



Expanding Educational Opportunities for Youth



investing in social change
venture philanthropy partners

KIPP DC
Smart Schools. Proven Results.

Introduction



Jessica Cunningham became a teacher because she believed that if she worked hard and set a high standard for herself, she could help students open doors to brighter futures. Unfortunately, Jessica quickly realized that she was having a limited impact as an educator working in the public school system, where she felt that expectations for students and faculty were often limited.

Although she loved teaching, Jessica knew there was a way to educate students better. Unwilling to leave the teaching profession altogether, Jessica set out to find a school that was giving kids in Washington, D.C. the education she knew they deserved.

Jessica joined KIPP DC as a teacher in 2003 and immediately felt at home. When asked what about KIPP DC's model sets it apart from other school systems, Jessica replies simply, "We don't have a model. We just figure out what works and get really good at doing it."

KIPP DC's commitment to doing what works begins with adults. Jessica has seen firsthand that oftentimes, the bar is set too low for teachers. At KIPP DC, Jessica found a group of smart, committed educators who expected a lot of

themselves and, in turn, taught their students to expect more of themselves as well.

Since joining KIPP DC over a decade ago, Jessica has taught at KIPP DC KEY Academy, KIPP DC's first school, and founded WILL Academy, KIPP DC's third middle school, where she served as principal for four years. Jessica also held the position of KIPP DC Chief Academic Officer for two years. She is currently the principal at KIPP DC College Preparatory, a high school that KIPP DC established in 2009.

"KIPP DC helps kids open doors for themselves, doors that would have been much harder for them to push open otherwise," says Jessica. "That's what great schools are supposed to do for students."

The Investment Partner: KIPP DC

KIPP, which stands for Knowledge is Power Program, is a national network of high-performing, college-preparatory public charter school systems. Across the country, KIPP serves 58,000 students in 162 schools.

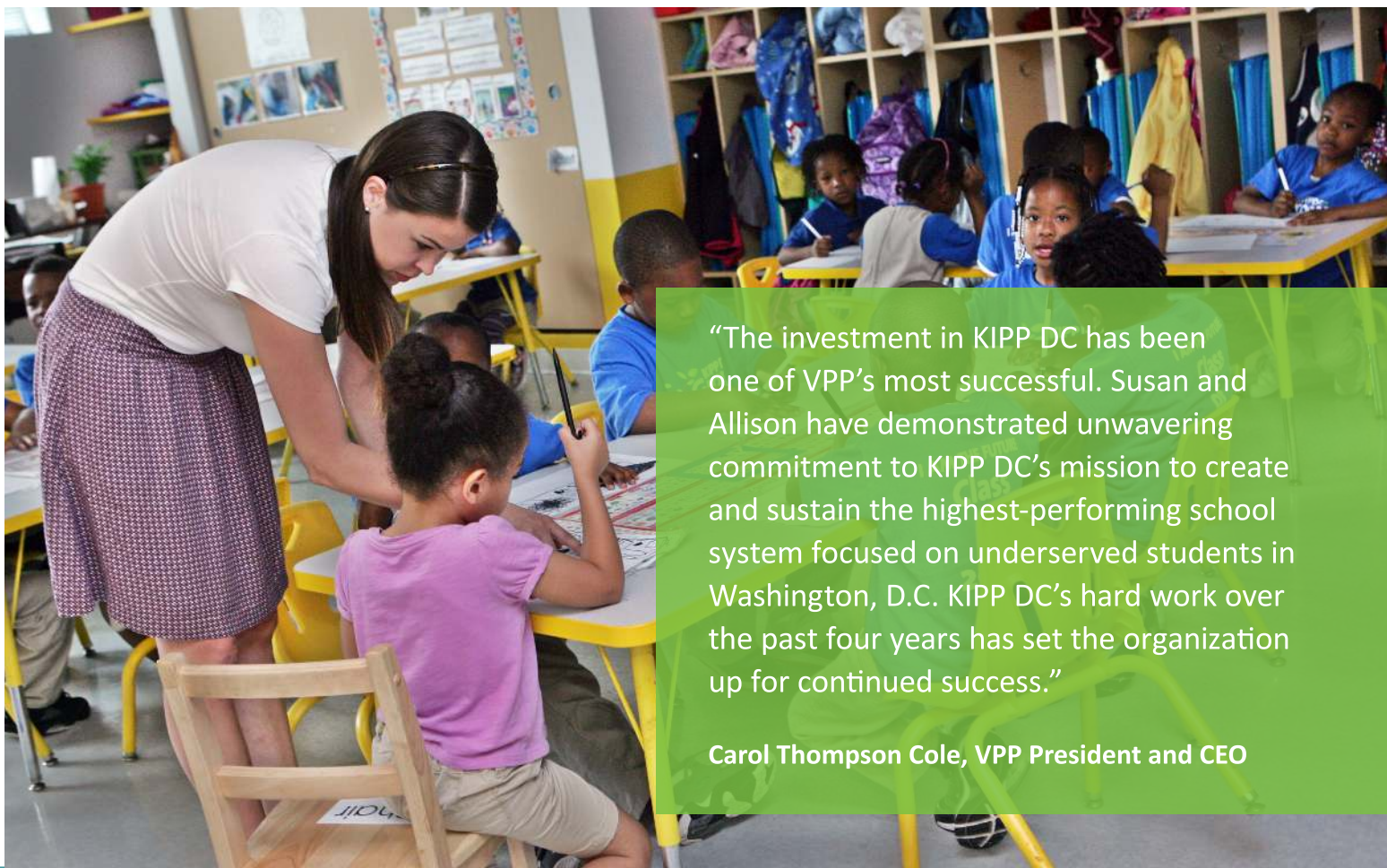
KIPP DC became part of that national network in 2001 with the establishment of KIPP DC KEY Academy in a church basement in Anacostia. KIPP DC's staff, which consisted of just five people at that time, went door-to-door recruiting students to attend KEY Academy in the school's first year. At each door, KIPP DC staff promised families that KEY Academy would give students an education that prepared them to live lives filled with opportunity and choice. When the school opened, it had 80 students.

