

KIPP® LA Schools

For Immediate Release

October 22, 2014

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KIPP Empower Academy Celebrates New Home in South LA as KIPP LA Announces Ambitious Growth Plan

*Sacramento Mayor and former NBA All-Star Kevin Johnson
lends support at ribbon-cutting ceremony for LAUSD's top-performing school*

LOS ANGELES (October 22, 2014) – Today, KIPP LA Schools held a grand opening ceremony at the new home of KIPP Empower, LAUSD's highest-performing school. At the event, KIPP LA announced an ambitious plan to grow to 20 public charter schools by the end of 2020, serving 10,000 students in South and East LA—more than double its current enrollment.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrated KIPP Empower's new facility in the heart of South LA. Founded in 2010, KIPP Empower Academy serves over 550 students in grades K-4. Ninety-eight percent of KIPP Empower's students are African-American and/or Latino, and 89 percent qualify for the federal free and reduced price meal program. With an Academic Performance Index of 991, KIPP Empower is the highest-performing school in LAUSD out of more than 900 schools, as well as the 10th highest-performing elementary school in the state of California. As the pioneering blended learning school in the national KIPP network, KIPP Empower has integrated technology into the classroom, providing students access to rigorous adaptive software programs while allowing teachers to provide small group instruction targeted to students' individual needs.

"We are very excited to continue our work in this beautiful new building and have our team and family reunited under the same roof," said Neela Parasnis, school leader of KIPP Empower. "Now that we have a permanent home, we can deepen our connection with the community and continue to strive to provide high-quality educational opportunities for our students."

KIPP Empower is one of 11 college-preparatory public charter schools operated by KIPP LA Schools. KIPP LA currently serves 4,000 students in grades K-8. KIPP LA's schools are outperforming both LAUSD and the state of California, with an average Academic Performance Index of 883—more than 80 points above the state goal.

"As we celebrate KIPP Empower's new home, we are thrilled to be expanding to bring more schools like KIPP Empower to the students of South and East LA," said KIPP LA Executive Director Marcia Aaron. "The families in these communities are demanding access to an excellent college-preparatory public education for their children. KIPP LA's growth will help meet that demand."

Sacramento mayor and former NBA All-Star Kevin Johnson spoke at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. As mayor of California's capital city, Johnson is an outspoken supporter of public education and a longtime proponent of charter school organizations like KIPP LA. He was a member of KIPP's first national advisory board and played a key role in helping the organization expand to California in the early 2000s.

Johnson was joined at the ceremony by a number of KIPP LA supporters, including philanthropists Martha Karsh and Erika Glazer, and representatives from The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Quest Foundation, and The Riordan Foundation.

“I’m so honored to be here at LAUSD’s highest-performing school to celebrate its new home and many accomplishments,” said Mayor Johnson. “KIPP LA’s schools are having a tremendous impact on South and East LA by providing students with the skills they need to succeed in college and in life. Los Angeles needs more high-quality schools like these and KIPP LA’s growth plan will help make that a reality by the end of the decade.”

Since its founding, KIPP Empower has operated in temporary facilities and on split campuses. The school’s new facility features 27 classrooms designed specifically for the school’s unique rotational blended learning model, as well as a multi-purpose room and cafeteria; a covered outdoor lunch area; a physical education space; a playground; and a faculty lounge. With a permanent facility of its own, KIPP Empower is poised to become a fixture in the community, and the school’s staff and students are already seeking out opportunities to partner with neighbors and community members.

“This isn’t just a school. It’s a team and family. Everyone is involved, including parents and the community,” said Melody Moore, whose daughter, Ashandi, is a 4th grader at KIPP Empower. “KIPP is committed to staying by Ashandi’s side all the way to and through college. It’s also committed to supporting our community, and making it a place where children and adults can learn and grow.”

KIPP LA is part of KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program), the nation’s largest charter school network. Nationwide, KIPP operates 162 college-preparatory public charter schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia, serving 58,000 students from underserved communities in grades PreK-12. To date, more than 80 percent of students who have graduated from KIPP middle schools nationwide have matriculated to college. KIPP is the winner of the 2014 Broad Foundation Prize for Public Charter Schools for demonstrating the most outstanding student achievement and growth among charter school networks nationwide.

About KIPP LA Schools

KIPP LA Schools is a non-profit organization that operates 11 high-performing elementary and middle public charter schools in South and East Los Angeles. KIPP LA’s students are 99 percent African-American or Latino, and 89 percent qualify for the federal free and reduced price meal program. KIPP LA’s schools are among the highest-performing schools in LAUSD serving a majority low-income student population. Over 75 percent of KIPP LA’s alumni are persisting in college. To learn more, visit www.kippla.org.

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