KIPP

Leadership Framework
and Competency Model

Introduction

The KIPP Leadership Framework and Competency Model describes the competencies and behaviors considered most important to the performance of KIPP Executive Directors, Principals, Vice Principals/Deans and Grade Level Chairs/other teacher leaders, leaders in our regional shared services teams and KIPP Foundation staff.

Our leadership framework is the high-level category architecture that assists in organizing our competencies and showing how those competencies relate to one another. A competency can be defined as "a cluster of related knowledge, skills and attitudes that affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development" (Parry, 1996, p.50).

Every competency in this model includes key behaviors that make up the competency. The key behaviors within each competency describe the actions a leader takes that demonstrate proficiency in that competency.

This model lays the foundation for several associated tools that will enable us to more effectively select, develop, evaluate, retain, and promote leadership at KIPP. Leadership development tools associated with this model include evaluation tools, goal-setting tools, 360 feedback tools, proficiency and leadership development roadmaps, realistic job preview tools, interview protocols, and selection rubrics.
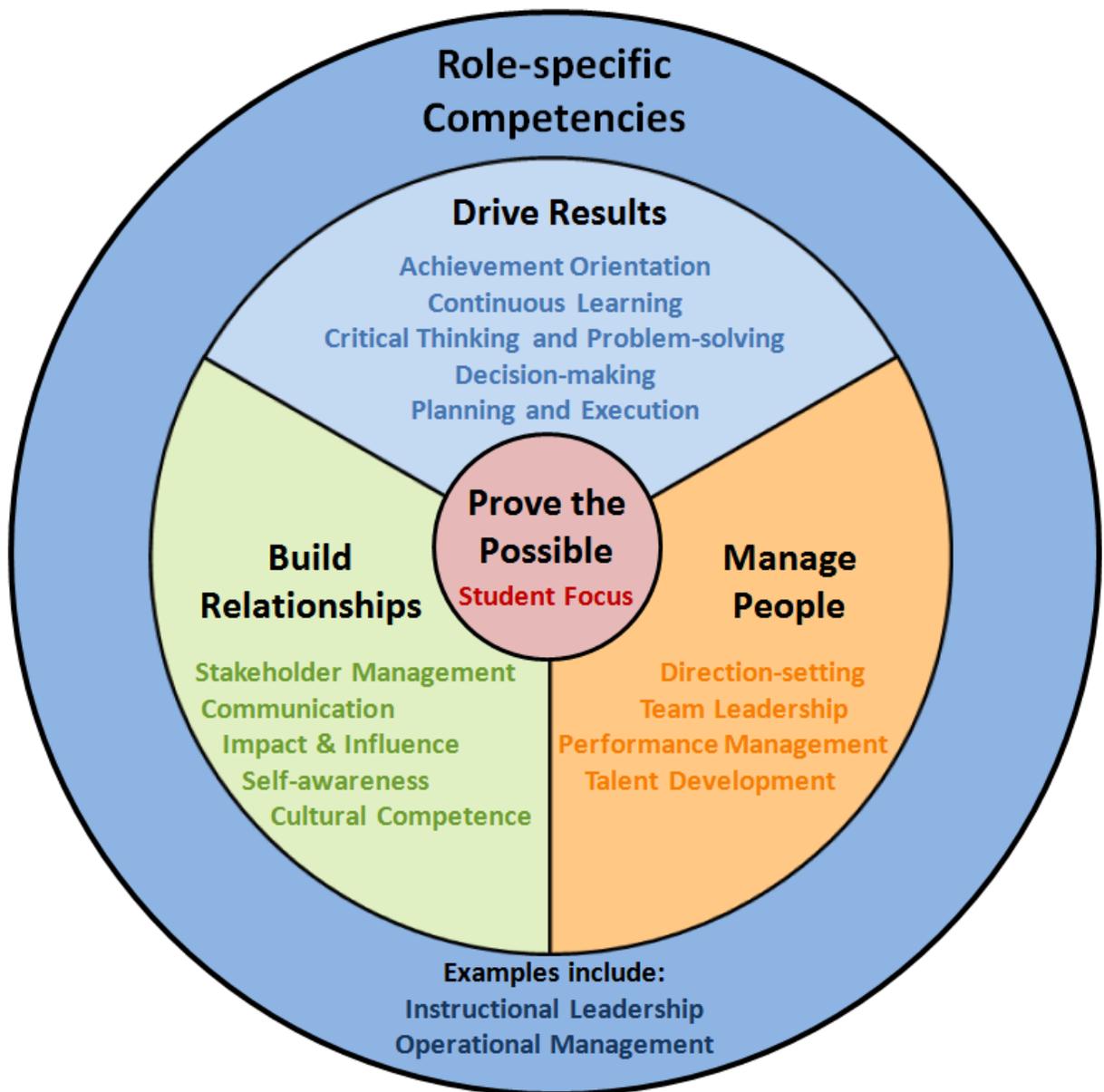

