



Chairwoman Richardson, Ranking Member Troy and Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education. On behalf of KIPP Columbus, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1 and the Quality Community School Support Fund.

My name is Hannah Powell, and I am the Executive Director of KIPP Columbus located in Northeast Columbus. KIPP, the Knowledge Is Power Program, is a national network of free, open enrollment college preparatory public schools. There are 255 KIPP schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 110,000 students with more than 15,000 KIPP alumni currently attending college. Nationally, KIPP alumni are graduating from college at 3x the rate of their peers.

KIPP Columbus, the only set of KIPP schools in Ohio, was founded in 2008 with 50 students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade in a leased building from Columbus City Schools, our local district. With the need to reach students at a younger age and expand to serve additional grades, KIPP Columbus committed to building a campus reflective of our students' potential and aspirations on the grounds of a former golf course.

The KIPP Columbus campus opened in 2014 and now educates more than 2,000 students infant - 12<sup>th</sup> grade, an increase of 4,000% in only 6 years. The KIPP Columbus campus is more than just school buildings, but rather a true community organization committed to educational excellence, holistic growth and development for our students and neighborhood, and a partner to ensure that all students have what they need to be successful.

With a mission to, together with families and the community, create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose -- *college, career, and beyond* -- KIPP has maintained excellence in its growth, and will improve upon that standard -- proving what is possible in public education.

Within our mission is the charge that KIPP Columbus students will develop the skills and confidence necessary to lead fulfilling lives and create a more just world -- giving them the freedom to shape their futures and positively affect their communities. Further, we are committed to raising expectations of public education by cultivating high-performing educational leaders, and by serving as a model of excellence.

100% of our students receive free breakfast and lunch over 98% are students of color, with just under 15% have special needs. In our first class of graduating high school seniors in the spring of 2020, 100% of students graduated and were accepted, awarded over \$7 million in merit scholarships from colleges and universities.

KIPP Columbus continues to rank as one of the top schools for academic growth of any school in the state of Ohio, and is a top performing urban school for academic growth. This growth has led to multiple state awards from the Ohio Department of Education including the Momentum Award and the designation of being a High Progress School of Honor. KIPP has also had nearly a decade



of clean, perfect audits, earning the Auditor of State Award in each of the last four fiscal years.

KIPP Columbus also partners with more than 100 community organizations to provide extracurricular activities, programming, mental health services, and more to our students and families; and we offer 7 varsity sports -- competing in the Ohio High School Athletic Association (one of only several charter schools to be admitted to this competitive group).

Currently, there are nearly 2,000 children on the waiting list for our enrollment lottery, and the demand exceeds our current capacity. Due to this, and the needs of our community, we again are expanding to serve those on our waiting list and beyond. Our second phase of growth will allow KIPP to serve nearly 4,000 students on our campus, and bring the possibility of additional community buildings and improvements to the Agler road corridor. With the addition of these new quality seats, we are positioned to raise the bar in a new and transformational way -- by establishing KIPP Columbus schools as premiere, landmark, college-preparatory institutions.

The ~\$4.5M received from the Quality Community School Support Fund over the past two years has been catalytic to our growth over the past few years and is necessary to expand with quality in the future. Without the continued funds, our growth will likely be slower or smaller, leaving many students still on our waitlist and the need widening. As you may know, Ohio community schools face significant funding shortfalls when compared to their local districts. Even though we serve students of similar backgrounds, KIPP Columbus received an average of \$10,766 per pupil in FY 2020, while Columbus City Schools received \$16,485 per pupil.

The extra resources from the quality funding program helps narrow these funding gaps. They allow us to expand our teaching fellowship program, leadership training programs, and the build out of our high school programming while expanding and enhancing operations to strengthen our current and future educational delivery models. We are requesting that the Quality Community School Support Fund be continued and be added to House Bill 1.

Chairwoman Richardson, thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you or the committee has any questions, I would be happy to answer them.