



# ● KIPP FRAMEWORK FOR ● EXCELLENT TEACHING

# Why do we have a KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching?

## 1. We teach in schools, not classrooms.

This seems like a nonsense statement until you consider all the mindset shifts necessary to break away from the traditional vision of teachers as islands. The purpose of this statement is to acknowledge that teachers do a significant amount of work outside the classroom walls with parents, fellow teachers, and leaders. This argument is not just a paean to the value of collaboration; it is the challenge of Baldwin's quote "The children are always ours, every single one of them." If we teach in schools and not classrooms then it matters just as much how kids are in the classroom down the hall and in all the grades to come.

## 2. We teach on a PreK to 16 continuum.

Faced with the brutal facts that college completion and career success is an exponentially harder and more important outcome than just annual test scores or even college acceptance, our mission has shifted from to college to through college. The change of preposition marks a profound change in our thinking. We realize that the outcomes our kids deserve necessitate continuously strong teaching from the time our kids are four until they are twenty-two. An excellent KIPP classroom is not a catapult that sends a kid shooting off to college (and landing who knows where) but part of a bridge. And all of our excellent teaching revolves around seeing that continuum and approaching each interaction with our children with, an urgent patience, an understanding of what lies ahead of them, but also an absolutely insane focus on accomplishing the most we can with the moment in front of us.

## 3. Joy is a means and end in education.

Joy is more than a tool for increased engagement. Joy is what it means to teach and learn in our schools. Joy appears in myriad ways across the PreK-16 continuum but is palpable in every excellent classroom. It is not simply something you do in a hook to jazz kids up for a lesson. Joy is infused throughout the very act of teaching and learning. Literally we think our job is so fun that people should have their noses pressed up against the glass on the classroom door wanting to see our kids learn. Kids should enjoy school so much that they can't imagine missing a day and attendance rules become unnecessary.

## 4. We need a platform for sharing and innovation.

The iPhone unleashed thousands of programmers to share bite-sized, useful tools. Suddenly you could find gluten free restaurants, solve equations, and identify bird calls with your phone. Right now a school leader in New Orleans might be leading an amazing professional development session about questioning that isn't easily shared with the principal in Los Angeles. We hope the Framework becomes a common language for talking about extraordinary teaching that facilitates a similar wave of problem-solving and sharing amongst teachers and leaders. Ideally KIPP Share starts to feel like the app store where problem-solving tools for improving teaching are shared, used, and revised to work even better.

## 5. We want teaching to be a ray, not a line segment.

We wanted a framework that shouted a growth mindset about teaching and learning. Like a ray, there is no endpoint in teaching and learning. It is an art and science at which we can continually get better. Becoming a truly excellent teacher is a lifelong pursuit. We want every one of our teachers to embody the belief: *I can become a great teacher and will never truly get to the end of this path because there's so much to learn and so much to do in the act of teaching and learning.*

# KIPP FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENT TEACHING

*At the center of our work is:*

## Student Growth and Achievement

Excellent teaching means students learn, grow, and achieve transformative life outcomes.

*The four elements of excellent teaching are linked through our:*

## Beliefs and Character

An excellent KIPP teacher is committed to KIPP's mission. She constantly pursues becoming a better person, just as she supports students in this pursuit. She understands that her beliefs and character affect who she is, her impact on and relationships with others, her classroom environment, how she teaches, and what she knows.

*The four elements of excellent teaching are:*

## Self and Others

Excellent teaching requires understanding of oneself, one's connection to others, and a growth mindset that allows the teacher to take ownership for the success of all KIPPsters.



## Classroom Culture

In an excellent classroom culture, the teacher focuses on countless tangible and intangible details in the space to create an environment where students are joyfully engaged, meaningfully on-task, and feel ownership for their individual and collective successes in college and in life.



## The Teaching Cycle

Excellent teaching means planning and executing rigorous, engaging lessons that fit into a logical scope and sequence, as well as using student data to assess mastery of objectives and movement toward big goals for student achievement and growth. Excellent teaching requires a 1/12 mindset, recognizing that even the tiniest details can dramatically impact student mastery.



