

KIPP Academy Boston Charter School

Questions as derived from Panel Review

Mission and Vision

- 1. Please explain why you chose to propose a K-8 school in Boston rather than replicate the middle school/high school model you've established at KIPP Lynn (KAL).**
 - The student population in Boston reflects a similar population that we serve in Lynn. In Lynn, 87% of students are on free or reduced lunch. We serve a high percentage of English Language Learners and special education students. A Harvard study has found that we exhibit great efficacy in working with our students, especially the ELL population.
 - We make a promise to all students at KIPP Lynn that they will go to and graduate from college. Our kids often enter the school 2 or 3 grade levels behind. As we look to grow in Boston, we envision an environment where kids do not experience the achievement gap. This is why we decided to start with an elementary school and grow into a middle school.

- 2. How have you modified the mission, vision, and or educational philosophy of the proposed school from the existing school?**
 - The mission is still about maximizing the potential for college graduation. The education philosophy is still same idea – it's about finding out where kids are and then reaching them through effective programs and tools. Nothing is sacred except for what works. In Lynn, we have 45 countries represented in our student body. We're going to be open minded going in, looking around and understanding the needs of our students.

- 3. How will the college success mission be reflected through the school at all grade levels?**
 - It is more exciting to start out from the beginning with a family, since it is often their first experience with education. We will have the opportunity to involve families about college and outcomes, about college savings plan, about reading to their kids every night.
 - KIPP has opened 24 elementary schools in the past 6 years. Our mission and philosophy is the same. If you go into any KIPP school across the country, the kids, at any age, will tell you they're going to college. We are a community of practice, where school leaders and teachers share with each other.
 - The approach is to find out the best possible way to work with the kids. We recognize that younger kids are different from middle school kids. The common threads are the high expectations, good participation, and politeness. We follow the same principle of rewarding kids for their good efforts, and we make sure our approaches are developmentally appropriate.

Description of the Community (ies) to be Served

1. You articulate that the KIPP model includes: increasing time on learning, facilitating partnerships between school and families, and providing students with in-depth structured character development. You give some examples of what you do at KAL. How will these be operationalized at the proposed school?

- We believe in outreaching to and involving parents in the education of their children. Our attrition rate is low at 2.8% annually, because we serve the entire family. If we need to be opened until late four nights a week, two nights a week, or on Saturdays, we will do it.
- The benefit of being in Boston is we can capitalize on the social service resources there to provide them to our families.

2. How did you determine a need for an elementary school in Boston?

- We went door-to-door, to the supermarkets, to community events, and talked to nonprofit organizations. We met with the Mayor, the superintendent, with Boston College's school of education. The board has strong ties to Boston for fundraising and politics.
- There's a high level of frustration among Boston parents around school closings and school turnaround. The need for a high quality school is urgent.
- Teach for America (TFA) is now in Boston with 125 teachers. So many of our teachers are working hard to provide opportunities for kids and to figure out opportunities for those kids when they leave the classrooms. Our teachers are hungry for more opportunities for their students and families.
- I work with TFA alumni. A lot of people are coming to me, looking for opportunities to plug in and teach.

Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

1. How will the school facilitate ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum?

- At the board level, we review dashboards at monthly meetings to review indicators such as attrition rate. We are here to hold the leadership accountable, to make sure he's achieving the goals for the school.
- Whether it's character development or academics, we do backward design to what a college graduate needs to be successful. We meet on Wednesdays to review data analysis. Over the course of the year, we will synthesize data to figure out gaps. There are weekly meetings for the leadership team to pick out trends.
- It's a bureaucratic nightmare to look at teachers' lesson plans every week. We do look at student outcomes though, and unless there's a problem, we trust the teachers to do their work.
- There is sharing of information and knowledge within the schools and also within the KIPP national network. KIPP National has developed a sharing platform that teachers can plug into. We identify teachers with the best outcomes and we videotape them, document their lesson plans, and interview them.

2. How will tutoring for all students work? During the day? After school? What kind of tutoring? How is it organized?

- Teachers will identify 3 or 4 kids who need extra help and will bring them in on the weekend for the teachers to work with them. We also have a large pool of talented tutors to tap into. At the elementary level, you can rely on parents to augment and tutor at home.
- We will group and regroup kids for tutoring services. We'll use data to help identify kids.
- We are staffing up. Every grade will have learning and ELL specialists. We will more than double the staff capacity in Lynn.

