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KIPP Charter Network Receives \$25.5 Million From Walton Family Foundation

By [Christina Samuels](#) on November 15, 2011 9:22 AM | [7 Recommendations](#)

The Walton Family Foundation is announcing its plans today to donate \$25.5 million to the Knowledge is Power Program, or KIPP, charter network.

The Bentonville, Arkansas-based foundation, created by Wal-Mart founders Sam and Helen Walton, has been a longtime supporter of KIPP schools. But this award is the foundation's largest gift to KIPP so far. It's intended to provide support to help double the number of students attending KIPP schools by 2015, raising the number of children enrolled from 32,000 this year to 59,000.

In a press release announcing the award, Jim Blew, who leads Walton's K-12 education efforts, said the foundation is concentrating resources on KIPP because it "has an established track record of creating public schools of excellence in low-income communities, and there is growing evidence that traditional public school systems are striving to replicate KIPP's successes."

Currently, the San Francisco-based network has 109 charter schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia. The grant, however, will go to the KIPP Foundation rather than directly to the schools themselves, which are locally run in 30 regions across the country.

Steve Mancini, a spokesman for the KIPP foundation, said the funds will help underwrite professional development for future KIPP school leaders, research and data collection. The organization's plan is train 750 KIPP educators to become founders, assistant principals, deans of students, special education directors, and other leaders for KIPP schools through the foundation's yearlong training program, which consists of summer institutes, coaching, and professional development workshops throughout the school year.

Mancini said KIPP also wants to survey parents and teachers to get a better idea of their overall experience at KIPP schools.

As the number of schools expands, Mancini said, the idea is "go deeper" where there are existing KIPP schools. For example, Atlanta would expand its existing network of five KIPP schools to eight; New Orleans would grow from nine to 12.

"We see it as the holidays came early for KIPP," said Mancini.

The KIPP network wasn't the only charter network sharing expansion plans this week. Uplift Education, a Dallas-area charter network, is set to announce tomorrow the details of its plan to add 20 schools and grow from 5,700 students to 13,000 students by the 2015-16 school year.

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