## Knowledge

Teaching is an art and science. As the artists and scientists, we are responsible for building our understanding of child development, pedagogy, and content. We are responsible for knowing what we are teaching, how it fits in a PreK-16 continuum, and who we are teaching it to.



# BELIEFS AND CHARACTER

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## Beliefs

I believe that...

- A. All children can and will learn. (GROWTH MINDSET)
  - B. Accountability starts and ends with me. (THE MIRROR)
  - C. Differences among people exist and are a source of strength.
  - D. The future matters; so does every moment between now and then. (TODAY & TOMORROW)
  - E. When there are problems we find solutions. When there is a better way, we find it. When a teammate needs help, we give. When we need help, we ask. (THE CREDO)
  - F. With deliberate practice, I can constantly become a better teacher. (GROWTH MINDSET)
  - G. We are a team and family. We teach in schools and communities, not just in classrooms. (TEAM & FAMILY)
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## Character

An excellent KIPP teacher...

- A. Has grit. Gets stuck and does not stay there. (GRIT)
- B. Is zesty. Finds passion, joy, and adventure in the work. (ZEST)
- C. Values relationships and builds them intentionally. (SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE)
- D. Makes decisions with students' best interests in mind. (KIDS IN THE CENTER)
- E. Demonstrates self-control, both work-related and inter-personal. (SELF-CONTROL)
- F. Keeps commitments made to: students, families, and colleagues. (PROMISES TO CHILDREN ARE SACRED)
- G. Takes time to show gratitude. (GRATITUDE)
- H. Expresses and maintains optimism about the future of our students and our schools. (OPTIMISM)

# SELF AND OTHERS



- 1.1**  
**Self-awareness and self-adjustment**
- An excellent teacher...
- A. Doesn't settle or sit. Grows. (SHARPENS THE SAW)
  - B. Calibrates emotions even when pushed. (TURN YOUR DIAL)
  - C. Adjusts tone and actions as needed. (NEWTON'S 1<sup>ST</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> LAW)
  - D. Manages time, energy, and attitude.
  - E. Recovers physically and renews emotionally and mentally. (OXYGEN MASK)

- 1.2**  
**Continuous learning**
- A. Seeks feedback and data early and often and adjusts. (GET IT AND USE IT)
  - B. Researches, observes, experiments, shares, and collaborates. (PANS FOR GOLD)
  - C. Sets and achieves big and small goals for professional growth. (GROWTH MINDSET)
  - D. Takes advantage of learning experiences both in and out of school. (SHARPENS THE SAW)

- 1.3**  
**Building relationships**
- A. Treats colleagues, students, and families as people first and works to make them feel known, loved and valued. (PEOPLE FIRST)
  - B. Intentionally seeks to know others and to let others know them.
  - C. Engages in genuine conversations with colleagues and families even when difficult.
  - D. Notices and intentionally takes advantage of opportunities to strengthen relationships.
  - E. Anticipates and identifies problems in relationships and generates multiple approaches to addressing them.

- 1.4**  
**Cultural competence**
- A. Seeks understanding of and honors the vast similarities and differences of student cultures, social contexts, and communities we serve.
  - B. Considers cultural connections and differences between herself, students, families, and colleagues when communicating in general, as well as when planning and executing lessons.
  - C. Labels personal biases and seeks to overcome them.

- 1.5**  
**Communication**
- A. Actively listens to others, with appropriate eye contact and non-verbals.
  - B. Communicates with genuine warmth and maintains rigorous expectations for behavior and results. (WARM & DEMANDING)
  - C. Responds to students and adults with positive tone, clarity, and enthusiasm.
  - D. Avoids sarcasm.
  - E. Writes clearly and concisely, with appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and tone.
  - F. Communicates praise, feedback, and concerns directly to students, families, and colleagues.

- 1.6**  
**Professionalism**
- A. Honors that teaching is our chosen profession and that our students and their families put a tremendous amount of faith in us as professionals. Consequently, we embrace that part of being an excellent teacher is living up to the professional standards established by our KIPP schools, KIPP regions, and KIPP as a whole.



