
Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by intoeyes2001 - 2008/04/04 07:49

Info from Kindezi School

Hello! My name is Kathleen Jones, and I am involved with the Kindezi School, a group that is applying through Atlanta Public Schools to become a public charter school. Kindezi School would be a K-8 charter school in West End, opening its doors in Fall of 2009. This school would be the first of its kind-- class sizes of only six students per teacher, teachers using the tutorial method in order to individualize instruction, and a focus on leadership and the arts. You can read more about the Kindezi School model at <http://www.kindezi.org>.

The Kindezi team wants to show Atlanta Public Schools that we have parent interest and community support. If you are a potentially-interested parent of a child aged 3 to 7, would you take two minutes to click on the following link and sign the petition of interest? There is nothing binding in signing it-- you're just expressing interest.

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/Kindeziparent/>

If you are a local community member and just want to express support for the idea, take a second to click on the following link and sign on!

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/kindezischool/>

Thanks for your show of support, and I'll keep you posted on the progress of the school.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Jones

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by VirtualM - 2008/04/04 16:24

As a parent, I'm fully behind this. When we bought our home in West End, we started exploring education options and then decided that we might only be able to live in the area for a few years due various issues with public schools. This is great because it gives parents options for education. I want to invest in the neighborhood for as long as possible, but I also have to think about my child's future and well-being. I would like to invest in the local public schools, but at this point, I'm nervous about them and my son's ability to thrive there and I know that many others feel the same way. If a decent charter school opened up its doors, I think it would attract many more young families into the area - just see what it's done for Grant Park (a neighborhood we considered but house prices were well out of our range.) Please sign the petition!

I just wish they would've come to our neighborhood sooner...I almost feel like visiting West End was a bit of a last resort as doing a bit of online research shows that Kindezi school has canvassed other neighborhoods for quite some time - this is the second time they've submitted the charter to the school board, so they've been at it for at least two years. I would love to hear why they're just now coming to West End from someone involved with the school. Or have they come before and I'm just new to everything?

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by kathleenj - 2008/04/08 11:55

Yes, Kindezi School will be a great schooling option for West End parents. As for our presence in West End, we have only recently been talking with the pastor at West Hunter Street Baptist Church on Ralph David Abernathy about possibly using their space for our facility. Before that, we were looking at other facilities in southwest Atlanta, but this possibility has risen to the top. So, we will be continuing to attend local meetings and will keep everyone posted about our pending approval. Thank you for your enthusiastic endorsement!

Kathleen Jones

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by cubana - 2008/04/08 15:30

Kathleen, I was at the meeting.

Would you explain the following

- 1) how is it possible to keep the ratio 6:1.
- 2) I heard there is no exam taking as this school is this true. If so, how are the students evaluated.
- 3) Also some of the charter school in West End give preference to West Enders, is your school willing to give us preference?

Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by kathleenj - 2008/04/08 20:58

Hello,

Thanks for your thoughtful questions about Kindezi School. I will address all three questions/concerns that you bring up:

- 1) How can Kindezi School afford a 6:1 student-teacher ratio?

In order to make class sizes as small as possible, we will use a "trimmed down" administrative model in which our school administration will consist of a principal, business manager, and administrative assistant. All other staff will be classroom teachers. Teachers will teach two subject areas to classes of six on Monday through Thursday, and students will be in a "large class" environment on Fridays with a 24:1 student-teacher ratio. This will allow 75% of teachers (on a rotating basis) to use Fridays for professional development and assisting in administrative duties. Also, classroom teachers will coordinate and implement "specials" classes such as art, p.e., music, etc. This may seem like a daunting amount of work for teachers, but given that teachers will be working with small groups of students and will have planning time built into every school day, we feel that educators will be very excited about the model.

Having a small administrative staff is the key to paying more teachers' salaries and, therefore, creating smaller classes. Many public schools have a student-staff ratio that is close to 6:1, but their student-teacher ratio is more like 25:1. We feel that a drastic departure from the structural norm is what it will take to create an innovative and effective school.

- 2) Will Kindezi School participate in standardized testing?

As is required by state and federal law for all charter schools, Kindezi School students will take the annual Georgia CRCT and Writing Tests. While we will not be "teaching to the test", we feel that the data feedback from the CRCT and other standardized tests will provide us with valuable information about the overall effectiveness of our program, and given our model, we expect for all students to meet and exceed state standards. As for assessment on a day-to-day basis, all teachers will be expected to utilize both formal and informal assessments in the classroom in order to gauge student progress and drive instruction.

- 3) Will children of West End residents be given preference for Kindezi School enrollment?