KIPP DC has grown significantly since those early days. The school system currently serves over 4,600 students at 15 schools on six campuses across Washington, D.C., and will

serve over 6,000 students at 16 schools by 2020. While KIPP DC has grown, its approach to education has remained consistent: figure out what works and do it well.

Curriculum and coursework varies from school to school and classroom to classroom in an effort to meet the needs of each student. Above all, KIPP DC strives to fill its schools with the best possible educators and create learning environments where students feel safe and encouraged.

KIPP DC recognizes that providing students in the region with the best possible education is no easy task, and requires vigilant monitoring and adapting. That's why the organization is part of youthCONNECT, VPP's philanthropic effort to align public-private capital with evaluation experts and innovative nonprofits, all working to improve opportunities for vulnerable youth in the National Capital Region.



“The investment in KIPP DC has been one of VPP’s most successful. Susan and Allison have demonstrated unwavering commitment to KIPP DC’s mission to create and sustain the highest-performing school system focused on underserved students in Washington, D.C. KIPP DC’s hard work over the past four years has set the organization up for continued success.”

Carol Thompson Cole, VPP President and CEO

The Challenge

Almost a decade into KIPP DC's existence, the organization had proven that it could successfully educate students from low-income communities in Washington, D.C. By 2010, KIPP DC had grown to seven schools, each of which had a reputation of being among the area's best charter schools.

However, KIPP DC was quickly realizing that to have a profound impact on educational outcomes for students in Washington, D.C., it would need to continue to scale rapidly. Absent a strategic growth plan, KIPP DC was concerned that continuing to increase the number of students it served would jeopardize the caliber of education that its students received.



The Action

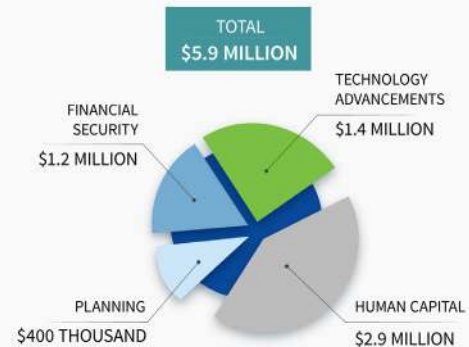
VPP began working with KIPP DC in 2010 to strengthen KIPP DC's organizational infrastructure so that it would be able to provide an outstanding education to a greater number of students from underserved communities in the region.

At the beginning of the four-year, \$5.9 million investment, VPP provided funding for KIPP DC to work with McKinsey & Company to develop a business plan. The business planning process helped KIPP DC's leadership see that the organization had the potential to scale significantly and brought to light the primary challenges the organization would face in doing so.

