Senate Education Committee
August 24th Hearing

Matthew Barnes
Executive Director, FamiliesEmpowered
Families Empowered

• We exist as a response to growing demand for high quality schools in Houston
• Our mission is to empower parents to engage in the “system of schools”
• We help connect parents to schools and schools to parents
  o Traditional District, Charter, Parochial, Independent
Finding #1: Large and Growing Demand for Choice

KIPP Houston and YES Prep Wait List Families
Finding #1: Large and Growing Demand for Choice

- KIPP/YES Prep Wait Lists:
  - 2010: 8,000 students
  - 2011: 12,000 students
  - 2012: 16,000 students (est)

- There is also high demand for choice with HISD magnet schools

- Parents contacting FamiliesEmpowered

- High levels of parent frustration
Parents who are moving from their CURRENTSCHOOL: What could be improved?

What is Driving Demand?

• Survey Question: “What could be improved in current school?”

• 37.2% Academic Quality and Instruction
  o “not challenged”, “no homework”, “too easy”

• 17.8% Don’t Know/Not Sure

• 14.8% School Personnel

• 10.4% Security/Safety/Discipline
  o “bullying”, “lack of control”, “staff not responsive”

• 9.2% Parent Relationships
  o “improved communication with parents”

602 Respondents in KIPP, YES Prep Waitlist Survey
Finding #2: Parents Uninformed about Available Choices

Percent of Waitlisted Families that Applied To Each School

- KIPP: 61.5%
- Yes Prep: 52.7%
- HISD Magnet Schools: 11.1%
- Other Charter Schools: 6.6%
- Catholic Schools: 1.7%
- Other*: 1.0%

602 Respondents in KIPP, YES Prep Waitlist Survey
Finding #3: Limited Space at Quality Schools
Finding #4: Informed Parents Choose

- Brookings Institute Education Policy Director States National Figures:
  - 25% of parents moved to a neighborhood because of the school quality
  - 11% of parents pay for private schools
  - 6% attend charter or home schools
  - 15% attend parent-selected public schools (i.e. magnets)
- Parents largely unsupported in choosing their school
- Low-income, minority, & immigrants are least likely to choose... but this is changing.
Finding #5: Perception Differences by Income

Lower Income Families Rate Their Schools Higher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>6b) Provides quality teaching and a strong learning environment (P=.008)</th>
<th>6c) Provides a positive school culture (P=.025)</th>
<th>6j) Your overall satisfaction with the school's performance (P=.035)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $25K</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>7.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25K-$50K</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50K-$75K</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>5.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75K-$100K</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100K+</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

602 Respondents in KIPP, YES Prep Waitlist Survey
Finding #6: Many Parents Willing to Pay for Quality

Income Distribution of Survey Participants

- Under $25,000: 26.7%
- $25,000 - $49,999: 38.7%
- $50,000 - $74,999: 16.6%
- $75,000 - $99,999: 7.0%
- $100,000 & Above: 6.1%
- Refused: 4.8%

602 Respondents in KIPP, YES Prep Waitlist Survey
Finding #6: Many Parents Willing to Pay for Quality

Q11) Suppose you found a school that met all of your needs and desires. What amount, if any, would you be willing and able to pay per month so that your child could attend that school?

Percent of Respondents in Each Monthly Payment Category

- $0: 9.6%
- Less than $100: 38.0%
- $100-$200: 31.6%
- $201-$300: 10.3%
- More than $300: 10.5%

602 Respondents in KIPP, YES Prep Waitlist Survey
How We Help

• Connect parents to schools & schools to parents by:
  o Large group events
  o Small group events
  o Trainings for parents, parent groups, and school leaders

• Lower the barriers to choice
  o Information
  o Guidance
  o Resources
Examples

• Theo – Parent of Rising Kindergartener:
  o Knew his daughter was “smart” and should be in a “better” kindergarten but didn’t know any options existed

• How We Helped:
  o Theo attend FamiliesEmpowered School Expo in Nov 2011, he learned about several school options, and applied to 3 schools
  o Child accepted into River Oaks Elementary in fall of 2012

• Jasmine – Rising 10th Grader:
  o Student did not feel challenged. She “wanted more for herself.”

• How We Helped:
  o Counseling provided to child/mentor about options that met her interests
  o Jasmine applied and was accepted into Young Women’s College Prep Academy (HISD School)
Review and Conclusion:

• Demand is high and growing
• Most families unaware of options or how to choose
• Shortage of high quality alternatives
• Informed parents actively “shop” for their schools
• Many parents willing to pay for quality option
• Parents are expressing high interest in the support we are offering