KIPP FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENT TEACHING

SPRING 2011
There is a wealth of knowledge about what works in great classrooms. There are inspiring frameworks—Saphier’s pyramid to Lemov’s taxonomy, Teach For America’s rubric, Hunter’s lesson plan—that describe great teaching. We draw from all of these amazing resources to develop this vision. We believe that excellent teaching at KIPP means:

- A commitment to long-term transformative outcomes for kids. We know the ultimate measure of our success is the lives our kids are able to lead.
- Teaching is not an individual endeavor. We teach as part of a team. Recognizing our collective effort, a student’s family must also teach our kids as well.
- Joy. We are lucky enough to do the hardest, most fun work imaginable. People should have their noses pressed up against the glass, begging for our jobs. Our students and their parents should know that we absolutely love what we do. More important, our students should revel in the joy of learning, struggling, and growing every day.
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: 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.

**BELIEFS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I believe that...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>With effort and appropriate strategies, all children have what it takes to learn rigorous academic material. I have an unshakable belief in the potential of every child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I am accountable for my students’ learning despite external factors out of my control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Success is measured by our short-term results and ultimately by the lives our kids choose to lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>With unwavering diligence every problem that exists in a school can and should be solved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Teaching is not finite. It requires continuous learning, reflection, and problem-solving, and requires that I constantly increase my repertoire, matching what is best for my students with the circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The whole school significantly affects student learning, so I will continuously seek to improve the school by building strong relationships with colleagues and families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHARACTER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>An excellent KIPP teacher...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Demonstrates grit through challenges to ensure that all of her students learn and grow. She never gives up on students, and supports students in responding to life’s challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Approaches all aspects of life and teaching with zest, energetically giving his all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Demonstrates love for students by building respectful, caring, professional relationships with them, keeping commitments, and making decisions with students’ best interests in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Uses her understanding of her own motives and emotions and those of others (social intelligence) to build strong relationships, create a welcoming, engaging learning environment, and to ensure that students learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Demonstrates self-control that supports a stable mood and follows through on all commitments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Takes time to thank the students for hard work and results, the families for supporting their kids, and colleagues for great teamwork, showing gratitude every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Expresses hope about his students’ future thanks to their hard work, and expresses hope for the constant improvement of his own practice, the school, and the broader movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Brings humor to her relationships with students and colleagues and to her teaching to engage students and make learning fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Lives and models the school’s values and norms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

### 1.1 SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-ADJUSTMENT

An excellent teacher...

- Demonstrates a growth mindset about self.
- Monitors and maintains emotional composure even in difficult situations.
- Seeks to understand how his tone, actions, and comments are perceived, and adjusts as needed.
- Manages time and takes care of self so she can take care of students.

### 1.2 CONTINUOUS LEARNING

- Takes responsibility for results, mistakes, and behavior.
- Seeks feedback, proactively uses data, and immediately adapts practice to improve as a teacher and person.
- Researches, observes others, experiments, shares, and collaborates on new practices.
- Sets and relentlessly makes progress toward goals for professional improvement.
- Analyzes how her teaching impacts the PreK-16 continuum and makes appropriate changes.

### 1.3 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Makes students, families, and colleagues feel known, loved, and valued in and out of the classroom.
- Keeps commitments made to: students, families, and colleagues.
- Engages in genuine conversations with colleagues and families to achieve common goals.

### 1.4 CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Considers cultural connections and differences between himself, students, families, and colleagues when making decisions.
- Labels personal biases and seeks to overcome those biases.
- Gains understanding of and respect for student culture, social context, and community in order to build relationships and drive learning.
- Adjusts communication in order to improve connection with students, parents, and colleagues.

### 1.5 COMMUNICATION

- Actively listens to others, with effective eye contact and non-verbs, and confirms understanding.
- Communicates with genuine warmth and maintains rigorous expectations for behavior and results.
- Responds to students and adults with positive tone, clarity, and enthusiasm. Does not use negative language such as sarcasm, or engage in gossip.
- Writes clearly and concisely, with appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and tone.
- Communicates feedback, concerns, and praise directly to students, colleagues, and families, matching the means to the purpose.
- Seeks to understand and gain context.
- Describes instead of interpreting behavior when giving feedback.

### 1.6 CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Notices what is happening in the classroom and in students’ work and uses the data gathered to match the teacher to the student and situation.
- Anticipates and identifies problems with students, colleagues, or families in a timely manner and generates multiple approaches that either prevent or solve the problem.
- Breaks down complex content and thinking processes into accessible parts for students.
- Breaks down complex student data to help drive student achievement and growth.
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.

2.1 EXPECTATIONS

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

A. Communicates four key messages to all students all of the time: 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.
B. Actively develops a growth mindset in students: take risks, admit confusion, make and learn from mistakes.
C. Clearly and repeatedly uses criteria for success to communicate what he wants students to accomplish and how he expects them to behave.
D. Upholds challenging but realistic expectations for performance and behavior by providing prompt, specific affirmations and adjusting feedback to students.
E. Constantly pushes student work toward college readiness.

