

Student 5 – In Response to Superintendent

I am a Junior at Midwest Urban High School and I believe that it is time for a change. I grew up in an area where hope and success and two words that you don't hear very often. Most of the people that I encounter have lost their jobs or didn't even have one to begin with. Many are living in poverty and more often than not you see a lot of these same people turn to crime or addiction to cope with their unfortunate situations. Both of my parents work 50+ hours a week at a minimum wage job in an effort to keep a roof over mine and my brother's head and food on the table. They both had originally gone to school around here and each one dropped out when they were my age or before. Their parents didn't make enough money so they had to leave school and get a job in order to help their family survive. It has been primarily this experience that fuels their desire to see their children finish school and succeed in this world. However with the current situation that our school is in I find that goal to be a near impossible one.

Many of the kids that I grew up with have already stopped going to class for one reason or the other. Either they think it is just a waste of time or they are affected by the constant violence surrounding them in these halls. The strain of it all has begun to affect the teachers as well. Many of them seem to have given up on us in one way or another, and I can't blame them. It's time for a change and I, just like the Superintendent, believe the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) could be the answer.

By allowing an institution like this into our school we are giving ourselves a chance to start over. KIPP is driven by success. Success in its students to make it through high school and graduate college with a 2 or 4 year degree and the confidence to overcome life's challenges; and success in its teachers who each make learning, not just a part, but their entire life. They are committed to student success and appear to go above and beyond to ensure that we become the very best that we can be.

Not only does KIPP have the motivation but they also have the funding. We can finally be part of sports teams that play on actual courts, or engage in art projects with actual supplies, and with this additional funding we can finally have a feeling of pride in our school and ourselves. Money alone will not solve our problems, but funds that are properly allocated into our school will give us a sense of hope and a feeling of empowerment. Outside these walls many of us do not have a lot. We are faced with adversity and a feeling of rejection from society, but inside we can matter. We can have a place to be proud of, a place where we know we can succeed with the support of others; a place of hope.

So as a student of MUHS I whole heartedly agree with the superintendent's recommendation to contract our school out to the KIPP program. In a city where it seems that so many have given up we are in desperate need of someone who will fight for us and our successful futures.