



# KIPP:MINNESOTA

COLLEGE PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REPORT TO COMMUNITY  
2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR



KIPP:  
**NORTHSTAR**  
ACADEMY



*KIPP North Star Academy 8th grade students gathered for a photo in front of our wonderful new campus.*

## **MISSION:**

To create and sustain a respected, influential, and inspiring network of public schools that battles educational inequity by helping students develop the knowledge, skills, character strengths, and habits to succeed in college and the competitive world beyond.

In July, 2014 we moved from our downtown start-up location to a spacious and bright school building adjacent to Shingle Creek Park in North Minneapolis. We renamed our school KIPP North Star Academy, formerly KIPP Stand Academy, to highlight our commitment to North Minneapolis, where the majority of our students live.

***Being a North Star means that you lead the way, shine bright, and make light for others.***

- Rachel S., 8th grade

***To me, a North Star is a person who does the right thing when no one is watching.***

- Malcolm Y., 7th grade

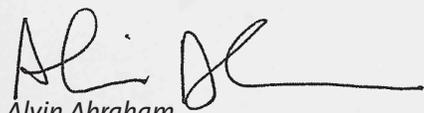
*Dear Friends and Supporters,*

*Last year I passed the reins as Principal of KIPP North Star Academy to my colleague Luwam Arefe and moved into the new role of Executive Director of KIPP Minnesota. My focus last year was preparing KIPP Minnesota to operate as a **network of schools and services**. The most exciting recent expansion of our network is the upcoming launch of **KIPP North Star Primary** in August of 2016. Amanda Markowitz, our amazing science teacher for the past three years was selected to complete the rigorous KIPP Fisher Fellowship training for her new role as principal. We look forward to welcoming kindergarteners to our campus and are excited for the new energy that elementary students bring.*

*The success of KIPP Minnesota depends not only on building our own network, but on enhancing the networks we form with others. The core of our network is the KIPP Foundation – which provides everything from financial support to curriculum to professional development. We benefit from an equally important collection of local people including the families, donors, schools, and organizations who are working to ensure that every student in our community receives a high quality education. In my new role I am fortunate to work on enhancing and expanding our partnerships in this network. Our community network is building both supply and demand for quality seats in our publicly funded schools. A recent analysis conducted by Minnesota Comeback confirms that our new campus location serves a section of Minneapolis that is particularly underserved in terms of good schools. Their report shows that North Minneapolis contains four of the eleven identified “highest need areas based on 2013-2014 service gaps” in education. Our community network also makes us more responsive to families navigating the challenges of poverty. For example, last year an extended family that has eight students at our middle school was evicted. Because we are an Anchor School of the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), KIPP and NAZ staff worked together to quickly find temporary shelter, food, and clothing so that the students did not miss any school.*

*Together, we are working toward the vision that all students attend a school that puts them on a track to and through college and expands their life options. Thank you for your support.*

*Warmly,*



Alvin Abraham  
Executive Director





We make a sacred promise to students that we will help them climb the mountain to and through college.

Work hard. Be nice.

KIPP North Star Academy is a public charter middle school that battles educational inequity by helping students develop the knowledge, skills, character strengths, and habits to shine as a north star in college and in the competitive world beyond.

**HIGH EXPECTATIONS.** We believe that all of our students are capable of remarkable learning and growth and that our talented team can and will find a way to achieve those results.

**POWER TO LEAD.** We value the entrepreneurial spirit of our principals and teachers and give them the authority and flexibility to make key decisions about staffing, curriculum, and instruction.

**MORE TIME.** Our day starts earlier and ends later than other schools. We hold classes on many Saturdays. Extra time allows for more rigorous academic preparation – and for fun, diverse enrichment activities and field trips.

**CHOICE AND COMMITMENT.** Each member of the KIPP North Star Academy community including parents, students, and teachers signs a 'commitment to excellence form' pledging the effort necessary for success.