As John Duff, a KIPP DC board member, explained, "The business planning process gave KIPP DC the confidence to scale. We were no longer constrained by the idea that our approach to education only worked if you limited yourself to a few schools."

The business planning process brought up four important opportunities for growth, which became the focus of VPP's investment in KIPP DC: human resources, technological advancements, financial security and student, family and community engagement. KIPP DC and VPP both acknowledged that the first step toward serving more youth was proactively planning around these four opportunities.

Human Capital: KIPP DC quickly realized that to scale and remain effective, the organization needed to have a plan



Investment Breakdown

to hire more qualified individuals and develop a pipeline of talent for new and existing schools.

Technological Advancements: KIPP DC's antiquated information systems kept data related to attendance, performance on evaluations and parent contact information in different places, which made it challenging for teachers to understand how their students were really doing. Additionally, lag times in the systems negatively affected student outcomes.

Financial Security: KIPP DC recognized that serving more students and opening more schools would require a proactive plan that identified where the necessary financial resources would come from.

Student, Family and Community Engagement: In order to grow aggressively, KIPP DC needed to establish deeper relationships with local communities, including students and their families.

The Results

Mignon Pinson's 10-year old daughter is a fifth grader at KIPP DC Northeast Academy, which opened in the final year of VPP's investment. Mignon has seen the impact of a KIPP DC education firsthand. "From day one, KIPP DC struck a match for my daughter," says Mignon. "Thanks to KIPP DC, she comes home and looks at colleges and universities online, without her father and me even mentioning it. KIPP shows her what possibilities are out there and gives her the opportunity to advance toward them."

Thanks in part to VPP's investment in the school system, the Pinson family's experience with KIPP DC is not unique. VPP's investment has enabled KIPP DC to increase the number of students it serves without compromising the caliber of education it provides. Today, KIPP DC is one of the largest and highest-performing school systems in Washington, D.C.

Strengthening the Organization

From the beginning of their partnership, KIPP DC and VPP were acutely focused on the four aspects of the business planning process that were guaranteed to improve the long-term capacity of KIPP DC to provide students in Washington, D.C. with excellent educations.

Human Capital

VPP's funding allowed KIPP DC to hire the right people, not just the people they could afford to hire. KIPP DC was able to put top-notch experts in place in the organization's central office. Hiring skilled managers and experts has allowed KIPP DC's leadership to focus on the organization's strategic growth and allowed teachers and principals to focus exclusively on the students.

Investing in capable central office staff allowed KIPP DC to effectively capitalize on the opportunity to restart the Arts and Technology Academy, a D.C. charter school in need of new management and leadership. The successful reopening of the school in early 2014 made KIPP DC one of the first school systems in the national network of KIPP schools to be entrusted with a school in need of a swift turnaround.

KIPP DC's need for additional human resources also led the organization to create the Capital Teaching Residency, a teacher training program that prepares aspiring teachers to be outstanding educators in Washington, D.C. The Capital Teaching Residency allows KIPP DC to train and certify their own teachers, developing a pipeline of talent to fill KIPP DC schools and partner schools throughout D.C. The program

"VPP's contribution to KIPP DC's success is manifested in our growth. KIPP DC has more than doubled in size and is on its way to operating 15 schools and teaching 10 percent of public school students in Washington, D.C. We are a changed organization."

David Bradley,
KIPP DC Board Member
and VPP Investor

OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

ENROLLMENT

3,053 more students enrolled in KIPP DC schools.

SCHOOLS

Eight new schools in operation.

DC COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CAS)

In 2014, 77% of KIPP DC students scored proficient in Math and 59% in Reading, exceeding the state averages by 23 percentage points in Math and 10 percentage points in Reading.

AP EXAMS

Twenty four percentage point increase in scores to receive college credit.

COLLEGE MATRICULATION

Nine percent increase in college matriculation rate.

has quickly developed into a successful venture for KIPP DC; 30 percent of the teachers hired for the 2014-2015 school year were Capital Teaching Residency participants.

Technological Advancements

With VPP's support, KIPP DC was able to strengthen and expand its data management team and enhance the organization's commitment to being performance based. In collaboration with Friendship Public Charter School, another D.C. charter school, KIPP DC was able to create a transformative data warehouse that gives teachers the ability to use data in a more seamless fashion. Now, staff members across KIPP DC are better equipped to use data to improve student outcomes.