Assessment, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

1. Please describe your promotion standards.

- What we've seen is that kids are less likely to leave when they're appropriately retained. We want to do that if it's the right thing developmentally, emotionally, socially, and academically. We would want to identify possible retainees by the end of the first quarter so it's not a surprise to the family. Parents should be intimately aware by midyear if their child is in danger of being retained.
- In middle school, if you're not passing math or English, you're a candidate for retention. If you're not passing science and history, you're also a candidate for retention. In middle school, we worry about playing catch up all the time.
- We want to build a school culture that flips the paradigm. A college diploma doesn't feature your age. It's more about acquiring the skills you need to succeed.
- Developmentally, people are more forgiving with retaining kindergarteners. If there's no movement in first grade, that's when we get really concerned.

2. What is the role of the Chief Academic Officer at the Central office?

- At the central office, we are looking to achieve the benefits of centralization. We are driving efficiencies and freeing up managers to provide leadership at the school. The CAO's role is to provide a macro view on what's happening at different schools, provide professional development to principals and teachers on site, and provide instructional leadership.
- When the CAO designs professional development, it will be with data in hand.

3. How do you use assessment to improve the educational program? How will you measure aspects of the mission like:

- KIPP national organization has nothing to do with the governance of individual KIPP schools. KIPP Foundation does the work around thoughtful growth, best practice sharing and quality assurance.
- We ask ourselves these questions: Are we serving kids who need us the most? Are they staying with us? Are kids making academic progress? Are kids on track to and through college? Are we sustainable from human capital and financial standpoints? This is the Healthy Schools Report Card. We're building out the

character education side of the report card, considering things like grit and zest and how these characteristics relate to academic achievement.

- We are tracking our alumni. In 90 days, we'll put a report out for the nation to know how our kids are doing. 95% of our 8th graders have gone on to high school; 87% went to college. The rate of college completion is less great.
- At KIPP Lynn, we did a project to analyze why kids left our schools. We found out a major reason is that they did not have a relationship with an adult in the building. Building on this finding, we then require teachers to teach electives to have an opportunity to get to know students.
- Teachers use formative data daily and weekly to make adjustments to their teaching.

School Characteristics

1. You list a number of partners that KAL has that provide services to students. Do you intend to have similar partners in Boston? Where are you in developing partnerships in Boston? What external programs will you replicate at KIPP Boston?

- We brought people on to the board who have significant Boston experience. We started having meetings with these people to figure out who we should partner with. We're going to people that we know and trust at a higher level to help us identify partners on the ground. We're building relationships necessary to go in and build the partnerships.
- Many schools in Boston can't help but reach out for partnerships. KIPP has the benefit that we're providing everything and can afford to pick and choose our partners.

2. Describe your student management system.

- KIPP Lynn has managed to build a disciplined, safe school without being a harsh place or relying on punishments as the primary level.
- We have in place a system that emphasizes planning and management and offers incentives for kids. Everything is plan and scripted. We also explain why a kid is getting a reward or discipline. We will adapt that for what works for elementary schools and the facility itself.
- These elements underpin the broader educational philosophy of academic excellence, character development, and more time on task.
- Kids internalized the cultural speak of the school when older kids model for younger kids.

3. Please describe your alumni program. How will you work with families through high school and college?

- KIPP alumni stay with us as long as we can find them. We have an alumni coordinator to advise and support alumni as they progress toward college. We understand it's a long term commitment to the kids.
- We help alumni in their academic paths but also in other ways, such as helping them to find summer jobs.

- We invest \$325,000 in our alumni support program. We pay 85 public school alumni \$5 an hour to come back and let us tutor them and monitor their report cards. We are here from 4 to 7pm every day to support our alumni.

4. How will new fifth graders be integrated into school culture? Will 5th grade continue to be an entry point?

- That's our sweet spot. We have 20 years of experience teaching to 5th graders. 5th graders are generally quick and eager to please. We're not anticipating this to be a huge challenge.
- Our goal is not to lose kids. There are programmatic things we can do to prevent this. The law is we have to replace anyone between K and 4th grade, but we don't anticipate having a lot of kids leaving.

Special Student Populations and Services

1. What special education and ESL staffing levels do you plan to have for the first five years of the proposed charter? What is the rationale? Can you be flexible?

- For ELL and special education, we will have a portion of the teacher's time to do administrative work. The rationale is that a person hired will spend 10% of their time on administration and 90% on teaching.
- There will be a full-time learning specialist in year one and one ESL.
- We hope to serve a lot of ELL kids. We have some flexibility and can tap into co-teachers.
- At the network level we have someone who will be supervising all of it, we have someone in mind who is an expert on ELL and special education.

2. When you report that KIPP Lynn currently serves 17% LEP students what do you mean? Where did that number come from?

- It was not misrepresented intentionally in any way, shape or form. This number is coming from the 4th graders' SIM data, which indicates 15 to 20% of the students are ELL. But after 3 years, they can't be classified as ELL anymore. We have 20 students who are classified as ELL and they are all in 5th and 6th grade. So looking at our current students, only 5% are classified as ELL. That data was taken from the MIT study that looks at their incoming students before.
- We're trying to recruit kids who are ELL, representative of the district. Not as much as the district, but we have a lot. We have a lot of student classified as FLEP.

