



Over 100 KIPP:MA Parents Attend #77000Reasons Rally



On the morning of November 13, 2014, over 100 families from KIPP Massachusetts boarded buses headed to Boston's Faneuil Hall for the 77,000 Reasons Rally, which called for a bold new plan to make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to eliminate racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps and offer every child a world-class education. The rally was attended by over 2,000 parents, students, school leaders and community activists from around the Commonwealth.

Event organizers hoped to focus attention on a troubling reality for families in Massachusetts: 77,000 children across the Commonwealth currently attend persistently failing schools,

where fewer than one-in-three students can either read or do math on grade level. Analysis shows that these schools overwhelmingly serve low-income children of color. Low-income students make up 85% (over 65,000 students) of all children who attend failing schools, while 71% (over 55,000 students) of students in failing schools are African-American or Latino.

Rosemary Rojas, whose son Julian is an 8th grader at KIPP Academy Lynn, joined the rally for the 77,000 students in need. "I want the same opportunities for these kids as my son has been lucky enough to receive. Coming together as a large group increases our visibility and shows politicians across the state what we want."

Many of the parent advocates who gathered on Thursday send their children to the Commonwealth's high-performing charter schools but there was a diversity of parents from all types of schools represented at the rally. Parent leaders are quick to say that bold change must include more than just an expansion of charter schools and have actively worked to build a movement of parents from all school types.

KIPP:MA currently serves students in grades 5-12 in Lynn and grades K2 and 5-7 in Boston. We hope to serve more students Lynn next year at KIPP Academy Lynn Elementary School, pending approval by the DESE. At the present time, we have no KIPP based options for our future 9th grade students in Boston. Although our aim is to provide a full K-12 education to the students in Boston, we are, for the time being, unable to do so due to the current legislative cap on charter school seats.



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF KIPP MASSACHUSETTS / WINTER 2015

A Message from Our Executive Director



Dear Friends,

This issue of Juntos marks the midway point in our 10th year of serving students in Massachusetts. From our first class of seniors graduating from a KIPP high school, to our first class of kindergarteners in Boston, KIPPsters and their families are proving the power of great schools.

As they enter their final semester in high school, 95% of the senior class of 2015 have submitted a total of 772 college applications! Though it is still early, seniors have already received 110 college acceptances and two have been awarded full-tuition scholarships through the Posse Foundation. We introduce you to those Posse Scholars, Anaidys and Jose, on page 3. As our seniors prepare to enter college, our KIPP Through College (KTC) team is ready to provide the support they need to persist through college and career. Already working with KIPP 8th grade completers who left prior to the creation of the high school in Lynn, the KTC team is working to ensure that all our students have the supports necessary to graduate from a post-secondary program and to lead a life of choice. We highlight the incredible work they are doing in our quarterly focus on the Six Essential Questions on page 3, and their efforts to retain and attract graduates through social engagements.

Our littlest KIPPsters at our Boston elementary have made huge gains since they joined us in August. In a recent STEP assessment, an early literacy assessment tool developed by The University of Chicago, the number of KIPP kindergarteners reading at or above grade level increased 70% from August to January. These results show the importance of starting our work with kids as young as possible. In Lynn, we are awaiting a vote by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on our proposed charter expansion, the outcome of which will determine whether we are able to open an elementary school in Lynn next school year.

In Boston, the current charter cap prohibits us from opening a high school to serve our future 8th grade middle school graduates. Despite the current environment, we remain committed to providing a full K-12 education to students in Boston and Lynn to ensure that every child has access to an excellent education. We are not alone in this fight. It is the parents and families of Massachusetts' students who are leading the charge. In November, over 2,000 parents, students and community members attended the largest rally for public education in Massachusetts' history. You can read about that inspiring day, and the over 77,000 Massachusetts students attending failing schools, on page 4.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Juntos. As always, thank you for your continued support over the last 10 years.

Many thanks, much love,

Caleb Dolan
Executive Director, KIPP:MA

Upcoming Events:

Month of February (ongoing)
Black Heritage Month
celebrations in Lynn

February 3rd
DESE vote on charter
amendment

February 24th and 26th
School council elections

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Poet Robert Pinsky Visits KIPP

On November 19, 2014, Robert Pinsky, one of America's foremost poets and former Poet Laureate of the United States, visited KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate High School (KALC) as the first in a series of visiting writers to come to KIPP. The Visiting Writer's Series is being brought to KIPP thanks to the generosity of Matt and Katie Fates, as an extension of the Schlesinger Visiting Writers Program Ms. Fates' parents founded at Yale University in honor of their son, John-Christopher Schlesinger.

Mr. Pinsky has authored nineteen books of prose and poetry, including his critically acclaimed translation of Dante's Inferno, and served as editor for five poetry anthologies. Shortly after being appointed to the post of Poet Laureate, Mr. Pinsky created The Favorite Poem Project, which is dedicated to celebrating, documenting and encouraging poetry's role in Americans' lives. One of the program's main goals is to enhance and improve the teaching of poetry in classrooms.

