



January 15, 2010

The Honorable Jared Polis  
501 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Polis:

We would like to applaud you for introducing the *All Students Achieving through Reform Act of 2009* (“All-STAR Act”), which if authorized and funded will enable successful charter schools such as ours to replicate, expand and serve more students who are currently in underperforming schools. We also appreciate that the legislation encourages rigorous levels of reporting, oversight and accountability for charter school authorizers, including intervention or closure of low-quality charter schools. The All-STAR Act rewards those that have proven they can close the achievement gap and help all students meet their highest potential.

In a nation that aspires to be a land of opportunity for all, only about half of students from low-income families graduate from high school by the time they turn 18. Those who do graduate perform, on average, at an eighth grade level. Less than thirteen percent of African American and less than nine percent of Latinos earn a bachelor’s degree. Fewer than one in ten students from low-income families graduate from college.

At the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), we know that it does not have to be this way. With 82 schools and over 21,000 students across the country, we are proving what is possible in public education, proving that schools can be the levers of change for students from low-income families. We serve a student population of which over 80 percent are students from low-income families and over 95 percent are students of color.

Our basic premise has always been that there are no shortcuts to academic success. Our schools are primarily charter schools, where principals receive less funding than traditional public schools but have greater freedom to hire the best teachers, manage their budgets and extend learning time. Under a commitment signed by students, parents, and teachers, our students attend school from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every weekday, a host of Saturdays, and for an extra month in the summer—60 percent more class time on average than the typical school year.

After four years with KIPP, middle school students essentially double their achievement levels in math and reading on national norm-referenced tests. In 2008, KIPP students improved their math performance from the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile during the fall of fifth grade to the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile by the end of eighth grade. For reading, KIPP students improved from the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile. Eighty-five percent<sup>i</sup> of KIPPsters are matriculating to college<sup>ii</sup>, while the national average for low-income students is 40 percent.

As we grow the size of our network to 100 schools by 2011, to serve an anticipated 40,000 students when all of those schools reach scale, we are ever-mindful of opportunities to shine a light on measures that will help to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality public education. We are confident that the All-STAR Act will help ensure that more of our nation's students have the opportunity to go to and through college.

Onward,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Barth', written in a cursive style.

Richard Barth  
CEO

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<sup>i</sup> Of eighth-grade KIPP completers.

<sup>ii</sup> From the two original KIPP schools.