Inspiring Schools that are *Beating the Odds*

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools



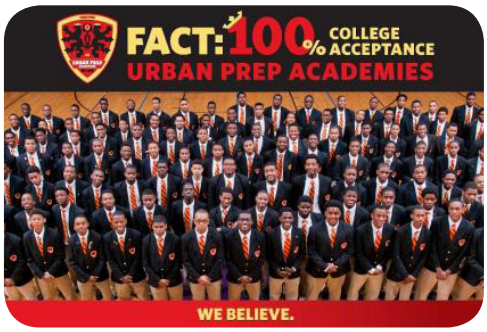
Nationally, only 12 percent of low-income high school graduates go on to earn a four-year college degree. Boston-based **Match Education**, serving primarily low-income and minority students, has a college completion rate of 4.5 times higher. Fifty-four percent of Match graduates receive an undergraduate degree. Ninety percent of Match students take at least one AP course, as well as a college course at Boston University, before graduating from high school. Match builds confidence by developing relationships through daily tutoring. The practice has been so successful that traditional school districts, like Chicago Public Schools, now partner with Match to borrow its tutoring program.



One hundred percent of Indianapolis' **Charles A. Tindley** students have been accepted to four-year colleges and universities. More importantly, though, says Chancellor Marcus Robinson, they arrive on campus having fully experienced college rigor. "At Tindley we don't just believe in college preparation, we practice college immersion," said Robinson. Each Tindley student must complete an array of college courses – English, History, Philosophy, and Calculus – before they can obtain their high school diplomas. Over 80 percent of Tindley alums have graduated college or are pursuing a bachelor's degree.



Agong sounds in the hallways of **YES Prep Public Schools** every time a senior gets a college acceptance letter. For 15 years in a row, 100 percent of YES Prep seniors have graduated with acceptance to four-year colleges and universities. The vast majority of students in these Houston and Memphis charter schools are from low-income families. Each year of high school, college readiness courses are offered to students including SAT prep, understanding financial aid, and how to write college application essays. Beginning in sixth grade, students take annual college tours; and all seniors are required to apply to at least eight four-year colleges by mid-November. At the urging of YES leaders, 24 colleges commit special consideration for qualified YES students and meet their documented financial needs. Other benefits include a scholarship fund, care packages for freshmen, and alumni designated support for peers. No wonder the waiting list to get into these outstanding charter schools is more than 7,000 names long.



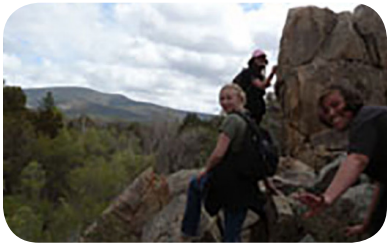
"We believe," says Tim King, founder and CEO of Chicago's **Urban Prep Academies**, describing simply and poignantly how 100 percent of graduating seniors in these charter schools have been admitted into four-year colleges or universities the past four years in a row. Urban Prep students have received more than six million in scholarships and grants this past year. Every morning students recite the creed: "We believe in ourselves. We believe in each other. We are college bound." Powerful, considering the national high school drop-out rate for African-American males remains just above 50 percent. While most Urban Prep students come from economically disadvantaged households and are behind in many subject areas, Urban Prep remains committed to preparing all of its students for college and life.



For the last three years, every single one of Dallas' **Uplift Education** charter school graduates has felt the relief and excitement that comes from opening an envelope from a college and learning they had been accepted. "Our teachers believe all children can learn and all children can go to college. They work every day to help scholars grow academically and prepare," says Yasmin Bhatia, Uplift Education's CEO. Uplift's "Road to College" team takes its scholars on college field trips, helps them with college applications, makes sure parents understand all their financial options, and even provides graduates with support while they are in college.



In the past four years, 100 percent of **Aspire Public Schools'** graduating seniors have been accepted to college. Aspire has become one of the highest-performing school networks in the nation, serving predominantly low-income students in California and Tennessee. "We believe high-quality teachers are the number one lever for preparing students for college," said James Willcox, Aspire Public Schools CEO. "We are committed to developing and supporting highly effective teachers in every classroom." Since 2009, to deliver on its "College for Certain" mission, Aspire has collaborated with teachers to develop a nationally recognized teacher assessment and professional development model.



This fall, all graduating seniors at Prescott, Arizona's **Northpoint Expeditionary Learning Academy** walked onto a college campus. "[We] work with all students beginning in ninth grade to maintain the expectation of college acceptance," said the charter school's director, Geneva Saint Amour. The school model focuses on rigorous academics combined with citizenship and character. "You would think that school is a place where students sit for seven hours a day in their own bubble and occasionally interact with others on a surface level," said Hans, a former student. "That is what I expected, but Northpoint changed that. It has changed me socially, morally and emotionally."