# CLASSROOM CULTURE

## 2.1 Expectations

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

- A. Consistently communicates: 1) This is important; 2) You can do it with hard work; 3) I will not give up on you; and 4) We will help each other. (KEY MESSAGES)
- B. Insists that students take risks, make and learn from mistakes, and admit confusion. (GROWTH MINDSET)
- C. Lets students know exactly what academic and character excellence looks like for the year, the unit, and the lesson and demands it. (WARM & DEMANDING)
- D. Provides real-time and specific affirming and adjusting feedback about academics and character to students. (THE SPOTLIGHT)

## 2.2 Investment

- A. Treats their classroom goals and investment of kids and families like a garden. (TEND IT CONSTANTLY)
- B. Designs the physical space to make it inviting, purposeful, and a reflection of the students in the room. (THEIR HAPPY PLACE)
- C. Ensures kids can explain the why, big and small, for every action, activity, and artifact. (THE WHY OF THE WAY)
- D. Makes sure that goals, big and small, matter to kids and their families.
- E. Creates a classroom where kids are proud to be and you can tell.
- F. Provides students with opportunities to make choices and to influence the classroom culture.

## 2.3 Routines and systems

- A. Designs efficient behavioral and academic systems. (WELL-OILED MACHINE)
- B. Models and practices systems until they are mastered. (100%)
- C. Tweaks systems when they are not working.
- D. Maintains a clean and organized classroom space. (CLEANER THAN WE FOUND IT)
- E. Anticipates challenges that individual students may have with some routines and systems and makes adjustments.

## 2.4 Management and discipline

- A. Implements a classroom behavior management plan with the goal of 100% of the students meeting 100% of the expectations 100% of the time. (100%)
  - B. Notices what is happening in the classroom and adjusts accordingly. (WITH-IT-NESS)
  - C. Considers and addresses the root causes of student disruption or inattention.
  - D. Reacts with speed and decisiveness when behavior does not meet expectations. (WARM & DEMANDING/100%)
  - E. Administers consequences that logically connect to the behavior and the child. (LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES)
  - F. Uses a calm, firm, and convincing tone when addressing inappropriate behavior. (WARM & DEMANDING)
  - G. Uses a variety of techniques to capture and maintain mutual respect and attention from students (i.e. – narrate the positive, correct, assertive body language, proximity, etc... see SAPHIER'S ATTENTION CONTINUUM and LEMOV'S TAXONOMY)
  - H. Provides specific, observable, concrete, and sequential directions and expects students to follow them. (SOCS/100%)
  - I. Reconnects positively with students after administering a consequence.
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## 2.5 Joy!

- A. Exudes a love of teaching and learning through facial expressions, tone, and actions. (LOVE OF THE GAME)
- B. Nurtures curiosity and a love of learning.
- C. Smiles and laughs regularly, and brings humor and zest to the work of teaching and learning.
- D. Celebrates individual and group efforts and successes when students meet and exceed expectations.
- E. Creates opportunities in the day for students to smile, laugh, and be expressive.



# TEACHING CYCLE

## 3.1 Big goals

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

- A. Establishes and refers to measurable, challenging, year-long goals for student growth and achievement. (BIG ROCKS)
- B. Breaks big goals into manageable and measurable chunks. (CHUNKY MONKEY)
- C. Regularly tracks and communicates progress with students and families. (TRACKS & TELLS)
- D. Connects big goals to student experiences or future opportunities. (THE ROAD AHEAD)

## 3.2 Long-term and unit planning

- A. Backward plans from college-readiness, common core, and state standards to create: (END IN MIND)
  - i. Assessments (THESE FIRST)
  - ii. Goals
  - iii. Scopes and sequences
  - iv. Enduring understandings and essential questions
  - v. Unit plans
  - vi. Objectives/aims
- B. Seriously...please do it. (SERIOUSLY, PLEASE DO IT)

