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New charter school in Boston will be first in city run by KIPP network

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 17, 2012 03:00 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A school opening in Boston next week will be the first in the city run by the well-known Knowledge is Power Program, which has established a nationwide network of more than 100 public charter schools.

The KIPP Academy Boston Middle School will welcome its first set of students, 72 fifth-graders, on Monday, officials said.

The school will open at 215 Forest Hills St. in Jamaica Plain, sharing space for now in a building with the MATCH Community Day Charter Public School, which owns the facility and opened a school there [last year](#) that is expanding each year.

KIPP Academy Boston hopes to eventually find a permanent home in Mattapan and plans to grow to serve 648 students in grades K-8, Jennifer Parkos, chief development officer of KIPP Massachusetts, said by phone Friday.

There are two other KIPP schools in the state, a middle school and high school

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in Lynn serving 588 students.

“After a decade of working with kids and families in Lynn and seeing over 80 percent of our founding class matriculate to college we are excited and honored to begin the same journey with these 72 students and families in Boston” said a statement from KIPP Massachusetts director Caleb Dolan.

Christine Barford will be the principal at KIPP Boston, school officials said. She has worked in the KIPP network for seven years, first as a teacher and then as principal of the KIPP Gaston College Preparatory in North Carolina and most recently as a professional instructional coach at KIPP Academy Lynn.

“It has been great to meet every one of our kids’ families before the first day of school.” Barford said in a statement. “We are excited to work with such a diverse group of students with many different learning needs along with other high performing traditional public, and innovative schools in the city of Boston.”

KIPP schools feature longer school days, a longer academic year and focuses its mission on “spending more time in its students’ lives,” officials said.

Teachers regularly visit students’ homes, teach electives and offer homework support until 9 p.m., according to the program. The schools also offer extensive field learning, electives and an alumni program to provide support to current KIPP students.

Nationwide, the college graduation rate for students from low-income communities is 8 percent, while the national graduation rate for students attending KIPP schools is 33 percent, the program said in a press release.

There are 112 KIPP schools in 20 states and Washington D.C. serving 32,000 students, officials said.

By 2019, KIPP Massachusetts hopes to grow to five schools with more than 2,100 students in Boston and Lynn.

The new Boston school is not an in-district charter school. Its founding class was selected through a blind lottery in March, officials said. There are no admissions tests or MCAS score requirements; interested families who live within Boston and have a child of appropriate age may enter in the open lottery

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each year.

Charter schools operate with greater flexibility than traditional public schools and are meant to develop innovative ways of educating. Every five years, the schools are reviewed by the state's education department, which determines whether or not to renew a school's charter.

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