



New York State Education Department Charter School Office

Charter School Application Summary, Findings, and Recommendation

*Application in response to the
New York State Education Department 2011 Request for Proposals to Establish
Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents
to establish the proposed:*

KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School

September 6, 2011

Summary of the Proposed KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School

Charter School Name:	KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	David Levin
District of Location	NYC CSD 6
Opening Date	Summer/Fall 2012
Projected Charter Term	September 13, 2011 – June 30, 2017
Not-for-Profit Management Company	KIPP NYC, LLC
Partners	None
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 90 students in grade 5 in 2012-13, growing to 695 students in grades K through 2 and 5 through 9 in 2016-17.
Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	1060 students in grades K – 12 in 2019-20.
Mission Statement	“The mission of KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School is to help our students develop the academic and character skills necessary to achieve success in high school and college, be self-sufficient in the competitive world and beyond, and build a better tomorrow for themselves and us all.”

The KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School is a K through 12 college preparatory program that builds off the success of the four existing K through 12 KIPP charter schools in New York City (KIPP Academy, KIPP STAR, KIPP Infinity and KIPP AMP). Key design elements of the school include:

- A model of instruction with a 15 year history of effectively serving students from low-income families and helping them to achieve academically and socially through a program of academic rigor and character development.
- Commitment to the “Five Pillars” model: high expectations, more time on task, focus on results, power to lead, choice and commitment.
- A formal relationship with KIPP NYC, LLC, a not-for-profit network serving the four existing New York City charter schools through its Shared Services Team, which provides finance, operations, technology, human resources and professional development services for the schools through a cooperative fee-based arrangement.
- Location in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, a predominantly Hispanic/ Latin American community with a high percentage of new immigrants, high poverty rates and students at risk of academic failure.

The KIPP Washington Heights Academy Charter School proposed school calendar includes 210 days of instruction, including Saturday sessions and three weeks of mandatory summer school, which KIPP considers to be the beginning of the regular academic year. The daily schedule is structured to offer a longer school day; however, the day begins and ends at different times for the elementary, middle and high school grades. The schedules all begin and end within the hours of 7:22 a.m. and 5:15 p.m., with 53 - 95 minute daily blocks of ELA instruction and 50 - 72 minute daily blocks of Mathematics instruction.

The KIPP Shared Services Teaching and Learning Team will support the school’s focus on data-driven instruction and assist teachers to use ongoing assessment data to identify where students are failing to

progress toward proficiency and to develop effective strategies for re-teaching material. The proposed school will utilize curriculum developed in other KIPP model schools across the country. Teachers at KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School will work together to develop, share and refine effective teaching strategies, which can be used in team-teaching experiences. The academic calendar will assure that faculty members have bi-weekly opportunities to collaborate on planning (lessons, curriculum, school and classroom culture), observe one another and provide feedback. KIPP NYC considers high quality instruction to be the result of meticulous planning, varied and rigorous instructional techniques and methods that are relevant to students. Because more than academic and intellectual skills are required to maximize a student's potential in college and beyond, character development is a focus of the KIPP academic culture, as is the implementation of a consistent and fair behavior management system. Throughout their experience at KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School, students will receive ongoing support and counseling as necessary to help them achieve their greatest potential. Home visits will continue to be a cornerstone practice at all grade levels, as well as providing an on-staff social worker who is invested in the success of KIPP students and the KIPP mission.

KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy will administer the same standardized exams in ELA and mathematics as the New York City Department of Education and the NYS Testing Program in grades K through 12. The Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment will be used at the elementary and middle school level to provide teachers with nationally-normed, real time data that highlights students' strengths and areas of growth in Math and English. In addition, KIPP NYC has invested significant resources and staff time into the development of common interim assessments. These teacher-designed assessments are tied to a common scope and sequence and allow teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and make appropriate adjustments. To supplement the interim assessments, teachers utilize an array of weekly and daily quizzes. These weekly and interim assessments will be used by teachers at KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School to inform and optimize ongoing instruction.

KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School will employ the following strategies to support and retain teachers:

- All new teachers will be assigned a mentor teacher.
- The Principal will work closely with individual teachers and department heads to support and assist teachers.
- A culture of a community of learners will be established through the teacher evaluation process and departmental planning meetings to support staff.
- The utilization of monetary incentives through sign-on bonuses, student performance and the assumption of additional duties.
- Implementation of a supportive professional development program that allows teachers the opportunities to explore best practices across the city, state and nationally.

KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School will use a variety of performance indicators to annually review the effectiveness of staff. Such measures will include student achievement data as measured on interim assessments and NYS tests, feedback from the KIPP Healthy Schools survey (completed by teachers, students and parents) and classroom observations by the Principal and Deans of Teaching and Learning

KIPP NYC Washington Heights Charter School proposes to establish a preference for at-risk students in the lottery admission process. The criterion, which is consistent with the lottery admission policies of all KIPP NYC charter schools, would be defined by the applicant's free and reduced lunch eligibility. Admission preferences would be applied in this order: 1) returning students; 2) siblings; 3) students residing within CSD 6 and eligible for free and reduced meals; 4) students residing outside of CSD 6 and

eligible for free and reduced meals; 5) students residing within CSD 6 and not eligible for free and reduced meals; and 6) students residing outside of CSD 6 and not eligible for free and reduced meals.

As required, the founding group provided a set of draft by-laws and code of ethics. Additionally, each founding group member proposed for a seat on the board of trustees has provided a resume or curriculum vitae, a statement of assurances and a completed request for information from prospective charter school board members form.

The founding group consists of individuals who have a range of expertise in the areas of education, charter school governance, administration, curriculum development, law, financial planning, business management, not-for profit management, accounting, fundraising, and community engagement.

The proposed initial members of the board of trustees are described below.

- **David B. Massey** is the proposed board chair for KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School. He currently holds the position of Assistant United States Attorney for the Office of U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Through extensive service on the charter school boards of KIPP Academy, KIPP STAR, KIPP Infinity, and KIPP AMP, Mr. Massey has significant knowledge of non-profit governance and the KIPP mission.
- **Rafael Mayer** is a Managing Director and Co-Founder of Khronos LLC, an investment management firm responsible for over \$2 billion of assets under management. Mr. Mayer is the proposed Secretary of the KIPP NYC Washington heights Charter School Board of Trustees, and brings four years of experience serving on the KIP AMP Board, as well as governance expertise through roles as a trustee of the Dalton School and a board member of Planned Parenthood of New York City.
- **Joseph Negron** began his teaching career in the Washington Heights section of New York City, and has served as Principal of KIPP Infinity Charter School for the past five years. During his tenure as Principal, the school has outperformed all other middle schools in Harlem, and, in 2008, KIPP Infinity Charter School was named the highest performing public middle school in the city.
- **Jane Martinez Dowling** has been committed to providing educational opportunities to underserved children for over fifteen years. Ms. Dowling is currently the Executive Director of KIPP through College (KTC), the alumni support program at KIPP NYC, LLC
- **Carrie Gennuso** brings many years of experience in management at Gap, Inc., as well as governance experience as a founding board member of KIPP STAR and a current board member of the Frederick Douglas Academy in Harlem.
- **Brian Zied** is the CEO and Portfolio Manager of Charter Bridge Capital, a long/short equity hedge fund. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in Management and Technology. He also serves on the board of Education Reform Now.
- **Dawn Palo** is currently a Managing Director at BNP Paribas, a European leader in global banking and financial services. She has worked for Merrill Lynch/Bank of America and Goldman Sachs. She also serves on the KIPP Academy board of trustees.

The members of the founding group that will provide services to the proposed school are describe below.