As our application stands, Kindezi School's primary attendance zone will be NPUs T, S, R and I, all of which lie in southwest Atlanta. Our choice to have a broad primary attendance zone is due to both a lack of total certainty about our school facility (the West Hunter Street Baptist Church facility has only been a recent possibility) and a broad base of support from various neighborhood associations in southwest Atlanta. Our selected attendance zones have been submitted to Atlanta Public Schools along with our charter school application, but we would certainly welcome any questions or feedback on the issue.

Our charter school application is currently being reviewed by APS and we will receive an answer from them by mid- to late-May. I will continue to check the WEND forum for any other questions people have about our school model.

Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by ewelina - 2008/04/08 21:36

Kathleen,

As a future parent, I am really excited about your school.
How many students is your school looking to accommodate?
How many classrooms are you going to lease from the church? Can you describe the facility that you will have available?

Also, I would like to let everybody know that Dean Leeper (the co-founder) will be at the NPU-T meeting tomorrow to seek its approval. Please come to the meeting and have all your questions answered, so we can make conscious decision.
I realize that due to time limitation the School was not able to have any official presentation before WEND Body. I believe this can be made up at the NPU-T meeting tomorrow.

PLEASE COME as educational options are one of the most important factors for West End.

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by cubana - 2008/04/09 00:26

Kathleen,

You did not specify what kind of evaluations will be done. Since I went to a traditional school I cannot visual the concept of a non testing school. Please help me out.

The members of WEND are having a discussion on our other website about this school and one of the things that keep occurring is that we dont have enough information. Is there some other way to get information on the Kindezi school without going to your website?

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by kathleenj - 2008/04/09 08:20

Kindezi School would have 24 students per grade and be a kindergarten through eighth grade school, with an ultimate total of 216 students. In our first year of operation we would have 96 students (K-3), and would add on a grade level each year until we are at full capacity.

As for the facility, I don't want to speak too much about it yet, since we still need to go through a formal approval process with members of the church. However, I will say that the amount of empty potential classroom space is more than enough to accommodate our facility needs.

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by cubana - 2008/04/09 08:43

Kathleen, I am dont think my questions were answered.

- 1) How are students eval if no tests are given
- 2) Is there somewhere else we can go to find out about the school without going to the website

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by deanleeper - 2008/04/09 09:21

Hi cubana,
I'm sorry you were under the impression that there will be no exam-taking at Kindezi School. That is false. As a charter school Kindezi School will be subject to No Child Left Behind. Therefore, our students will be tested as much as students in traditional schools. Those tests include the CRCT, ITBS, the Georgia Writing Assessment, and more.

There is nowhere on-line you can do to find out more about the school other than our website. However, I'd be happy to send you more information. There is a 10 page summary of our charter school petition and then there is the petition itself which is over 200 pages. If you'd like me to send me those please just e-mail me at deankeeper@kindezi.org and I'll reply with those documents attached.

Dean

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by ewelina - 2008/04/09 09:32

Hi Dean,

Thanks for your answer. I was wondering about financing your operation because I know that your school is going to be tuition-free. How is it going to be financed then? Do you have any commitments from any corporations or foundations to support you?

I am new to the idea of charter schools but I have heard a lot of positive things about them.

Thanks,

Ewelina

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by cubana - 2008/04/09 09:44

Ewelina,

This is great question and thank you for answering me other question. I have signed the petition.

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by deankeeper - 2008/04/09 09:45

Hi Ewelina,

Charter schools are financed in basically the same way that public schools are financed. Most of our revenue comes from Atlanta property taxes and slightly less than half comes from the Georgia tax revenues. We do not have any strong relationships with any corporations.

We should receive over \$10,000 per student.

To clarify on something Kathleen wrote earlier, I will be at the NPU meeting tonight but I haven't been invited to present. I'd be happy and eager to speak with people individually who have questions though.

Dean

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by ewelina - 2008/04/09 10:05

Dean,

Is your project sustainable only based on financing from city taxes and Georgia tax revenue or you will have to go out and look for donations? I guess, you will welcome any donations - am I right?

I guess, my question is, will you be able to start and thrive just on government financing?

How does your financing relates to public schools in the area?

Thank you

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by deanleeper - 2008/04/09 10:45

Start up financing is available through the federal government. We will receive a \$400,000 federal implementation grant. That will allow us to purchase furniture, hire staff during the pre-operational year, purchase books, etc. We will also apply for foundation grants and individual donations. You're right, we will always eagerly accept donations. Our five year budget does not project that we will be very successful at fundraising. Yet it is a sustainable budget.