**RESULTS.** KIPP schools focus on a high level of student performance on standardized tests and other objective measures and emphasize continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

260  
STUDENTS



97%

AFRICAN  
AMERICAN

97%

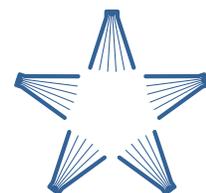
ELIGIBLE  
FOR FREE OR  
REDUCED-PRICE  
LUNCH

81%

LIVE IN  
MPLS

93%

AVERAGE  
DAILY  
ATTENDANCE  
RATE



MPLS KIPP MINN

NORTHSTAR  
ACADEMY

# HIGHLIGHTS

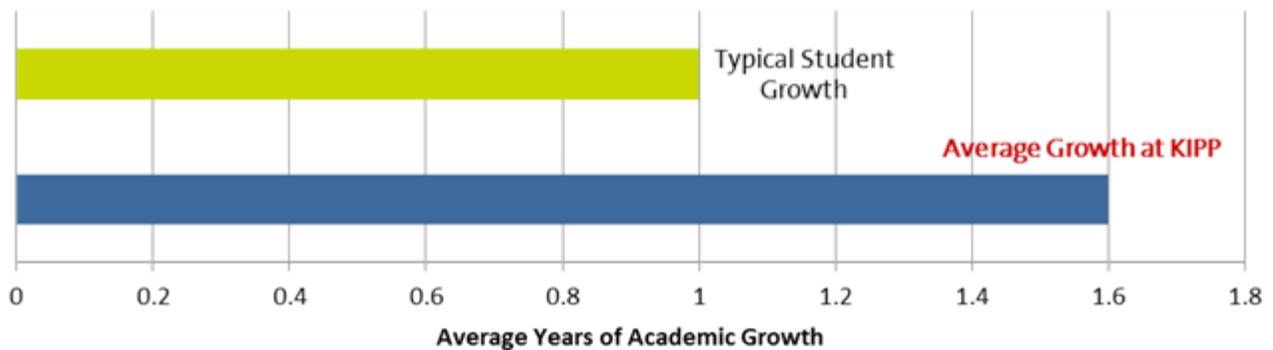
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## Student growth data from Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test

Our goal is that students will show greater than 1.5 years of academic Growth between the Fall and Spring MAP tests.

For each of the past three school years, our students have grown academically by more than **1.5 years on average**, erasing their academic achievement gaps in meaningful ways.

### GROWTH BETWEEN FALL AND SPRING MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS TEST IN 2014-2015



We believe that data helps us understand our true impact, what is working, and what we need to improve to better prepare students for success in college and in life. To that end, we conduct an annual Healthy School & Regions Survey which gathers information from KIPP students, parents, and staff. Here are some of the statements with the highest agreement rates on our annual KIPP Healthy School & Regions Survey last year:

*"I plan to go to college."*

**Student**

*"With hard work, my child is capable of attending college."*

**Parent**

*"School leadership uses data to monitor progress, identify problems, and find solutions."*

**Teacher**

# TEACHER – STUDENT FAMILY CONNECTION

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Amanda Markowitz is truly a master teacher, admired and respected by her students and colleagues. She taught for two years at another school as a Teach For America corps member and for the past three years at KIPP with consistently impressive outcomes. During each of her years at KIPP, Amanda has helped her students gain more than two years of science content in a single year. Last year, her students' academic growth was the highest of any 6th grade teacher in the KIPP network. This year, her 5th grade students grew by an incredible average of 2.8 years between the fall and spring MAP tests, jumping from an average percentile of 15 in the fall to 45 in the spring. Amanda also led KIPP's science teachers, designing assessments to align with content standards and ensuring curriculum followed proper scope and sequence, while also incorporating elementary standards that our students had often missed. Under her leadership, science showed the strongest student growth of all content teams, averaging two years of academic gain during the 2014-2015 school year.

Amanda follows the growth mindset approach in her work. In her view, all students have the ability and capacity to learn; her role is to encourage, challenge, and support each student to reach their full potential. One of her 5th grade students this year exemplifies the success of this approach. At the beginning of the year Emani was apprehensive, reluctant to participate, and lacked confidence. Ms. Markowitz recognized she was bright (as evidenced by her straight As in all of her other classes) and that Emani's struggles were not with aptitude but merely confidence. So she began to work closely with Emani and found a very supportive partner in Emani's father, Alfonzo. According to Ms. Markowitz, "his involvement and responsiveness was integral to Emani's success." Alfonzo remembers the first parent teacher conference: "Ms. Markowitz said by the end of the year she would not only understand science, but LOVE science." He left the conference excited that his daughter's teacher believed in her and was truly invested in her education. Emani describes the support she received from Ms. Markowitz, "Sometimes I'm not sure of the right answer...but Ms. Markowitz encourages me to try even if I'm wrong sometimes." All of her hard work, support from her father, and encouragement from Ms. Markowitz paid off! Emani grew by an astounding 5.8 years according to the MAP test jumping from the third percentile in the fall to the 58th percentile in the spring! **Together, Emani, Alfonzo, and Ms. Markowitz illustrate a KIPP core belief that all students can and will learn and achieve.**



“I aspire to create a school that emphasizes the belief that effort leads to success, empowers scholars to reveal the brightness in themselves, and encourages individuals to shine their light for others.”

