

KIPP K-8 Literacy Instructional Vision

Overview

The creation of the KIPP Literacy Instructional Vision is the result of the work of teachers and instructional leaders in the KIPP network as well as members of the KIPP Foundation who comprised the Instructional Vision Team. The formation of the team was in direct response to the needs of the KIPP network. The combination of variability among schools and regions, the fact that 81% of teachers report developing their own unit plans, the needs of new teachers, and the adoption of the Common Core State Standards led the call to action. This vision was developed to help guide a partnership with third-party publishers to provide KIPP teachers in grades K-8 with access to robust curricular resources, associated professional development, and recommendations for school-wide structures and conditions that support achievement in literacy.

Partnership with a publisher could mean adoption of off-the shelf products, co-development of materials specifically for KIPP, or further development of existing resources such as the Featured Teacher curriculum. It's essential that the experiences and wisdom of KIPP teachers and leaders, current research, and clear alignment with the CCSS guide the curricular decisions we make for our kids. This high-level vision reflects the beliefs, experiences, and knowledge of KIPP teachers and leaders and will serve as the foundation for the Instructional Vision Team's decision making.

Core Beliefs

We believe in a balanced approach to literacy. Students need independent, guided, and shared reading, as well as daily read alouds¹ and time for word study.

We believe that every teacher is a reading teacher. Reading, writing, and vocabulary development have to be integrated across the content areas for students to make the reading growth required for them to be college and career-ready, as well as engaged citizens.

Foundational skills, including phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition, print concepts, and fluency, are key components of learning to read. In the early grades, this is a foundational part of the reading curriculum. For students in upper elementary and middle school who are below grade-level, developing these skills can be an essential part of intervention depending on students' needs.

Frequent and systematic vocabulary instruction in all content areas is essential to students' development as readers, writers, and speakers. Students need to significantly expand their vocabulary each school year to access complex texts, improve comprehension, and enhance their writing and speaking contributions.

¹ Read alouds only apply to elementary literacy instruction.

Students need authentic opportunities to make meaning of and interact with texts both as a reader and a writer during the school day. Teachers need to engage students with texts in ways that both honor authors' purposes and students' backgrounds and experiences. Writing tasks should build on these reading experiences in relevant and meaningful ways.

Students grow as readers when they have extensive practice with both literary and informational texts in their zone of actual development (independent level) as well as in their zone of proximal development (instructional level/CCSS recommended levels). In order for students to meet the demands of the Common Core Standards and demands of college-level texts, they need to have significant opportunities to grapple with both fiction and non-fiction texts that are beyond their skill levels and interests and also read voluminously at their instructional levels.

Teaching reading is an interdisciplinary effort and applying background knowledge during and after reading enhances reading comprehension in all subjects. Acquiring knowledge on wide variety of topics and disciplines equips students to access texts at more rigorous levels. Students need to constantly access this prior knowledge while they read to reach these levels of comprehension.

Teaching reading is an art and science and doing it well requires ongoing support and professional development for teachers. School leaders need to prioritize literacy as a school-wide effort, continuously driving the cultivation of knowledge, skills, and mindsets required of excellent literacy instruction.

Student Habits

In order for our beliefs to be a reality in the classroom, we must foster specific habits in KIPP students. Our definition of habit is that it is a tendency or disposition. Students develop habits through explicit teaching and need frequent opportunities to practice with positive reinforcement, feedback, and support. These habits, which reflect many of the Common Core Anchor Standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, as well as highly predictive character strengths, support students in becoming college and career ready.

KIPP students are skilled readers:

- Students read at school for at least 100 minutes each day.
- Students regularly seek out opportunities to read outside of school.
- Students ask questions about text's content and structure.
- Students use prior knowledge to make inferences about texts.
- Students distinguish between important and non-important information within a text.
- Students document mental processing of text through annotations.
- Students show perseverance in reading challenging texts.