- **David Levin** is the co-founder of the national Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), the KIPP Foundation and KIPP NYC (the family of KIPP programming in New York City). Prior to July 2011, Mr. Levin was also the Superintendent of the KIPP NYC. He has extensive experience launching, leading and operating charter schools nationally and in NYC and has received numerous awards and recognition for his work.
- **Vicki Zubovic** is currently the Managing Director of Development at KIPP NYC. She is responsible for fundraising to support the eight KIPP schools in New York. Under her

leadership, private funding for KIPP NYC has increased from \$6 million to over \$10 million in two and a half years.

- **Quinton Vance** is the Executive Director of KIPP NYC and will play an integral role in ensuring the successful launch of KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School. He is the former principal of KIPP Academy Charter School and a former teacher through Teach for America.
- **Jack Chorowsky** is the Chief Operating Officer of KIPP NYC. He leads the Shared Services Team's work in data, development, finance, human resources, operations, recruitment and technology. Prior to joining KIPP NYC, he worked as a lawyer in Washington, D.C. and as an educational publishing and digital media executive.
- **Kaya Stone** is currently the Managing Director of Operations, Human Resources and Technology at KIPP NYC and an alumnus of the Broad Residency in Urban Education. He has served as a Business Development Manager, AmeriCorps Vista member and an Education Pioneer with the Oakland Unified School District.
- **Carrie Mauer** is the Managing Director of Data and Special Projects at KIPP NYC. She oversees the network's data efforts, and is responsible for public funding, facilities and new school start-up.
- **Charizma Williams** is the Managing Director of Finance at KIPP NYC. She has worked as a consultant and business analyst with a supplemental educational firm and as a financial analyst for a leading financial firm. She has been working to improve the financial processes and systems across the KIPP NYC network.
- **Kerry Mullins** is the Managing Director of Recruiting at KIPP NYC. In addition, she has worked in the executive/legal recruiting industry for more than eight years. She is responsible for ensuring every school in the KIPP NYC network receives a strong cadre of applicants for all teaching and staff vacancies.

Once the principals of KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy have been hired by the KIPP NYC Washington Heights Charter School's Board of Trustees, they will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of their respective elementary, middle or high school program. While they will receive significant support from KIPP NYC Superintendent David Levin and from the KIPP NYC Shared Services Team, including Executive Director of KIPP NYC Programs, Quinton Vance, the Principals will ultimately be responsible for the day-to-day management of their schools.

The proposed school will form a partnership with KIPP NYC, LLC. KIPP NYC is a non-profit charter school network comprised of four K through 12 charter schools: KIPP Academy, KIPP STAR, KIPP Infinity, and KIPP AMP. Each of the current KIPP NYC schools receive development, finance, operations, technology, recruiting, teaching and learning and human resources support from KIPP NYC's Shared Services Team (SST) through a cooperative fee-based arrangement. Prior to 2009, these services were provided by staff employed by KIPP Academy; shared services staff and related non-personnel expenses were, during this period, allocated by KIPP Academy pro-rata to the other KIPP NYC schools. In 2009, SST was formalized within KIPP NYC, a distinct New York limited liability company whose parent is KIPP New York Inc., a non-profit corporation. Each of the existing four KIPP NYC charter schools has a shared services agreement with KIPP NYC. The intention is to have KIPP NYC Washington Heights Charter School access these support services from KIPP NYC, following a similar structure as KIPP Academy, KIPP STAR, KIPP Infinity and KIPP AMP.

The founding group is seeking space in a New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) facility. In a letter of support for KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy, NYCDOE Chancellor Dennis Walcott indicated that "while we continue to assess space availability...we will work with the [applicant] to consider split siting options and possible incubation spaces."

Fiscal Impact on District of Location

The projected fiscal impact of the KIPP Academy Washington Heights Charter School during its first five-year charter term on its district of residence, the New York City School District (“NYCSD”), is summarized below.

