The Problem
Each year, Houston’s best-known schools are forced to wait-list hundreds of students as the demand for a quality education far exceeds their capacity. In 2011 alone, KIPP and YES Prep charter schools had to turn away more than 12,000 students. However, there are many school options from which parents can choose, including lesser known district, charter and private schools (many of which offer specialized services, transportation and strong academic records). Unfortunately, parents are unaware of additional options, how to access them or how to determine which school is the best fit for their child. As a result, the news of being wait-listed, coupled with a lack of knowledge regarding how to engage in Houston’s education system, often creates a sense of powerlessness, thwarting parental efforts to secure their child’s future.

Vision and Mission
FamiliesEmpowered believes that by educating and guiding parents through the school choice process, we create an educated consumer base confident in its ability to make informed decisions for their children as well as in their ability to engage with the education system to elevate the quality of product offered. This is demand-side education reform.

What began as a singular service to support the families of the 12,000 wait-listed KIPP and YES Prep applicants now includes support for any Houston parent searching for the “right fit” school. FamiliesEmpowered has created online, phone-based, and in-person systems which help families:

- Learn effective parental roles and how to identify their children’s academic needs;
- Evaluate and identify schools to determine those best able to meet their needs;
- Engage schools to assure college-bound progress for their children and;
- Actively pursue the school(s) of their choice.

FamiliesEmpowered favors no single school or school model and as such, works with all area schools to find the best fit for parents. As parents learn of their school options, their role in the education of their children, and their shared plight with neighbors, social connections increase, social capital grows, and bottom-up pressure for local school improvement builds. Our work appropriately brings parents into the center of education reform and fosters the demand-side pressure necessary to sustain ongoing improvement in school quality.

For more information, please contact:
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