn, MA 01902
781.598.1609



215 Forest Hills Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
617-390-5140



Event Recap:



The KAL step team performs at the KIPP School Summit in Orlando, FL

July:

- Construction wrapped up on the new High Rock facility which houses both KIPP Academy Lynn and KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate.
- KIPP:MA teachers and staff cheered on the KAL step team at the KIPP School Summit in Orlando, Florida. The group received a standing ovation from more than 3,000 attendees.

August:

- The doors to KIPP:MA's first Boston school opened to 72 founding 5th graders and their families. The KAB school will ultimately serve grades 5-8.
- New 5th and 9th graders learned the ropes of being KIPPsters at "KIPPnotizing". KIPP schools in both Lynn and Boston began summer sessions on August 20th.
- KIPP alumni were given a sendoff to school in style at an event hosted by KIPP Through College (KTC) staff. KTC students will receive assistance from KTC staff to help them acclimate and succeed in college.

*What does **grit** mean to you?*

Send us a tweet about your grit @KIPPMMA hashtag #GRIT and your message may appear in our winter edition of Juntos!

Founding Principal Christine Barford shares why KAB is the house that grit built

Q: What does grit mean to you?

A: Grit means having a determination to follow through despite any and all obstacles we may encounter.

Q: How have you used grit to launch KAB?

A: KAB was built with grit! Initially, the Boston school was going to be for elementary students but after further exploring the needs of the community, we realized the best service we could offer would be to create a middle school first. We needed grit to change our game plan from curriculum to the teachers we were recruiting to staff the school. We had plenty of opportunities to show just how gritty we were!

Q: How do you feel KIPP allows students to develop grit?

A: There's a reason "Work hard. Be nice." is one of our most tried-and-true KIPPisms. Our kids get their hands dirty all the time in the classroom. This can be anything from sorting out a tough math problem to doing something right even when it's not the popular decision. Many of our students come to KIPP with a well-developed sense of grit since just by being a kid you encounter challenges daily. We hope to help them harness that character strength for academics.

Q: How do you use grit in your job?

A: Being in a school provides plenty of daily opportunities for challenges. Very few things ever go exactly as they're planned. However, we've done a lot of work over the summer with our staff to make sure we know exactly what we want from our school this year, in 10 years, and in 50 years from now. That way, when any of us have challenges, we can be gritty, tackling each and every one of them, because we know where we're headed. Those could be kids struggling academically, a teacher being sick, or a parent who needs our help. We've got plenty of grit to go around.





Do Now:

1. How many students attend our three schools?
(A)588 (B)651 (C)660 (D)2160
2. How many KIPP:MA alumni are in college?
(A)36 (B)45 (C)53 (D)857
3. What percentage of our students receive free or reduced lunch?
(A)70% (B)85% (C)90% (D)100%
4. How many KIPP Lynn teachers have won the Harriet Ball Excellence in Teaching Award?
(A)0 (B)1 (C)2 (D)3

Answers: 1.C 2.B 3.B 4.D



We spoke with KIPP mom Natasha Megie to find out how developing grit at KIPP impacts her daughter's education

Q: What does grit mean to you?

A: When I hear "grit" I think of my daughter, Sasha. Her whole spirit and attitude are about trying hard.

O: How do you feel KIPP allows its students to develop grit?

A: For me, teachers are always encouraging them to reach for whatever their dreams are, not just in the classroom but in everyday life. They don't just make sure the kids are studying, it's their whole attitude. They teach kids how to be

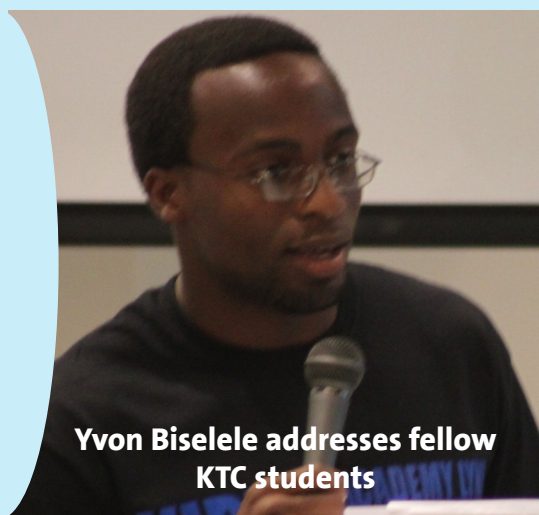
strict with themselves and to be disciplined but still reach for the stars.

Q: How have you used grit to be strong or how have you seen your daughter become stronger?

A: Sasha's whole commitment to school shows her grit. It's such a long day and she complains about it sometimes, but she still gets up and pushes herself every day even though it's hard. I never have to tell her to do her homework. She gets straight 'A's and she tries for excellence because she wants to push herself to do well.

Q: Do you have any advice for younger KIPPsters about why grit is important?

A: KIPP teaches students not to make excuses and that there are no shortcuts. It teaches that we will all fall down at one point or another, but it's about getting back up and learning from our mistakes and moving forward. Those types of skills translate to getting a degree and getting a job.



Yvon Biselele addresses fellow KTC students

We sat down with recent KIPP alumnus Yvon Biselele to talk about how grit shaped his KIPP experience:

Q: How do you define grit?

A: Grit is having the guts to get through something tough and keep going.

Q: What advice would you have for new KIPPsters just starting to develop their grit?

A: I want to be a supportive alumnus. I want to tell the kids that middle school might seem like a stepping stone right now but if you work hard now it will pay off in the end. Getting into college is a big competition and so if they stick with it and do the work now, they may reap the benefits later.

Q: How did developing your GRIT at KIPP middle school help you when you went to high school at Northfield Mount Hermon?

A: Having more time in the classroom helped me to fight through the longer, tougher days in high school, especially at a boarding school. I learned to ask for help when I needed it and I used SLANTing all the time.

Q: Now that you have graduated, what are your plans for next year and how do you hope KTC will help?

A: I'm attending American International College in Springfield, though I'm not sure what I want to major in yet. I'm hoping KTC will help me in the process.

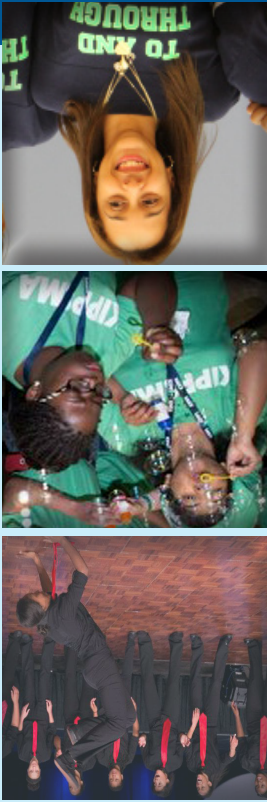
Interested in earning your GED, improving your English language skills or increasing your fitness level with a Zumba dance class? Check out these and other FREE Adult Education classes online at:
kippma.org/kalc-adulted.php



www.kippma.org · 781.598.1609

To make a donation, visit www.kippma.org/donate

Do you or someone you know want to TEACH at KIPP?
Visit www.kippma.org/teach



- Find out why *grit* is one of KIPP:MA's values
- Discover what *grit* means to our staff, students and parents
- Test your KIPP knowledge

In this issue...



KIPP Massachusetts
90 High Rock St.
Lynn, MA 01902

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE **PAID**
MAILED FROM ZIP 01902
PERMIT NO. 89