## 3.3 Lesson planning

- A. Plans a daily objective/aim that is achievable, rigorous, and measurable. (SMART AIM)
- B. Establishes clear criteria for success and an aligned way to assess daily. (THE WHAT)
- C. Breaks content down into clear, accessible ideas and procedures. (BUILD/CLIMB THE STAIRS)
- D. Matches materials/explanatory devices to objective. (MATCHING)
- E. Connects current lesson material to past and future material as well as material from other content areas. (BUILD THE NEURAL NET)
- F. Explicitly differentiates and groups kids in plan. (GROUPING)
- G. Connects to prior knowledge. (BAITS)
- H. Develops compelling hooks throughout lesson, aligned to objective. (HOOKS)
- I. Includes introduction to new material, guided, and independent practice. (I/We, We, You)
- J. Establishes checkpoints. (TSA)
- K. Scripts varied questions and acceptable answers as needed to drive rigor. (QTIDWTFTA)
- L. Writes an aligned, interactive agenda. (THE HOW)
- M. Builds in dual-purpose when possible (character-academics, academics-academics, etc.) (BANG FOR THE BUCK)

## 3.4 Rigor

- A. Clearly communicates what mastery and excellence looks like, differentiated for all student groups. (THE BAR)
- B. Spirals and scaffolds up, down, and across Bloom's Taxonomy. (SPIRAL & SCAFFOLD)
- C. Varies questioning strategies. (QTIDWTFTA)
- D. Proactively addresses student misconceptions. (MISCONCEPTIONS & NON-EXAMPLES)
- E. Makes students explain and defend their answers, even when they are correct. (ELABORATIVE INTERROGATION & STRETCH IT)
- F. Insists on all-the-way correct answers from students orally and in writing; does not accept partial answers. (RIGHT IS RIGHT)
- G. Unpacks and repacks incorrect answers for mastery, and has the students do the same. (CLOSE THE CIRCUIT)
- H. Provides each student with timely, structured academic feedback – verbally and in writing. (JOHN WOODEN & SOCKS)



### 3.5 Lesson execution

- A. Posts and communicates clear objectives, CFS, and an engaging agenda for the lesson so kids know what is to be learned, why it is to be learned, and how it is to be learned. (WHAT, WHY, & HOW)
- B. Delivers content in a well-organized, clear, accessible manner – highlighting key points. (CLARITY)
- C. Activates prior knowledge. (BAITS)
- D. Hooks, models, guides, releases, and closes. (CATCH & RELEASE & CLOSE)
- E. Creates external indicators that the brain is on-task (i.e., nodding, tracking, note-taking, independent work). (MAKE IT VISIBLE)
- F. Notices student confusion and does something about it. (WITH-IT-NESS)
- G. Ensures that students are thinking about the task and responding to the teacher and each other. (BE ON-TASK)
- H. Provides opportunities for clear, organized student note-taking when appropriate. (NOTES)
- I. Ensures sustained and structured independent practice of objective.
- J. Circulates and responds to student work in real-time. (MOVE YOUR APPLE & SPOTLIGHT)
- K. Works as needed with individual students and small groups to differentiate and ensure mastery. (YOU DON'T NEED AN INTERVENTION TIME TO INTERVENE)
- L. Uses a variety of methods to review and practice skills already mastered. (SPIRAL)

### 3.6 Ratio

- A. Frequently engages all students in opportunities to think, speak, and write. (MAKE KIDS SWEAT)
- B. Uses a variety of ratio strategies to increase thinking and talking done by students. (Wait time, call and response, pre-call, cold call, half statements, fill in the blank, unbundling, elaborating or building on, playing dumb, etc...)
- C. Ensure that partner and group work is structured and accountable. (MAKE EVERY WORD COUNT)
- D. Employs economy of language and action. (ECONOMY OF LANGUAGE)

### 3.7 Pacing and timing

- A. Sets, communicates, and keeps pace during class time. (URGENT PATIENCE)
- B. Uses brisk and smooth transitions throughout.
- C. Plans for periods of active and passive engagement. (A PULSE IS A SIGN OF LIFE)
- D. Adjusts lesson timing as appropriate to meet needs of all students. (Reevaluate planning if occurs repeatedly.)