~ Amanda Markowitz

“I like getting homework...it makes me want to work harder.”

~ Emani

# KIPP THROUGH COLLEGE

With postsecondary education now a key threshold for self-sufficiency, KIPP believes that the disparity in college graduation rates must be dramatically reduced. Our KIPP Through College (KTC) program helps to close the opportunity gaps our students face as they continue to – and through – college.

We worked closely with our **102 alumni** last year to ensure that they stayed on the path toward high school graduation and then college or post-secondary options. We are excited to add a second KTC position to work with the 27 alumni who will be high school seniors next year. Alex Plattner, a talented writing teacher at our school from 2012-2014 spent last year working in the KIPP Bay Area KTC office. Special thanks to our partner the General Mills Foundation for providing a matching grant to help fund this important new role.

98% of our **44 eighth graders** from last year will be attending college-prep high schools (i.e., has AP courses and/or International Baccalaureate programming; offers college-access programs such as AVID or College Possible; and has a graduation rate of 75% or better.) in fall 2015.

High schools include a Cristo Rey, St. Louis Park, Minneapolis College Prep, and Breck.

We are grateful for generous community philanthropists who help cover the tuition of students attending select college prep high schools. Special thanks to the Carlson Family Foundation for sponsoring nine 9th graders at Cristo Rey, to the John & Denise Graves Foundation for sponsoring two freshmen at Benilde St. Margaret's, to the Saunders Family Foundation for sponsoring a student at De La Salle and at Breck, and to the Breck School for providing a partial scholarship to a new KIPP student.

Nationally, only 8% of students from the lowest economic quartile complete a four-year degree, compared with 71% from the highest quartile.



# CHARACTER COUNTS

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KIPP's longstanding motto — **“Work hard. Be nice.”** — isn't just a tagline. Since KIPP's beginning in 1994, the development of character has been as important to us as the teaching of rigorous academic skills. We believe both are essential to the success of our students in college and life, and a wide body of research proves it.

We continued to enhance our ongoing character education work, promoting seven key traits that are highly associated with long-term academic success. The annual student survey administered by the KIPP Foundation gives us quantitative feedback on these efforts. For example, two of the five most positive response shifts from the 2013-2014 survey were increased student agreement with these statements of self-control: “I can control my temper.” and “I pay attention and ignore distractions.”

Enrollment growth meant we spent tremendous energy last year communicating and upholding our high expectations for behavior. In addition to our new 5th graders, 53% of our students in grades 6 - 8 were first-year KIPPsters, many of whom came from schools with different expectations. We changed our behavior management system mid-year, dropping our Student Paychecks in favor of a more flexible system of “Glows and Grows.” While our expectations remained high, the new system added more flexibility and opportunity for student “cool down” and reflection. We were pleased that suspensions dropped 17% per week with this change. Ongoing character education played a big role in this improvement, as we helped students shed negative, reactive habits and build self-control, social intelligence, optimism, and grit.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PARTNERS

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2014-2015

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### **Reynolds-Anthony Harris, Community Representative**

Lyceum Partners, Founder and Managing Director

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### **Anna Ouattara, Community Representative**

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### **Brian Shephard, Teacher Representative**

KIPP North Star Academy,  
Grade Level Lead and 8th Grade Reading Teacher

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MinnCAN

Minnesota Comeback

Northside Achievement Zone

Students For Ed Reform

Teach for America Twin Cities

University of MN

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Wilderness Inquiry

# SUPPORTERS

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We are grateful to all of our supporters who have helped provide the opportunity for our students to learn and excel.

Listed below are donors who have given \$500 or more. All other supporters are listed on our website.

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## **\$200,000 plus**

Carlson Family Foundation

## **\$50,000 plus**

Best Buy Children's Foundation  
The Minneapolis Foundation  
WEM Foundation

## **\$25,000 plus**

Boston Scientific  
Grotto Foundation  
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Donor list reflects gifts and pledges to KIPP Minnesota during the 2014 - 2015 fiscal year as of June 30 2015.