Financial Security

The business planning process that VPP initiated prompted KIPP DC to take a hard look at what financial resources the organization would need to increase the number of students it served and assess where those resources would come from. With VPP's support, KIPP DC was also able to hire four senior development personnel who have worked to ensure that the financial aspects of KIPP DC's business plan were implemented successfully.

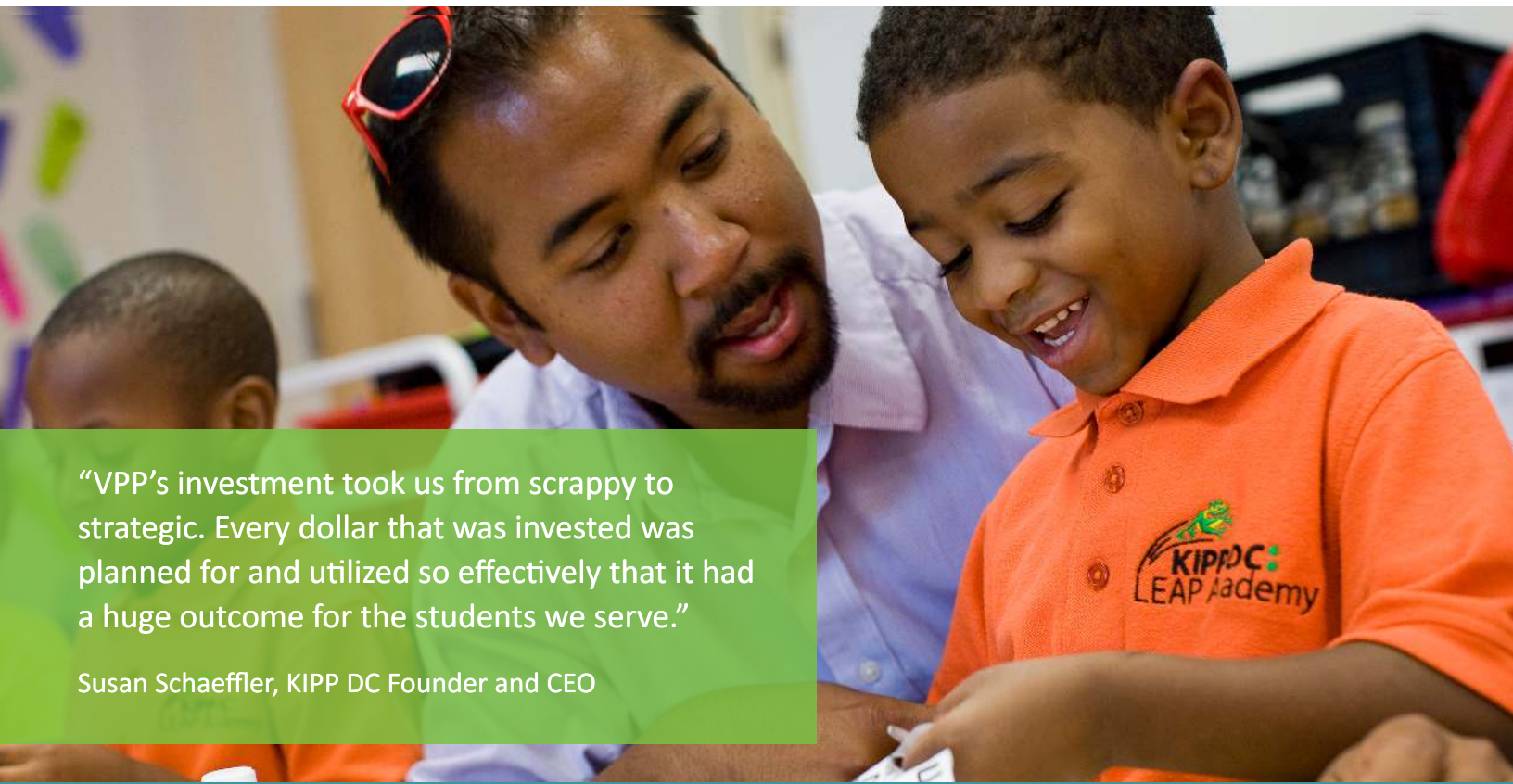
Throughout VPP's investment, KIPP DC consistently exceeded fundraising milestones for new dollars and new donors. Additionally, KIPP DC successfully secured a \$10 million Race

to the Top grant, diversifying its funding streams to include federal funds. KIPP DC's fundraising successes over the past four years help to ensure the organization will continue to have the funds it needs to provide Washington, D.C. youth with quality educations. As Terry Golden, Chairman of the KIPP DC Board of Directors said, "VPP helped us create a long-term financial plan to develop the greatest financial strength of any charter schools in the city."