- Students' are metacognitive when they read, allowing them to recognize when comprehension breaks down.
- Students paraphrase and summarize sections of text to strengthen literal understanding.
- Students use word parts and context clues to determine meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Students re-read challenging sections of text to ensure understanding.
- Students consult other texts, resources, or reference materials to enhance understanding of text.
- Students draw connections between one or more texts.
- Students draw connections between a text and universal ideas.
- Students determine how literary and structural elements of a text contribute to its meaning.
- Students determine the central ideas of a text and evaluate its overall significance or merit.
- Students can share their reading level and growth goals at all times and are invested in progress.

KIPP students are skilled writers:

- Students write to improve understanding of what they think, read, and hear.
- Students regularly seek out opportunities to write outside of school.
- Students demonstrate command of standard English when appropriate.
- Students use precise and concise language to explain thinking.
- Students support claims with relevant and sufficient evidence as well as logical reasoning.
- Students demonstrate breadth of thinking by drawing on a wide variety of literary and informational sources for support.
- Students demonstrate depth of thinking by considering inter/intra-disciplinary connections and alternative viewpoints.
- Students adapt their tone according to context, purpose, and audience.
- Students describe experiences or events using relevant and sufficient details and coherent event sequences.
- Students can independently engage in the stages of the writing process when given a writing task: researching, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing.

KIPP students are skilled speakers:

- Students demonstrate command of standard English when appropriate.
- Students use precise and concise language to explain thinking.
- Students actively listen to, acknowledge, build upon, and question the perspectives of others.
- Students support claims with relevant and sufficient evidence as well as logical reasoning.
- Students demonstrate breadth of thinking by drawing on a wide variety of literary and informational sources for support.
- Students demonstrate depth of thinking by considering inter/intra-disciplinary connections and alternative viewpoints.
- Without prompting, students regularly make contributions that enhance discussion and deepen understanding.

- Students pronounce words correctly, and use appropriate volume, tone, body language, and eye contact.

Teacher Habits

We believe teacher actions impact student actions. For students to develop the habits necessary for success in college-preparatory ELA classes, teachers must explicitly support students in developing these habits through their teaching.

KIPP teachers have a deep understanding of their content

- Teachers can explain with absolute clarity what the standards for their grade-level expect students to understand, know, and do by the end of the year.
- Teachers can explain how concepts relate to those that were previously taught and those that are still to come.
- Teachers can map standards into a coherent year-long progression acknowledging rigor of standards and skill levels of students.
- Teachers can make effective text selections based on standards, complexity measures, and skill levels of students.
- Teachers are readers and writers themselves, continuously developing their own content knowledge and understanding of what good readers and readers do.
- Teachers recognize what they don't know, and continuously seek opportunities to deepen content knowledge.

KIPP teachers are careful and resourceful planners

- Teachers leverage the literacy and curriculum resources available to them and build upon and internalize them as often as possible rather than reinventing the wheel.
- Teachers closely read and intimately know the texts they put in front of students.
- Teachers choose literary and informational texts that are authentic, high-interest, culturally relevant, and at the appropriate levels of complexity at grade level.
- Teachers balance literary and informational texts for their grade-levels as recommended by the CCSS.
- Teachers plan questions aligned to the Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening that isolate misunderstanding and promote student discourse.
- Teachers build significant time into their literacy blocks for students to read and write independently.
- Teachers plan to address the needs of students in all quartiles through individually conferencing, and strategic integration of different learning modalities.
- Teachers integrate a variety of different learning modalities into instruction to match the learning styles of their students.

KIPP teachers employ a balanced literacy approach

- Teachers explicitly help students make connections between skills, content, and real-life application.