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year ⁽¹⁾	Charter School Basic Tuition Rate ⁽²⁾	Total Charter School Basic Tuition Only	Estimated District Special Education Payment ⁽¹⁾	Total District General Fund Budget ⁽³⁾	Percent of District Budget
2012-13	90	\$13,527	\$1,217,430	\$207,800	\$19,218,074,295	0.007%
2016-17	695	\$17,199	\$11,953,305	\$933,457	\$19,218,074,295	0.067%

The calculations above assume that there will be no annual increase in the charter school basic tuition rate in year one (2012-13) and a 6.2% average annual increase each year thereafter for the remainder of the charter period (2013-14 thru 2016-17). Per the latest NYCSD Financial Status Report (FSR),⁴ dated May 2011 and published on the NYCDOE website, the NYCDOE is projecting its NYCSD budget to increase at a rate of 1.59% over the next three years. In order to conservatively avoid underestimating the fiscal impact that the charter school will have on the district going forward, the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) is assuming no growth in the NYCSD budget during the duration of the school’s charter.⁵

It should be noted that, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations. For forecasting purposes, the fiscal impact of this charter school on the district in which it will be located assumes that: there will be no fluctuations in the grade levels served by existing charter schools over the course of the charter term; the charter school will be able to meet its projected maximum enrollment; all students will come from NYCSD; and, all students will attend every day for a 1.0 FTE.

The specifics of the school’s enrollment composition are still unavailable; however, the Department acknowledges that the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed charter school on other public and private schools in the same area will also be influenced by the proportion of charter school enrollees that would have attended a same-district public or private school had it not been for the presence of this charter school.

¹ Source: KIPP Academy Washington Heights Charter School Application.

² Source: Education Law §2856(1)(a)(iii) and NYS Education Department Office of State Aid Charter School Basic Tuition Rate Analysis, September 2011.

³ Source: NYCDOE Financial Status Report May 2011.

⁴ NYCSD’s Total District General Fund Budget includes federal special education revenue and other federal grants and/or funds provided.

⁵ Additional notes: While the school has included other federal grants and/or funds that may flow through the district to be received by the school in its proposed budget, this analysis does not account for these sources of potential revenue, nor does it include the value of certain services (e.g., transportation) that the district is required to provide the charter school. However, the analysis also does not account for district per-pupil expense and overall resource savings that is likely to result from a significant reduction in the number of students attending district public schools.

Below, for your reference, please find additional data on New York City Community School District 6.⁶

New York City Community School District 6 Data

Enrollment Data	
Total District Enrollment:	24,801
Grade K through 12 Enrollment:	24,322
White:	3%
Black/African-American:	8%
Hispanic/Latino:	89%
American Indian/Alaskan Native:	0%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander:	1%
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch:	89%
English Language Learners:	36%
Students with Disabilities:⁷	14%
Graduation Rate	
Graduation Rate for 2005 Cohort:	72%

2009-10 State Assessments (% proficient)		
Grade level	English Language Arts	Mathematics
3	33%	41%
4	33%	45%
5	33%	49%
6	24%	40%
7	27%	43%
8	27%	41%
Cohort 9-12	79%	78%

⁶ Source: 2009-2010 New York State School Report Card (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/reportcard/2010/home.html>) and Special Education School District Data Profile for 2009-10 (<http://eservices.nysed.gov/sepubrep/>).

⁷ This figure is the available city-wide classification rate: the ratio of the count of school-age students with disabilities (ages 4-21) to the total enrollment of all school-age students in the school district, including students who are parentally placed in nonpublic schools located in the school district. The numerator includes all school-age students for whom a district has Committee on Special Education (CSE) responsibility to ensure the provision of special education services. The denominator includes all school-age students who reside in the district. In the case of parentally placed students in nonpublic schools, it includes the number of students who attend the nonpublic schools located in the school district. Source data are drawn from the Student Information Repository System (SIRS) and from the Basic Education Data System (BEDS).

Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the New York City Department of Education held a hearing on Thursday, May 19, 2011 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed charter school. Thirteen community members spoke at the meeting. Many speakers had questions about the proposed program. Four speakers were in support of the proposed school. In addition, there were a number of questions posed during the hearing and a few oppositional comments regarding “charter schools kicking district schools out of districts”, KIPPS’ “skewed test scores” and the KIPP organization’s lack of efforts to enroll English language learners.