3. What ancillary services are you planning to provide?

- We provide everything we can for our kids. That is the spirit we will go in to Boston. We do visits and provide jackets and blankets for our kids in winter. In our new high school, we're building a doctor's office.
- We'll have a therapist, a registered nurse, and a social worker.

Capacity

- 1. What experience do the founding group members and/or board have with elementary grades?**
 - I've taught in elementary school.
 - The CAO is currently working with school design fellows to work through elementary school designs.

- 2. What exactly will KIPP national do to support the proposed school?**
 - KIPP national helps to grow the network, monitor quality assurance, and share best practices.
 - Growing the network has been about developing leaders; \$9 out of \$24 millions has gone toward leadership development. We run a leadership development pipeline from classroom teachers to school leaders. To open a KIPP school, you need to propose a founder who has gone through the national Fisher Fellowship. We have done this 99 times now.
 - For the \$50,000 network fee, a KIPP school gets the following:
 - A full year of training and salary for the Fisher leader
 - A summer program aimed at principal preparation
 - A summer teacher leader program, which is a 6-week cohort-based program
 - Quality assurance in that we provide a school review and school inspection
 - Data collection to ensure transparency across the network
 - Retreats based on content areas, which are done year round; follow-ups are provided through an online platform
 - The board sees a lot of value from the KIPP Foundation. The foundation has been able to bring lots of resources to develop skills in school leaders. As we look to growth planning, we want to address risks up front. The Foundation provided us with a resource to help us do this. KIPP Foundation has also provided resources to help us do board evaluations.
 - KIPP has a national leadership role, and we can leverage the KIPP reputation in policy and in fundraising.

Governance and Management

- 1. Will there be any changes in the governance structure of the board to oversee two schools?**
 - We have needs on our board for more diversity. We're going to have one board that governs both schools, but might also develop a Lynn specific committee and a Boston one.
 - In building the committee structure, we know that we need to grow the board. But we are cautious about building up the culture on the board as well. All new board member candidates have to serve on committees before they will be pushed up to the board.

2. **Please walk us through the organizational chart.**
 - a. **Please describe in a little more detail the central office structure and roles/responsibilities.**
 - Where the arrow goes is where the reporting exists.
 - 6 people reporting to the Executive Director are central office staff. Some business managers will be located on site at the schools.
 - The organizational chart reflects our commitment to coaching and professional development.
 - b. **Where will the central office be located?**
 - We're experiencing a lot of growth. We're only going to be in two buildings, one in Lynn and one in Boston. The central office will be at one of those two locations.
 - We recognize there is an issue with comingling funds between districts. We are not going to borrow from one school to pay the other.

Facilities and Transportation

1. **Please explain your transportation plan. On page 52...one bus route per grade level, each year at a cost of \$33,000 but on 53 your state that you'll be using BPS transportation with bus monitors. Which have you decided to pursue?**
 - a. **Transportation – each bus route \$33,000 (page 52) – but line item 49 is \$12,240?**
 - At KIPP Lynn, we have to pay for transportation. We are wary of comingling our students with students from the other schools. We will use BPS transportation, but will also have bus monitors on all the routes.

Budget

1. **How was this budget developed?**
 - We have a wealth of knowledge in regard to anything middle school related.
 - For things elementary school related, we draw on the 24 KIPP elementary schools and on the Brooke and Renaissance in Boston.
 - We have back-ups for all the numbers on the high level budget. It was a dynamic process where we reviewed numbers and looked at contingencies in our monthly meetings.
2. **Line item 42: Staff stipends are only in SPED? Why?**
 - You get \$4,000 stipend for being a coordinator.

Final Comments from Members of the Founding Group

- I'm very proud of our thinking through the key risks and mitigation strategies. This is about growing with quality. High quality goes hand in hand with planning.
- Human resources: Greater teachers make great schools. We are recruiting day in, day out. Our school has a culture of joy and enthusiasm, where teaching and learning is fun.

We have recess and electives everyday and a song day on Fridays. We have strong commitment to work life balance. People like the idea that we're not going to be a burn and churn organization. People talk about our professional development. It's the right thing to do for our staff, but it's also about how we are going to be competitive.

- Student recruitment: How to make sure we recruit kids who truly need us? We have an aggressive and systematic way of finding our kids.
- Facilities: The physical plant of the space is where kids have to work, so it must be the right space. We can only dance around this topic at this point, but we're developing contingency plans every day.