I'm not sure what you mean by "How does your financing relate to public schools in the area." If you are wondering whether our presence will reduce funding for local public schools I would say this: with just 24 students per grade, we will be a pretty small school. We will not noticeably affect the financial landscape of APS by ourselves. It is true, however, that any family that chooses Kindezi School over a traditional public school would reduce funding for the public school they would have attended. However, any family that chooses Kindezi School over a private school actually increases money and support for public education, since Kindezi School will be a public school. I argue that since the families are paying the taxes to support education, they should have a say in how that money is spent. Charter schools give them some control over that money by offering choices.

Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by Decon of the painful true - 2008/04/10 23:08

Yes I am going to say it, is this another school that is going to teach our youth to be starving artists. I want these kids to be given skills that will make them productive citizens of society. Yes I know that art is good for learning at an early age but later in the education process I am swayed against teaching art and more toward real life marketable skills. These are my thoughts and I welcome all of yours. I just ask that you bring it on with facts, studies and rational. I can be swayed in favor of this school if I can be convinced. I must admit though that the government schools in Atlanta are a failure. When the drop out rate for blacks is 50% all people should be up in arms. I was appauled to hear that the number of prison cells needed is figured out by the number of 3rd graders that do not know how to read. These children need to be given a chance to live productive lives. Get involved in the pta or make sure that this school or any school that is looking to open up in our area is looking out for the childrens best interest and not in getting grant money from the government or money for non profits that act only as a vehicles for getting more money for their teachers. Don't get me wrong, I am not accusing this school in doing this but I also am not telling any one to question the motivations to do so. Why not is Buckhead, midtown or east atlanta?

I may be negative but I am so mad that children are constantly being used as pawns by politicians to collect taxes and then do something else with the money. I believe thAT the TAD would have froze Property taxes and then used any increase in the taxes to go toward the Beltline project for a number of years. There would have been 880 million dollars taken away from the schools to fund the beltline. Don't get me wrong, at this point I would be in favor of giving the money to the beltline and not to the ineffective, criminal producing government school system. Stop crying everyone I did not say everyone or all but it is a very big percentage.

I could rant and rave but I will look forward to defending my viewpoints and I will graciously admit where I have been factually wrong. I welcome your feed back with out resentment. Win me over and set me straight.

Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by deanleeper - 2008/04/11 10:52

Hello Decon,

I'm not going to try to "set you straight" because I think you are entitled to your opinion. I will just say that our leadership and arts focus is only a part of our educational plan and that we do not intend to push students towards a career in the arts. We simply aim to develop creativity, which, since it is not tested by standardized tests, is often neglected. You can rest assured that, with just six students per class and an emphasis on tutorial, we are also going to teach our students reading, writing, and arithmetic with excellence. That's a promise.

Thanks for your input and please keep the dialogue going.

Re:Kindezi School - Charter School Meeting

Posted by ewelina - 2008/04/12 11:33

KINDEZI CHARTER SCHOOL MEETING!!!!!!

We are going to have a meeting with people from Kindezi Charter School tomorrow at 12 pm at the Grounds Coffee Shop. (Sunday, 04/12/2008).

They would like to meet with all interested residents, answer our questions, and listen to our concerns.

They would like to open the charter school in our neighborhood in 2009 and their application is still pending with APS.

Our support would help them get their application approved by APS.

If you are interested, please come...

Their program may be a great educational option for our kids!!!!!!!

THE OUTCOME OF THE MEETING WILL BE PASSED TO WEND AS OUR RECOMMENDATION.

See you tomorrow.

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School Meeting

Posted by Decon of the painful true - 2008/04/12 15:19

I would like to tell everyone that the coffee house is a for profit business. This family that took a chance on us neighbors to patronize them is profit driven. All that I ask is that everyone buy something or give at least a dollar donation so that this wonderful family can continue to give us a clean, eclectic ,friendly venue to have these meetings. I look forward to being at the meeting and being a part of the decision process of this school.

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by VirtualM - 2008/04/14 19:01

I attended the school board meeting tonight where Kindezi school spoke before the board. I was one of several people that showed up in support of the charter school initiative and I hope that the board decides to view the charter favorably. (More importantly, I hope that my highly disruptive son wasn't viewed as a negative!) Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard on putting this school together - I only wish that I had known about it sooner. I think that anyone who takes a genuine, active interest in the children of West End should be welcomed and I hope that this is a springboard for increased community interest and involvement in education initiatives of any capacity (not just with The Kindezi School.)

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by kathleenj - 2008/04/14 20:41

Thanks so much for attending, and what better place to have a verbal child than a school board meeting?! We are grateful to have found our way to the WEND community, especially because of the intense interest and attention you have paid to our efforts. We will keep you informed of any news we hear about APS decisions about Kindezi School, and please keep in touch.