Description of the Framework and Competency Model

Effective KIPP leaders Drive Results, Build Relationships, and Manage People. They do so in order to Prove the Possible for our students. As such, we've organized our core framework and competencies into these four categories. Every individual also has critical role-specific competencies that may vary by role across regions and as you cross from school leadership into regional leadership. Essential competencies such as Instructional Leadership and Operations Management fit in this category. The Role-specific Competencies category rings the core competencies because these competencies often make up a very visible part of an individual's role and because they often rely upon many of the underlying core competencies.

The Prove the Possible category and Student Focus competency are at the middle of our model, helping to always center the efforts of our leaders with a constant focus on what's best for students. The Drive Results category includes core competencies that are directly associated with the individual's ability to produce exceptional outcomes and their ability to model and support others in producing exceptional outcomes. The Build Relationships category includes competencies that enable our leaders to work effectively with others. The Manage People category includes competencies that all leaders must demonstrate to ensure that staff and team performance are excellent. Role-specific Competencies include specialized knowledge and skills that are extremely important and highly visible to some, but not all leadership roles at KIPP. For example KIPP Executive Directors and Principals must demonstrate operational skills and knowledge that are not required for KIPP Grade Level Chairs. This category allows flexibility for regional organizations to apply this model to Shared Services Team members whose roles may also require essential domain expertise.

Background and Research Base

The KIPP Leadership Competency Model is both empirically derived and heavily research-based. To create this model we relied partly upon the practical experience of high performing KIPP leaders at all levels and those at KIPP Foundation who work with those leaders. Through both discussions and focus groups, our leaders offered perspective on what competencies are most important to their effectiveness. Focus groups validated this model by providing role-specific examples of every key behavior in the model. We also relied significantly upon research in the organizational, business, and education domains that indicated which competencies and behaviors are most tied to effective leadership, management and student achievement. This research helped us to both prioritize competencies and structure the key behaviors that demonstrate proficiency in those competencies. Appendix A contains a list of the research base that has been referenced to build this model.

Role-specific Competencies

Drive Results

Achievement Orientation
Continuous Learning
Critical Thinking and Problem-solving
Decision-making
Planning and Execution

Prove the Possible
Student Focus

Build Relationships

Manage People

Stakeholder Management
Communication
Impact & Influence
Self-awareness
Cultural Competence

Direction-setting
Team Leadership
Performance Management
Talent Development

Examples include:
Instructional Leadership
Operational Management

PROVE THE POSSIBLE - Student Focus

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- : **HIGH EXPECTATIONS.** Expresses high expectations for all students, and expresses belief in their potential to complete college and succeed in life.

- : **STUDENT BEST INTERESTS.** Seeks to understand the needs and motivations of students, and makes decisions with student best interests and needs in mind. Expects teammates and employees to do the same.

- : **COMMITMENTS.** Keeps commitments made to students and ensures that others do the same.

- : **RESPECT.** Establishes and maintains a culture where students are treated with respect.

- : **RELATIONSHIPS.** Establishes and maintains strong relationships with students, and ensures employees do the same.

DRIVE RESULTS - Achievement Orientation

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- : **CHALLENGING GOALS.** Demonstrates high expectations by setting challenging goals for him or herself and others.

- : **INITIATIVE.** Takes initiative, going above and beyond typical expectations and making necessary sacrifices to achieve exceptional results.

- : **FOLLOW THROUGH.** Follows through on commitments and promises with an appropriate sense of urgency.

- : **RESILIENCE.** Demonstrates tenacity, persevering through significant challenges to reach goals. Supports perseverance in others.

- : **FLEXIBILITY.** Demonstrates flexibility when plans or situations change unexpectedly. Effectively adjusts plans to achieve intended outcomes.

- : **FOCUS ON RESULTS.** Focuses upon results and how they are achieved. Does not confuse effort with results.

DRIVE RESULTS - Continuous Learning

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- : **LEARNING.** Takes responsibility for behavior, mistakes, and results, learns from successes and failures, and teaches others to do the same.