The Department directly notified the NYDOE, as well as public and private schools in the in the region, of the charter school application and also issued an open call for written public comment via the State Education Department Charter School Office website. Chancellor Dennis Walcott submitted a letter in support of the KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School, noting that the proposal is a replication of existing NYCDOE-authorized high-performing charter schools and his support for the school “to support the children of New York City.”

Application Review Process

On January 3, 2011, as required by the New York State Charter Schools Act, the New York State Education Department released the *2011 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents*. In this cycle, the Department could legally award 58 new charters per Education Law subdivision 2852(9), 25 of which reflect charters that were available but not awarded during the 2010 RFP cycle. The charter school application process utilized by the Board of Regents and the Department during the 2011 RFP cycle is multi-stage, and designed to ensure that any charter school applicant presented to the Board of Regents for possible approval demonstrates four essential competencies:

1. The applicant demonstrates clear understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act and what it means to comply with the Act.
2. The applicant’s proposed school demonstrates clear alignment with the educational priorities stated in the law.
3. The applicant presents a coherent and practical design for the proposed school.
4. The applicant demonstrates the necessary experience, skill and will to manage the challenging and dynamic process of opening and operating a public charter school.

During this 2011 cycle, 100 letters of intent were received in January 2011, 80 charter school prospectuses were submitted by January 31, 2011, and, after an initial review process, 37 applicants were invited to submit full applications. The Department received 36 full applications, including the application for KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School.

To assess all four necessary competencies, the Department reviewed and evaluated a letter of intent, a prospectus, and a full application. The prospectus and the educational, organizational, and fiscal plan presented in the full application were evaluated by Department and external reviewers. After determining that the written materials submitted sufficiently met application criteria, the Department staff also conducted a two-hour capacity interview with the founding group and proposed board members for the school.

Findings

Based on the comprehensive review of the application and of the applicant, founding group, and proposed board of trustees, the Department makes the following findings:

1. The charter school described in the application meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.⁸ This finding is based on the following (among other things):
 - the applicant has included in the application the information required by §2851(2).
 - the proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents⁹, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal free and reduced price lunch program as required by Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 - the applicant has conducted public outreach to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).

2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the proposed charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner¹⁰ and the four essential competencies prescribed by the Regents for charter approval noted above. This finding is based on the following (among other things):
 - the presentation of a sound educational plan in the application, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of curriculum and instruction, school calendar and daily schedule, target population, assessment, and school climate and discipline.
 - the presentation of a sound organizational plan in the application, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of governing body, founding group, management and operation, staffing and human resources, student recruitment, enrollment and evidence of demand, community involvement and partnerships.
 - the presentation of a sound financial plan in the application, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of budget and cash flow, financial management, facility, transportation, food service, facility, and pre-opening plan.
 - an understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act, and the skill, will and capacity to successfully launch and operate a high quality public charter school.

3. Granting the proposed charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement, will materially further the purposes of the Act,¹¹ and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.¹² This finding is based on the totality of the information presented in the application and during the application review process, as summarized in this document.

⁸ Education Law §2852(2)(a).

⁹ Note, the data upon which to base the enrollment and retention targets mandated by the amendments to the Act was not available at the time the statute mandated the RFP be issued. As a result, the Department evaluated the plans for student enrollment, recruitment, and retention plans of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Department could make the determination that the applicant would meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets when developed. During the first year of the charter term, the Department will develop such targets and incorporate these targets into the school's charter agreement performance expectations.

¹⁰ Education Law §2852(2)(b).

¹¹ Education Law §2852(2)(c)

¹² As applicable pursuant to Education Law §2852(2)(d),

Recommendation

Based on the Department's review and findings, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the KIPP NYC Washington Heights Academy Charter School, to open in New York City in 2012.