2.2 ENGAGEMENT

A. Utilizes engagement for the purposes of mastery and meaning.
B. Ensures that students are engaged with the task, the teacher, each other, and independently.
C. Seeks external indicators that the brain is on task at hand (i.e., nodding, tracking, note-taking, independent work.)
D. Constantly checks student engagement and appropriately adjusts the format and execution of the class to increase engagement.
E. Hooks students into the lesson in multiple ways, intellectually and emotionally.

2.3 ROUTINES AND SYSTEMS

A. Models, teaches, and practices efficient behavioral and academic systems until they are mastered by students with minimal prompting and re-direction in order to increase learning time.
B. Quickly addresses challenges with routines or systems through a variety of appropriate strategies.
C. Organizes the physical space, seating arrangements, materials, and displays to meet the needs of instruction, maximize the flow of activities and students’ learning, and reflect KIPP’s college preparatory focus.
D. Anticipates challenges that students with special needs may have with some routines and systems, strategizes to minimize problems, and proactively prepares those students for success.
E. Provides students with opportunities to influence and take responsibility for classroom routines, rewards, and consequences.
F. Builds students buy-in to an effective system of incentives linked to intrinsic rewards.
**2.4 MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE**

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

A. Recognizes and addresses the root causes of student disruption or inattention.
B. Reacts with speed and decisiveness when behavior is disruptive or does not meet expectations. Promptly notes the behavior to the student and delivers the consequence.
C. Ensures consequences are logically connected to the behavior, fit the infraction, and that there are a range of consequences for any rule.
D. Uses a calm but firm and convincing tone when addressing inappropriate behavior.
E. Acknowledges expectations met and thanks students for exceeding expectations with positive consequences.
F. Uses confident, assertive body language to maintain respect and attention from students in and out of the classroom.

**2.5 JOY!**

A. Exudes a love of teaching and learning through facial expressions, tone, and actions.
B. Smiles and laughs regularly, and brings humor and zest to the work of teaching and learning.
C. Celebrates individual and group efforts and successes when students exceed academic, behavioral, and character expectations.
The Teaching Cycle: Excellent teaching means planning and executing rigorous, engaging lessons that fit into a logical scope and sequence, and 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.

### 3.1 BIG GOALS

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

A. Establishes measurable, challenging, and realistic goals that drive planning and assessment and cultivate the classroom and school community.
B. Uses student achievement data to establish long-term goals and regularly track progress, and has students track their own progress toward the big goals.
C. Breaks big goals into manageable chunks.
D. Invests in the students, their families, and their communities in an effort required to achieve the goals.
E. Communicates regularly with students and their families about their individual progress toward big goals.
F. Connects big goals to student experiences or future opportunities.

### 3.2 LONG-TERM AND UNIT PLANNING

A. Unpacks all state and college preparatory standards to be mastered, then backwards plans, sequencing them into manageable units of learning.
B. Designs and assesses goals, enduring understandings and essential questions, and objectives for each unit.
C. Creates and sequences objectives required to master the goals of the unit.
D. Develops or adopts assessments that indicate level of mastery of objectives for each student as the unit progresses, and at the end of each unit of study.

### 3.3 LESSON PLANNING

A. Plans a daily objective that is achievable, rigorous, and measurable.
B. Chooses materials/explanatory devices, and demonstrates pacing, sub-grouping, before differentiation to meet objectives and needs of students.
C. Develops hooks (at different points in the lesson) that engage students in the lesson.
D. Designs opportunities for students to connect the lesson to prior knowledge.
E. Sets up multiple ways to assess student understanding and mastery.
F. Writes an aligned, interactive agenda that provides opportunities for introduction of new material, guided practice, and independent practice.
G. Plans dual-purpose lessons when possible, addressing content and character objectives in one lesson.

### 3.4 RIGOR

A. Ensures that students “sweat” every day with an aim that is at the highest logical level for students, differentiated for all student groups.
B. Insists on all-the-way correct answers from students; does not accept partial answers.
C. Has a clear idea of what mastery or excellence looks like, differentiated for all student groups, and communicates the expectations for mastery clearly to all students.
D. Provides each student with structured, deliberate, and rigorous timely feedback on academic progress.
E. Uses questions to push students to apply knowledge in skills in ways up and down Bloom’s Taxonomy.
### 3.5 Lesson Execution

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Posts and communicates clear objectives and an engaging agenda for the lesson so kids know what is to be learned, how it is to be learned, and why it is to be learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Delivers content in a well-organized, clear, accessible manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Pre-assesses knowledge and activates current knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Executes lessons that include a hook as well as modeled, guided, and independent practice, and a closing that ties them together to ensure students achieve the objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Ensures that sustained, structured, and rigorous independent practice builds upon the guided practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for clear, organized student note-taking after the primary level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Circulates and responds to student work in real-time, working as needed with individual students and small groups during independent practice to differentiate teaching and ensure student mastery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>Ensures that nearly all students can complete independent work independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Uses a variety of fun methods to review and practice skills already mastered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Ratio