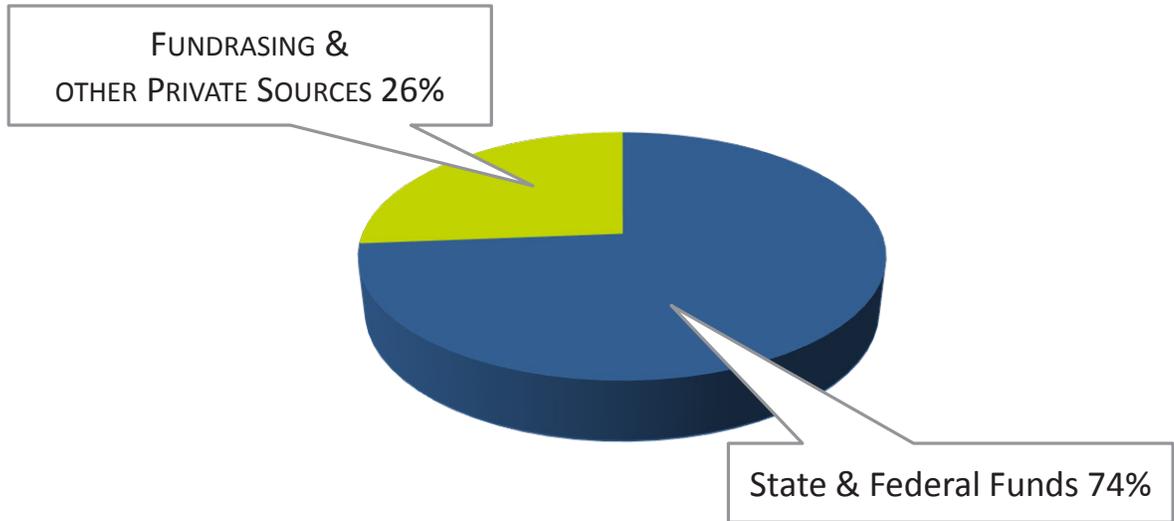
We are extremely grateful for our generous in kind donors who donated over \$16,000 worth of goods and services for our school.

# FINANCIALS

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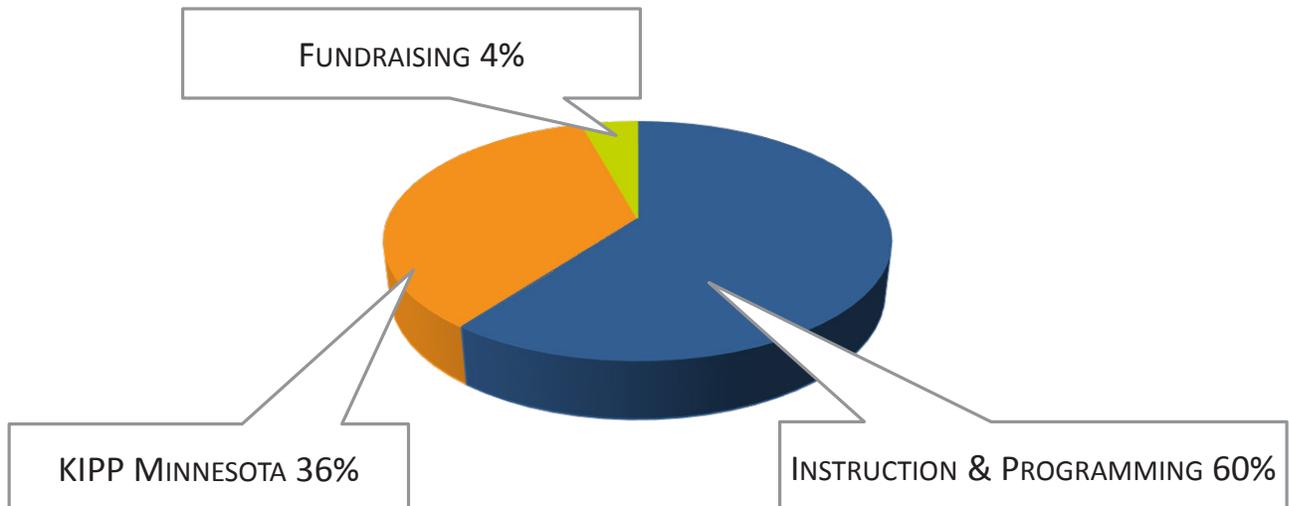
## Total Revenue

\$4,778,647



## Total Expenses

\$4,842,092



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