After a student guided tour of the Lynn campus, Mr. Pinsky presented his Favorite Poem Project to the senior class, 95% of whom are projected to attend a 4 year college next fall, and then allowed his presentation to be guided by the students' questions. One student-raised question of particular interest to Mr.



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Pinsky was in regards to his feelings about poetry as spoken versus written word. Mr. Pinsky, who believes poetry must be heard to be appreciated and to work, told the students, “The poem, inherently and by the nature of of its medium, is on an individual and human scale.”

After meeting with the larger group, Mr. Pinsky attended AP Literature class, where the students had prepared for his visit by reading a number of his poems. Again, Mr. Pinsky allowed the students' questions to lead the discussion. He shared his own poetry and discussed the inspiration behind some of his work. When asked how he would counsel a student struggling with writer's block Mr. Pinsky, with poetic ease advised, “Put syllables together and see what bubbles up.

See what germinates.”

“Having a famous poet whose work we have studied and discussed come in and speak about his process is invaluable. Mr. Pinsky is known as one of the great poetry teachers in America and to have him in our classroom was something my students and I will never forget,” said Josh DoBell, whose AP Literature class Mr. Pinsky attended.

At KALC, we offer seven AP course options. Additionally, the overall pass rate on all AP exams taken by the Class of 2015 was 55%, compared to a nationwide average of approximately 33% of public high school graduates.



Help support KIPP:MA Boston Marathon runners.

Through the John Hancock Marathon Non-Profit Program, KIPP Massachusetts has received two guaranteed entries for the 2015 Boston Marathon. Our Executive Director and avid runner, Caleb Dolan, will be participating in what will be his first marathon. Having completed multiple half marathons, he is excited for the challenge of running 26.2 miles to raise funds for KIPP Massachusetts. Running with him will be Hillary Paul, Biology and Engineering teacher at KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate High School. Hillary ran her first 10K just last fall, finishing with an impressive sub-50 minute time. She is excited to run her first marathon and can't imagine a better race in which to start!

Caleb and Hillary's fundraising pages can be found at www.crowdrise.com/KIPPBoston2015/fundraiser/friendsofkippacademy.



Two KALC students named Posse Scholars



Jose Valera and Anaidys Uribe, members of the Class of 2015 at KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate High School (KALC), have been named as Posse Foundation Scholars. Three other KALC seniors were named as finalists: Nicholas Gross, Mayelin Burgos, and Briana Collins-Lee.

Founded in 1989, the Posse Foundation identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes. Posse extends to these students the opportunity to pursue personal and academic excellence by placing them in supportive, multicultural teams—Posses—of 10 students. Posse partner colleges and universities award Posse Scholars four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships.

Jose and Anaidys are members of the first class of seniors to graduate from KALC and the first class of students to attend KIPP from 5th through 12th grade. They are members of a senior class of which 95% of students have 772 college applications have been submitted, and 110 college acceptances have already been received this early in the year!



KTC Hosts Annual Alumni Reunion

The second annual KIPP Through College (KTC) holiday reunion was held on January 9 at The Tavern in the Square in Salem, MA.

This annual reunion was established as a place for KIPP:MA alumni to reconnect with old friends, as well as engage with the KTC staff in a more relaxed, convivial atmosphere. The goal is to keep currently engaged alumni, those who work with KTC regularly on academic and career pursuits, connected to KTC while engaging alumni who may not be currently utilizing the KTC services.



Nearly 35 alumni, home from college or other post-secondary commitments, came together to reflect on their 2014 accomplishments and toast the new year (with sparkling cider, of course!).

KIPP:MA would like to thank The Tavern in the Square for generously donating a portion of the cost of the delicious three course meal in kind.



Six Essential Questions:
Are our alumni climbing the mountain to and through college?

Helping our students climb the mountain to and through college and achieve their dreams is only possible if we know exactly how we are doing. Data helps us understand our true impact; what is working and what needs to be improved. Our Six Essential Questions provide a yardstick by which to measure our progress, keep us focused as we grow, and most important, help us to keep the promises we make to our students and their families. In each edition of Juntos, we will focus on one of the Six Essential Questions by highlighting a program, person, or statistic that illustrates our commitment to staying on track. In this edition of Juntos, we are putting the spotlight on Question 4: are our alumni climbing the mountain to and through college?

The persistence rates below apply to all KIPP:MA 8th grade completers, 5 years after completing 8th grade. The numbers in parentheses represent the national averages for all low-income students.

92%

Graduated High School
(vs 72% nationally)

83%

Entered College
(vs 45% nationally)

68%

Persisting in College

1,000+

Projected Alumni by 2020