### 3.8 Assessment

- A. Creates or obtains standards-aligned formative and summative assessments as the first step of planning. (END IN MIND)
- B. Administers diagnostics that determine what students know and do not know to inform long-term and unit planning. (HOLES & BRIGHT SPOTS)
- C. Uses a variety of individual and whole group methods daily, weekly, and beyond to check for understanding. (CFUs)
- D. Varies questioning strategies in order to determine readiness for next step. (QUESTIONING)
- E. Assesses all students against each lesson's learning objectives to inform teaching daily.
- F. Plans unit assessments and weekly/bi-weekly assessments that are appropriately spiraled, scaffolded, and differentiated.
- G. Adapts, accommodates, and modifies assessments for students with special needs.

### 3.9 Analysis and action

- A. Provides ongoing and specific affirming and adjusting feedback about academics and character to students. (THE SPOTLIGHT)
- B. Immediately uses data from CFUs to correct misconceptions and determines whether to re-teach the entire class, target a smaller group, or individual.
- C. Accurately predicts level of student mastery in advance of exit tickets, student practice, weekly/bi-weekly assessments, unit assessments, etc . . .
- D. Tracks and analyzes assessment data regularly to drive short and long-term planning, re-teaching, and differentiation.
- E. Communicates what, when, and how assignments will be graded. Completes grading quickly and returns work to students promptly. (SERVES FRESH FOOD)
- F. Provides each student with timely, structured academic feedback-verbally and in writing. (JOHN WOODEN & SOCKS)



# KNOWLEDGE

## 4.1 Child development

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

- A. Uses knowledge of the developmental ranges of what students can do academically to inform planning. (ZPD)
- B. Knows the developmental ranges of what students can do behaviorally and uses it to make decisions. (ZPD)
- C. Knows what students care about and how they form relationships.
- D. Knows how to empathize and adjust to meet academic and emotional needs.

## 4.2 Content knowledge

- A. Knows the essential content, concepts and big ideas of the discipline well enough to create questions that teach and assess them.
- B. Knows what comes in the years before and after their curriculum. (CLIMBING THE STAIRS)
- C. Knows what to expect and how to support our English Language Learners. (EVERYONE'S AN ELL TEACHER)
- D. Knows what to expect and how to support our students with special needs. (EVERYONE'S A SPED TEACHER)
- E. Knows the college knowledge, habits, and social skills students require for higher education and when it's best to teach. (KTC IS EVERYONE'S JOB)
- F. Knows what they, as a teacher, do not know and asks for help accordingly. (THE CREDO)

## 4.3 Literacy for everyone

- A. Models thoughtful, joyful, and accurate reading, writing, and speaking.
- B. Deliberately and frequently expands students' vocabulary.
- C. Uses knowledge of students' literacy experiences, reading levels, and interests to plan lessons regardless of the subject. (EVERYONE'S A READING TEACHER)
- D. Models pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies.
- E. Models, teaches, and reinforces fluent and expressive reading aloud.
- F. Intentionally and regularly embeds non-fiction content and reading from other content areas into lessons. (BUILD THE NEURAL NET)
- G. Provides students with varied opportunities to express their thinking orally, in writing, and to engage in the writing process.

## 4.4 Differentiation

- A. Knows the learning styles and academic strengths and weaknesses of each individual student. (KNOW YOUR KIDS NOT THEIR LABELS)
- B. Accelerates and remediates for students starting at their learning edge. (ZPD)
- C. Varies teaching strategies, styles and activities to ensure all students master objectives. (IT'S ABOUT HOW THEY LEARN NOT HOW YOU TEACH)
- D. Uses practice and grouping strategies to work with specific students in class. (YOU DON'T NEED AN INTERVENTION TIME TO INTERVENE)
- E. Pre-teaches, re-teaches, and extends as needed.
- F. Is resourceful and creative in leveraging a variety of resources to help all students achieve learning goals. (People, technology, time, etc . . . )



This Framework reflects the collective wisdom, talent,  
and feedback of KIPP teachers and leaders from across  
the country, as well as our beloved resources:

*The Skillful Teacher* by Jon Saphier  
Kim Marshall's Rubrics  
*Star Teachers* by Martin Haberman  
*Teaching as Leadership* from Teach for America  
*Teach Like a Champion* by Doug Lemov  
*Character Strengths and Virtues*  
by Martin Seligman and Chris Peterson

Achievement First  
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