Student, Family and Community Engagement

KIPP DC's plan to dramatically expand the number of students it served required the organization to engage the communities around its schools. The addition of two new staff members dedicated to community engagement helped KIPP DC build relationships with local families and community-based organizations. These relationships have strengthened KIPP DC's efforts to effectively evaluate and meet the unique needs of each community.

Local community members have been an integral part of KIPP DC's restart of the Arts and Technology Academy. Reinvigorating a school that's lost its way requires rebuilding trust among community members. Local relationships have allowed KIPP DC to hear firsthand what residents do and don't want from the school moving forward, empowering KIPP DC to make the necessary changes without compromising aspects of the school that the local community already values.



"VPP's investment took us from scrappy to strategic. Every dollar that was invested was planned for and utilized so effectively that it had a huge outcome for the students we serve."

Susan Schaeffler, KIPP DC Founder and CEO

Long-Term Impact for Students



Outcomes for Students

VPP's partnership with KIPP DC allowed the school system to grow to serve more students without compromising the quality education that each KIPP DC student receives. As John Duff said, "Today, KIPP DC is bigger and just as good." Metrics related to enrollment growth, campus and school growth, and student academic achievement all have one thing in common: KIPP DC met and exceeded the goals VPP and KIPP DC set at the beginning of the investment.

Enrollment Growth

Prior to partnering with VPP, KIPP DC was serving 1,550 students. At the end of the investment period, 4,603 students were enrolled in KIPP DC schools. As a result of VPP's work with KIPP DC, over 3,000 more students from underserved communities in Washington, D.C. are receiving a quality education.

Mignon Pinson's daughter is one such student, and Mignon knows what a difference the education she is receiving now will make in her daughter's future. "KIPP DC's mission and goals drive everything they do in their schools," says Mignon. "My daughter's teachers are committed to her entire wellbeing, and that is reflected in the education she is receiving."

Campus and School Growth

Since KIPP DC and VPP began working together, the number of KIPP DC schools has more than doubled from seven to 15 schools, including KIPP DC's first high school. Additionally, KIPP DC has grown from three to six campuses. KIPP DC now operates five early childhood schools, five elementary schools, four middle schools and one high school.

Student Academic Achievement

Over the four-year investment period, KIPP DC more than tripled the number of students it serves, while at the same time improving the quality of its schools. 87 percent of KIPP DC's students score 20 to 30 percentage points higher on annual tests than students at traditional Washington, D.C. public schools with similar demographics.