- : **RISK TAKING.** Takes calculated risks and teaches others to do the same.

- : **DATA-BASED IMPROVEMENTS.** Uses data to accurately assess areas for improvement and teaches others to do the same.

- : **RESEARCH.** Uses research to inform practices.

- : **IMPROVEMENT.** Continuously and humbly seeks opportunities for personal and organizational improvement. Proactively solicits and willingly accepts assistance.

- : **INNOVATION.** Values and encourages creative and innovative ideas.

- : **SHARING.** Promotes and contributes to a culture of sharing effective practices within the organization and across the KIPP network.

DRIVE RESULTS - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **GATHERING INFORMATION.** Gathers information from multiple relevant sources and stakeholders when problem-solving.

- **SORTING OUT COMPLEXITY.** Identifies useful relationships among complex data from unrelated areas.

- **ANTICIPATING PROBLEMS.** Anticipates and identifies problems in a timely manner.

- **BREAKING DOWN INFORMATION.** Breaks complex information and problems into parts.

- **ANALYSIS.** Analyzes, reflects upon, synthesizes, and contextualizes information.

- **WEIGHING OPTIONS.** Weighs pros and cons of multiple options to solve complex problems.

DRIVE RESULTS - Decision-Making

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **PROCESSES.** Establishes decision-making processes, communicating about how decisions will be made and who has input, and ensuring that decisions are made by individuals best suited to make them.

- **CONSEQUENCES**. Considers both the longer-term and unintended consequences of potential decisions.

- **SENSE OF URGENCY.** Makes timely decisions, using intuition as well as data in the face of ambiguity.

- **COMMUNICATING.** Timely conveys decisions to relevant stakeholders and takes follow-up actions to support decisions.

- **DIFFICULT CHOICES.** Willingly makes and stands by controversial decisions that benefit the organization. Shares understanding of the rationale for decisions, particularly when consensus cannot be reached.

DRIVING RESULTS - Planning and Execution

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **BACKWARD PLANNING.** Methodically backward plans to achieve short- and long-term goals.

- **RESOURCES.** Accurately scopes and secures resources needed to accomplish projects.

- **PRIORITIZING.** Manages time and resources effectively, prioritizing efforts according to organizational goals.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Regularly compares actual progress to planned milestones and adjusts plans accordingly, holding him or herself and others accountable for achieving intended outcomes.

- **CONTINGENCY PLANS.** Proactively develops contingency plans in advance of potential or unforeseen circumstances.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS - Stakeholder Management

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **NETWORKING.** Seeks opportunities to work with a wide range of individuals and organizations to achieve common goals and better outcomes.

- **DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS.** Develops mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships based upon trust, respect, and achievement of common goals.

- **TRUST.** Gains the trust of key stakeholders by active listening and seeking to understand their views and needs.

- **RESPECT & APPRECIATION.** Consistently demonstrates respect and appreciation for others by empathizing, valuing their time and contributions, being available and responsive to their needs.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS - Communication

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **LISTENING.** Listens attentively. Seeks to understand other's point of view and confirms understanding.

- **SYSTEMS.** Establishes and/or uses communication systems that proactively engage key stakeholders, and rely upon a variety of appropriate channels.

- **WRITING.** Writes clearly, concisely and persuasively. Uses correct grammar, vocabulary and a tone that is appropriate to the message and audience.

- **SPEAKING.** Speaks in a compelling and articulate manner, adapting communication content and style to different audiences and venues.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS - Impact and Influence

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **ADAPTING STYLE.** Adapts personal leadership style/approach to influence others.

- **MAKING A CASE.** Appeals to emotions and/or reason using data, concrete examples, and demonstrations to make a compelling case for his or her position.

- **ANTICIPATING & PERSUADING.** Anticipates reactions and addresses concerns of others to help persuade them to move toward a goal.

- **MOTIVATING ACTION.** Stimulates others to take action and accomplish goals, even when no direct reporting relationship exists.

- **BUILDING COALITIONS.** Builds coalitions to garner support by aligning proposals/ideas with the needs and priorities of others.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS - Self-Awareness

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- : **INSIGHT.** Understands his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

- : **BALANCING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.** Balances personal strengths and weaknesses with the strengths and weaknesses of others.

- : **SEEKING GROWTH.** Seeks constructive feedback and other opportunities for self development.

- : **UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS.** Understands how others perceive his/her actions, comments, and tone.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS - Cultural Competence

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- : **RESPECTING COMMUNITY.** Demonstrates knowledge of and respect for the cultures of the community served.