- Teachers across grade levels use a consistent and systematic approach to vocabulary that includes the explicit and differentiated study of Greek and Latin roots, word parts, and high-leverage academic vocabulary.
- Teachers across grade levels use a consistent and systematic approach to grammar instruction that involves direct instruction and practice in the context of reading, writing, and speaking.
- Teachers plan interactive read alouds, shared reading, close reading, and guided reading lessons modeling strategies and habits of a good reader and support students in applying these in their own independent reading to ensure student transfer.
- Teachers use consistent methods and language to teach phonics, spelling, and word study across grade-levels.
- Teachers use a balance of whole group, small group, and partner groupings for literacy instruction to meet individual needs of students.
- Teachers gradually model reading skills in order to help students develop a repertoire of strategies they can use independently to make meaning of texts and to write effectively.

KIPP teachers use data to drive instruction

- Teachers use quantitative and qualitative measures to select texts for a variety of purposes.
- Teachers use reader-task considerations in measuring their expected performance.
- Teachers regularly use reliable formative and summative assessments to ascertain a student's skill level in reading, writing, and speaking.
- Teachers use assessment data to track student progress, to inform future lesson content, and to determine appropriate intervention and extension strategies.
- Teachers regularly inform students and their families of student progress towards reading goals.

Enabling Conditions

In order for beliefs, student habits, and teacher habits to thrive, there are enabling conditions that must be present in a school setting.

Content-specific professional development is prioritized by the school's leadership

- Teachers receive ongoing professional development on all components of balanced literacy, the purpose and structure of each (independent, shared, guided reading, read aloud, etc.) and how the components are integrated. Professional development includes workshops, coaching, and professional learning community (PLC) activities led by an experienced literacy teacher or instructional leader. Schools also provide professional development to support the reading, writing, and language strands of the CCSS
- Coaching of literacy teachers is done by individuals with extensive literacy content knowledge and knowledge of how students learn to read.
- Weekly Instructional Planning Sessions (45-60 minutes): Common planning time is provided for literacy teachers on a weekly basis with a combination of lesson planning and lesson study, data analysis, and review of instructional practices and materials. This should be

configured at both the grade level and a grade span (K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8) in order to support vertical alignment.

- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in all content areas meet quarterly to analyze formative and summative assessment data, make informed instructional decisions based on literacy research and Common Core requirements.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) conduct quarterly classroom observations to analyze the student impact of instructional decisions and collectively revise instructional strategies to optimize student outcomes.

School schedules are conducive to high-quality literacy instruction

- 2 Hour Literacy Block: Teachers organize instructional hours to maximize learning opportunities. A ELA block should including two hours of reading, writing and word study. Where possible, other core content subjects are also scheduled in extended blocks that provide for literacy skills across the curriculum in an integrated model of instruction so that students can apply these core literacy skills to their independent work.
- Schools methodically integrate foundational literacy habits and skills across grade levels and across the content areas.
- Schools provide structured reading intervention services for students who are not meeting benchmarks. RTI practices include a comprehensive model with prevention, intervention, and ongoing support in small group and one-on-one settings across the grade levels.

Teachers have access to exemplary curricular resources that reflect alignment to the Common Core State Standards and the instructional shifts.

- Teachers have access to high-quality curricular materials, including scopes & sequences, assessments, unit plans, lesson plans, and student assignments. KIPP teachers do not have to reinvent the wheel.
- Teachers have access to an abundance of literary and informational texts to support and enhance their curricula.
- Schools maintain large classroom libraries in all content areas with a variety of literary and informational texts that are high-interest, culturally relevant, and span multiple reading levels.
- Schools have leveled libraries for guided reading instruction.
- Schools have print-rich classrooms and hallways with walls that teach and intentionally reflect the literacy learning.
- Schools provide technology for blended learning models.

School leadership prioritizes and promotes a school-wide culture of literacy

- Whole school rituals and routines regularly build in opportunities for students and staff to showcase reading, writing, and speaking skills.
- School regularly provides enrichment opportunities for students to showcase reading, writing, and speaking skills outside of school.
- The school staff consistently models joyful reading, writing, and speaking.

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