

## College prep school beginning second year

By Andrea Eger

KIPP Tulsa College Preparatory will start its second year Monday celebrating a new facility and notable academic progress in its first year.

A new class of fifth-graders will begin the school's mandatory, three-week summer session, while sixth-graders will be back in school starting Wednesday.

The school moved last week into its permanent home, the old Woods Elementary School facility at 1661 E. Virgin St. The facility recently underwent a total renovation at a cost of \$2 million, all funded from a 2005 Tulsa Public Schools bond issue.

"We are so excited about the new building," Principal Millard House II said. "I've already had about 15 kids call me about how it looks -- they're anxious and ready to roll. It certainly was \$2 million well-invested by the community in Tulsa. I believe, over the next years to come, we will have students thank them with their academic progress."

Woods was an elementary school from 1965 to 1988 and then a classroom annex for nearby Booker T. Washington High School until that school got a new facility in 2003.

The Woods building's renovation included a new roof, all new windows, floor coverings and paint, new lockers and furniture, central heat and air, and asbestos removal.

Work still is being done to update the school's kitchen and to install hardwood flooring in the gymnasium.

Having a home to call its own is a vast improvement for KIPP Tulsa, which had been sharing space temporarily with two other school

programs at Lindsey Learning Academy since opening last August 2005.

The school is part of a national network of schools in the San Francisco-based Knowledge Is Power Program and is operated through a contract partnership with TPS.

KIPP Tulsa students not only commit to summer school but also to nine-hour school days, two hours of homework every night, plus Saturday school every other week during the regular academic year.



Music teacher Darius Kirk sets up his room in the new KIPP Tulsa College Preparatory school, which formerly was Woods Elementary School.

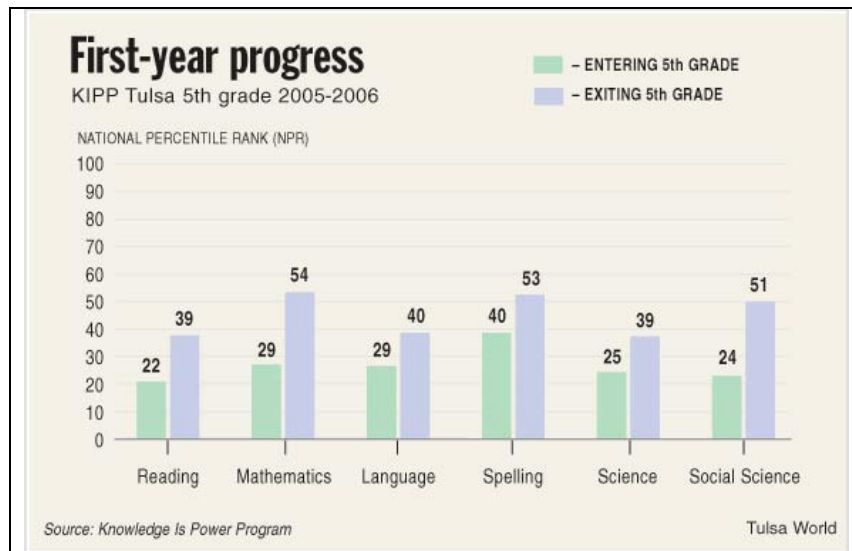
The Woods facility includes ample space for KIPP Tulsa's plan to expand into a full middle school, serving grades five through eight, by 2008.

House said the school is well on its way to delivering on its promise of preparing students from "underserved communities" in Tulsa for college.

KIPP Tulsa draws all of its students from north Tulsa, predominantly from 11 schools north of Pine Street. The majority of students in the school's first group of fifth-graders arrived last summer performing well-below grade level in core subjects such as math, reading and science. But House is eagerly awaiting the results of Oklahoma state-mandated standardized tests, which are due in mid-July.

He received the results of standardized tests sponsored by the Knowledge Is Power Program last week, showing that last year's students made even more progress than he had hoped for during their first year at KIPP Tulsa.

The fifth-graders were given the Stanford Achievement Test 10 -- which shows how they compared with other students across the country who took the same test -- at the beginning and end of the school year, so school officials could track their progress.



KIPP Tulsa students went from the 22nd to the 39th percentile nationally in reading and from the 29th to the 54th percentile nationally in math.

House equates the progress in terms of school years. He said he had hoped students would make about one year and six months' worth of progress during 2005-06, but the Stanford 10 results indicate that their progress was equal to one year and eight months.

"If we do this over the course of the next two to three years, we will definitely be able to deliver on the promise we made to these families," House said.

The test results also showed that the percentage of KIPP Tulsa students performing at grade level in reading and math had doubled by the end of the year and nearly quadrupled in science, said Steve Mancini, a spokesman for the KIPP Foundation.

"The students at KIPP Tulsa are 'raising the bar' for the entire KIPP network of schools nationwide," he said. "KIPP Tulsa's fifth-graders' gains in reading and mathematics are above average for first-year KIPP schools. This achievement is a testament to the dedicated teachers and students."

Mancini said KIPP Foundation officials are impressed with the Tulsa school's new facility and hopeful for the continued support of the program by its local sponsor, TPS.

"We at KIPP are grateful to Tulsa Public Schools for providing access to the newly renovated school facility," he said. "We hope KIPP Tulsa continues to receive the funding and freedom necessary to keep its students on the road to college and a better future."