- : **INCLUSIVENESS.** Creates an inclusive environment that respects the culture and community of the students being served.

- : **ADJUSTING BEHAVIOR.** Adjusts behavior according to cultural norms and cues.

- : **WORKING CROSS-CULTURALLY.** Communicates and works effectively with those from diverse backgrounds.

- : **VALUING DIVERSITY.** Creates and sustains an environment in which people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives can succeed.

MANAGE PEOPLE - Direction-setting

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- : **VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND GOALS.** Establishes, articulates, aligns, and/or teaches the organization's vision, mission, values and goals.

- : **INSPIRING OTHERS.** Inspires and gains the commitment of others towards the vision, mission, values and organizational goals.

- : **MODELING.** Models organizational values and strong character at all times.

- : **BUILDING CULTURE.** Integrates programs, rituals, and visual artifacts that represent the values throughout the organization.

- : **NEW OPPORTUNITIES.** Anticipates and seizes new opportunities that are aligned with strategic goals.

- : **MANAGING CHANGE.** Manages change by seeking to understand its effects upon the organization and key stakeholders, by guiding others through change, and by addressing resistance to that change.

MANAGE PEOPLE - Team Leadership

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **CLARIFYING.** Clarifies roles, accountabilities and decision-making among team members.

- **DELEGATION.** Delegates tasks to appropriate individuals or groups.

- **COLLABORATION.** Promotes collaboration among team members. Encourages others to cooperate and coordinate efforts.

- **ENCOURAGING INITIATIVE.** Encourages others to proactively solve problems and take initiative.

- **CONFLICT.** Models and encourages others to manage conflict openly and productively.

- **MEETINGS.** Leads team meetings.

- **CELEBRATING TEAM.** Prioritizes team morale and productivity, celebrating team accomplishments.

MANAGE PEOPLE - Performance Management

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **SETTING GOALS.** Sets team and individual goals with employees that align with organization vision, mission, values, and goals.

- **RESOURCES.** Provides resources needed to reach individual and team goals (human assets, dollars, tools).

- **FEEDBACK.** Consistently coaches others towards goals, recognizes accomplishments and provides timely, relevant, and constructive feedback.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Holds employees and teams accountable for achieving their goals and for modeling organizational values and strong character.

- **EVALUATION**. Evaluates performance regularly, identifying learning needs.

MANAGE PEOPLE - Talent Development

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **RECRUITMENT & SELECTION.** Recruits and/or selects a highly effective staff.

- **DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.** Creates developmental opportunities for staff to be more effective in their roles and progress towards career goals.

- **ON-THE-JOB DEVELOPMENT** Places individuals in roles and assignments that contribute to their personal and career development. Facilitates cross-team and cross-network movement when appropriate.

- **RETENTION.** Contributes to the retention of the most talented and valued employees.

- **SUCCESSION.** Explicitly builds systems that encourage talent to grow in the organization, and develops successors for own position.

- **POOR PERFORMERS.** Manages out staffs who do not meet expectations or fit KIPP culture.

ROLE SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES - Instructional Leadership

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **ACADEMIC VISION.** Establishes academic and character vision and / or goals.
- **CURRICULUM.** Oversees development and alignment of college preparatory curriculum.
- **INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT.** Supports instructional improvement by observing, coaching, modeling for, and teaching staff.
- **ASSESSMENT.** Oversees the administration of multiple forms of assessments, to measure and improve teaching and learning.
- **USE OF DATA.** Supports the team in using student and staff performance data to drive improved teaching and learning.
- **CHARACTER.** Oversees or implements systems that reinforce positive character, behavior, and organizational values for students.

ROLE SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES - Operational Management

Key Behaviors: An Effective KIPP Leader…

- **GETTING RESOURCES.** Brings resources (people, funding, etc.) into the organization to meet the needs of the strategy.
- **MANAGING RESOURCES.** Manages resources (people, financial, equipment) effectively to support the organization's short and long term goals.
- **FINANCIAL DECISIONS.** Uses financial information to make sound decisions.
- **VIABILITY.** Maintains a focus in the organization on the critical details essential to keeping the business running, such as risk management and compliance systems.
- **SUSTAINABILITY.** Establishes systems with the long-term sustainability of the organization in mind.
- **BOARD DEVELOPMENT.** Develops a group of committed board members who make concrete contributions to the school/region's success, and who have the diverse skill-set and talents necessary to meet critical needs of the organization.

Appendix A: List of Leadership Competency Model References

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