Kathleen

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by intoeyes2001 - 2008/04/14 21:23

Kathleen and Dean,

Good luck to you guys... I hope your application gets approved and we will see you in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, my expected son did not let me be at the meeting... One of these days:(

Ewelina

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by VirtualM - 2008/05/08 23:17

Are there any updates from the Kindezi people? It was announced that someone would present at the next NPU-T meeting, but I'm not sure if I can make it.

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by cubana - 2008/05/09 07:39

I only know they went in front of APS. I think it went ok, but Katheen will probably answer this question. The NPU agenda has not been sent yet.

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Re:Kindezi School - Charter School

Posted by cubana - 2008/05/09 08:34

Make a call, they are on the adgenda this coming Wednesday. Please come out to support.

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Kindezi School update

Posted by kathleenj - 2008/05/09 15:39

Hi there,

Kathleen Jones here. A quick update about Kindezi School-- the APS school board votes this next Monday, May 12 yay or nay for final approval of our charter school (and a number of others). We are encouraged by the signs and will post to this website as soon as we know APS's official answer!

Kathleen

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Kindezi School charter approved by APS!

Posted by kathleenj - 2008/05/13 10:51

Hi WEND members,

Kathleen Jones here, with Kindezi School. I have great news! Last night at the APS Board of Education legislative meeting, the board voted unanimously to approve our charter petition (along with one other KIPP school). That means that Kindezi School will be opening its doors in August of 2009 to students in grades K-3, and will add a grade level each year until we are a K-8 school. Dean Leeper and I will make every attempt to attend the next WEND meeting to give you more details.

Many thanks to WEND for your curiosity about and support of Kindezi School. You helped us to prove that we have community support, which was a critical part of our application.

More soon,
Kathleen Jones

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Re:Kindezi School charter approved by APS!

Posted by VirtualM - 2008/05/13 11:59

Kathleen,

Congratulations! I'm so happy for you guys because I know how hard you've worked on your charter, and I'm also excited for our neighborhood! Please let me know what I can do to help from here on out - I'm fairly available and would love to be involved!

Mary

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Re:Kindezi School charter approved by APS!

Posted by ewelina - 2008/05/14 15:58

Congratulations to you guys. I and Darek are very excited about your school. Let me know if I can help. I would love to get involved, too.

Ewelina

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Kindezi School - UPDATE

Posted by intoeyes2001 - 2008/07/26 15:02

Dear Kindezi School supporters,

Greetings, and we hope that this email finds you well. We have had a busy and productive few months with Kindezi School, and I want to update you on how you can become involved during this crucial pre-operation year. First, however, let me summarize a few exciting pieces of news since our Atlanta Public Schools charter school approval in May:

* As of this week, we are in the final stages of negotiating a lease and facility partnership with West Hunter Street Baptist Church in Historic West End (1040 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd, 30310). This wonderfully-located church has ample space on their building's third floor for a thriving school, and they are also open to us utilizing their dining room and gymnasium as well. Last night, on 7/22, the church's Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees voted to approve the proposed facility partnership. <http://westhunterstreetbaptist.org/>

* We have solidified our Founding Board with 11 members either representing the southwest Atlanta community or contributing as area educators. In our initial meeting, we have identified the following five focus areas for the next year: facility, fundraising, curriculum/instruction, strategic planning (marketing), and hiring. After forming task-forces in these five areas, we will be asking you, our active community, to get involved and help us make progress in these areas.

* Given our probable location in West End, we have begun approaching various organizations about community partnerships with Kindezi School, including the Wren's Nest, historic home of Joel Chandler Harris (next door to the church facility). Lain Shakespeare, executive director of the Wren's Nest, is excited to partner with our school by providing access to their beautiful grounds, encouraging their storytellers to work with our students, and eventually helping our students develop their own newspaper and blog publications. Very exciting! <http://www.wrensonline.com/>

While there is exciting progress underway, we have miles to go before we rest! That's where you come in. We will be holding our first Kindezi Team organizational meeting in early September after the start of the public school academic year. I will send out a final date and time for the meeting in mid-August. At that meeting, we will ask you to evaluate how you can best utilize your time, resources, and expertise for Kindezi School as we prepare to open our doors in August of 2009. Please respond with a general idea of whether a weeknight or weekend-day meeting would work better for you.

I am now working full-time as Kindezi School's "implementation coordinator", so don't hesitate to email me with any thoughts or questions. Keep spreading the word, and I look forward to seeing you in September!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Jones
www.kindezi.org

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Re:Kindezi School - UPDATE

Posted by cubana - 2008/07/26 17:58

I am happy to hear that. I know many in the neighborhood will be happy as well. Please keep in contact with WEND. Also, I am sure there are parents here that would love to be on your board.

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