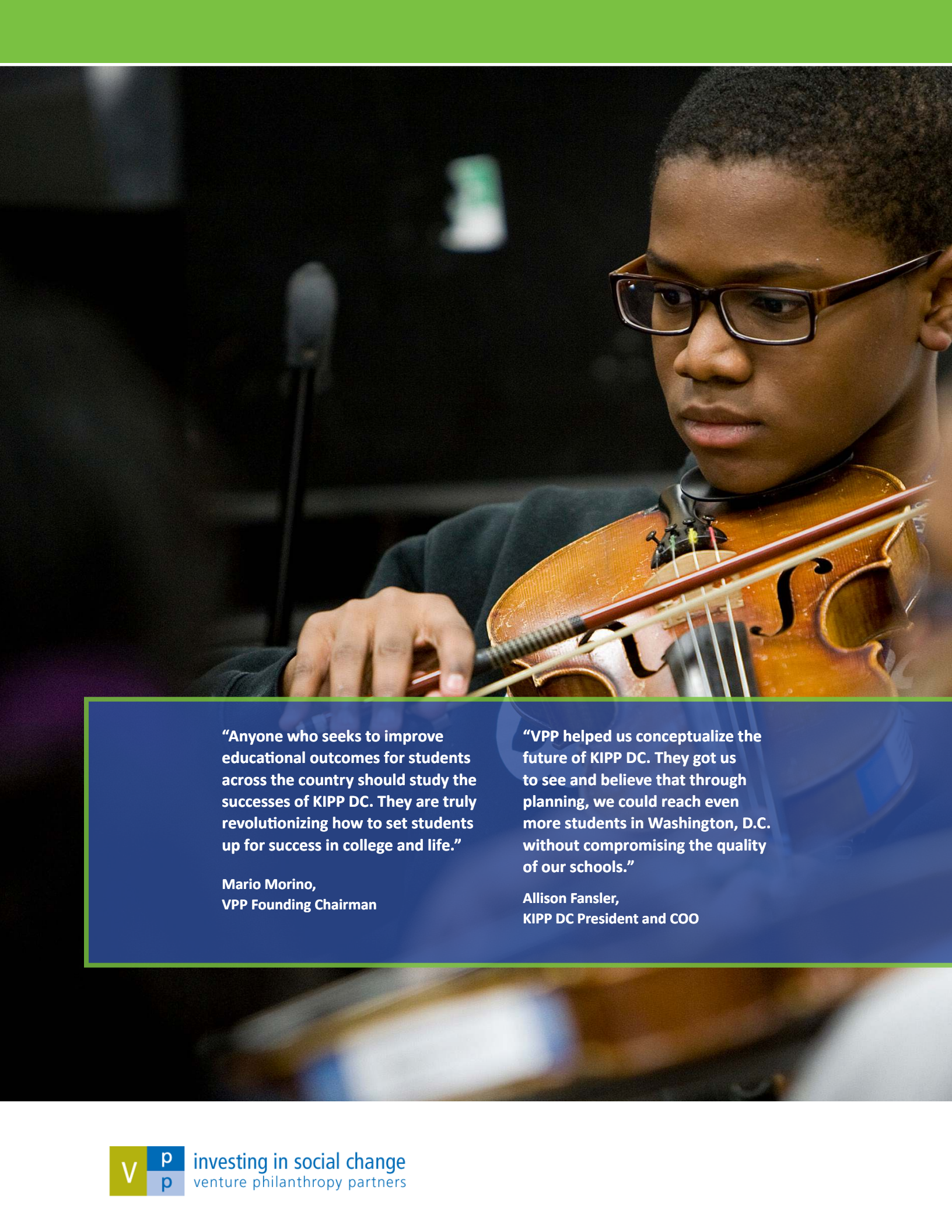
The success of KIPP DC students isn't limited to test scores. 95 percent of KIPP DC's class of 2013 received a high school diploma and 84 percent of the class went on to college, which represents a nine percent increase from the beginning of the investment.

KIPP DC's partnership with VPP and involvement in youthCONNECT also enabled the organization to expand and refine a program designed to maintain contact with KIPP DC alumni and support them through their transition to college and careers. KIPP Through College helps ensure that the success of KIPP DC students doesn't end when they graduate from high school.

As Jessica Cunningham articulated, "KIPP Through College is just as important as each school. We are all links in the chain, and when we all aren't functioning properly, the chain breaks. KIPP Through College helps kids at the hardest point, when all the structures they've grown accustomed to are gone."

Reflecting on the most rewarding aspect of her job, Jessica Cunningham says that, surprisingly, graduation isn't the time that she most looks forward to each year. Instead, Jessica most enjoys hearing from alumni about their experiences in college or on their chosen path. It's this very feedback from former KIPP DC students that allows Jessica and her colleagues to continue building on KIPP DC's successes, improving both the quality and quantity of educational opportunities for low-income students in Washington, D.C.

In the same way that Jessica uses feedback from alumni to catalyze forward momentum for her school, KIPP DC will capitalize on the successes and lessons learned from its partnership with VPP for years to come. Unencumbered by past concerns that serving more students could cripple KIPP DC's ability to effectively educate students and armed with the resources needed to continue to scale, KIPP DC is poised to continue its lasting impact on educational outcomes in Washington, D.C.

A close-up photograph of a young Black boy with short dark hair and glasses, focused on playing a violin. He is wearing a dark green long-sleeved shirt. The background is dark and out of focus, showing a microphone stand and some blurred lights.

"Anyone who seeks to improve educational outcomes for students across the country should study the successes of KIPP DC. They are truly revolutionizing how to set students up for success in college and life."

**Mario Morino,
VPP Founding Chairman**

"VPP helped us conceptualize the future of KIPP DC. They got us to see and believe that through planning, we could reach even more students in Washington, D.C. without compromising the quality of our schools."

**Allison Fansler,
KIPP DC President and COO**