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Lowers the ratio of student-teacher: student talk by fostering student dialogue and and evaluating one another’s ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Develops cooperative learning and partner structures that allow for students to dialogue, debate, and create without the teacher’s presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Employs economy of language and action to maximize the amount of time students think and work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Uses a variety of wait times to increase student talk and thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.7 Pacing and Timing

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Moves students briskly from each part of the agenda to the next, with smooth transitions and a sense of urgency and purpose, maximizing each moment of instructional time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Sets and communicates clear guidelines for how long activities will take, and uses timers or countdowns to keep up pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Adjusts lesson timing as appropriate to meet needs of all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Plans for periods of active and passive engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.8 Checking for Understanding

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Checks for understanding using a variety of individual and whole group methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Asks a variety of types of questions, moving students across the levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Makes students explain, defend, and revise their answers, even when they are correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Checks for understanding and mastery of the objective by all students throughout each lesson, using the data to correct misconceptions immediately, and to inform what she will do next to help them learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Decisively responds to gaps in understanding, knowing whether to re-teach the entire class or to target a smaller group of students within the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.9 Assessment and Analysis

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Creates or obtains a standards-aligned diagnostic, as well as formative and summative assessments to determine where students are in relation to the big goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Plans regular and unit assessments that are appropriately spiraled, scaffolded, and differentiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Assesses all students against learning objectives each day to inform teaching daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Communicates performance and progress to families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Tracks and analyzes assessment data regularly to drive short and long-term planning, re-teaching, and differentiation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

4.1 CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

A. Uses knowledge of children’s cognitive development, cognition, and behavior to plan, motivate, engage, discipline, and teach.
B. Uses knowledge to support emotional needs of students and develop their ability to self-regulate.
C. Uses knowledge of the appropriate level of skills, knowledge, and language acquisition for students in the age range to develop effective plans.
D. Uses knowledge of how students in a particular age range form relationships, communicate, and interact with others to cultivate classroom community.
E. Uses his knowledge of child development to strike a balance in how he exercises authority and how he interacts with and engages students.

4.2 CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

A. Develops deep, up-to-date knowledge of the essential concepts in the discipline and how they relate to one another.
B. Builds strong knowledge of state and national standards for the discipline.
C. Breaks the content down into accessible skills, procedures, and ideas for students while maintaining content at a college preparatory level.
D. Matches the content to an excellent strategy for presentation.
E. Has knowledge of what comes before and after in the curriculum (i.e., the third grade teacher knows what a second and fourth grade curriculum looks like, the Algebra II teacher is familiar with Algebra I and Pre-calculus.)

4.3 LITERACY FOR EVERYONE

A. Models thoughtful and joyful reading, writing, and speaking.
B. Deliberately and frequently expands students’ vocabulary.
C. Uses knowledge of students’ reading levels and interests to plan lessons regardless of the subject.
D. Models pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies.
E. Models, teaches, and reinforces fluent and expressive reading aloud.
F. Provides students with varied opportunities to express their thinking in writing and to engage the writing process.
G. Upholds high standards for the 6+1 Traits of writing in all circumstances.
Excellent teaching means that the teacher...

A. Challenges students at their level and brings them to the level required to meet learning objectives and big goals for the class.
B. Varies teaching strategies, styles and activities (despite personal style preferences) to help all students master objectives.
C. Knows the learning styles, academic strengths and weaknesses of each individual student, and does not get hung up on categories or labels.
D. Plans questions, activities, and assignments that adequately spiral and differentiate by level of difficulty, depth, and learning style to ensure that all students master the objectives.
E. Uses independent practice and peer groupings to allow time in class to work with specific groups of students and individuals.
F. Pre-teaches skills to the lowest skilled students regularly and re-teaches learning objectives to specific students as needed.
G. Uses peer tutors and groups, other teachers, parents, and outside tutors for out-of-class remediation and enrichment.
H. Provides lowest skilled students the time and/or other resources needed in and out of class to be successful.
I. Challenges the higher skilled students using independent practice and time in and out of class to tackle more challenging material.
J. Differentiates behavioral consequences.
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
YES
KIPP DC
KIPP Austin
KIPP NYC
TEAM Schools
Teacher U

OUR TEAM
Sebha Ali, Laura Bowen, Aaron Brenner, Sarah Campbell, Mikara Davis, Andrea DeAngelo, Carolyn Diers-Kaneda, Caleb Dolan, Steven Epstein, Erin Ewart, Amber Field, Shayna Hammond, Jen Keyte, Dave Levin, Vince Marigna, Heidi Moore, Joe Negron, Brad Nornhold, Todd Purvis, Nate Smalley, Quinton Vance, Elliott Witney, and Maddie Witter.