

SRI International

# San Francisco Bay Area KIPP Schools

A Study of Early  
Implementation

FIRST YEAR REPORT  
2004 -2005



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**Bay Area KIPP Schools**  
**A Study of Early Implementation**  
**First Year Report 2004–05**

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# Executive Summary

The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) aims to create schools for historically underserved students that significantly increase the amount of instructional time and the efficiency of learning during that time. By emphasizing preparation for college and a strong culture of discipline, KIPP schools expect their students to “develop the knowledge, skills, and character needed to succeed in top-quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond” (KIPP, 2005a).

In 2004–05, the KIPP network included 37 schools in “under-resourced communities” across the United States. Most serve grades 5 to 8 and operate as charter schools.<sup>1</sup> Individual KIPP schools have received notable press for their early results and promise. However, there has been no systematic study of KIPP schools to document how the national model is implemented to meet local needs and what effects it has on student behavior and academic achievement.

This report marks the end of the first year of a three-year study of five KIPP schools in the San Francisco Bay Area that opened between 2002 and 2004.<sup>2</sup> The ultimate purpose of the study is to understand the extent to which these five Bay Area KIPP schools achieve their goals and the implications of the findings for other public schools. Our goals are to document the implementation of KIPP in five settings, to assess its effects on students, and to draw inferences about the relevance of the findings for other schools and districts. To this end, we combine both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. During 2004–05, we conducted case studies of all five schools, including interviews with school leaders and teachers, focus groups with parents and students, and time-use observations. In addition, we carried out preliminary analyses of student achievement data. This report focuses on early implementation and outcomes.

## Findings

Overall, the five Bay Area KIPP schools, all relatively new schools, were clearly identifiable as KIPP schools. Each of the Five Pillars that define the KIPP model was evident across the schools: High Expectations, Choice and Commitment, More Time, Power to Lead, and Focus on Results.

**High Expectations.** To prepare students for college, KIPP schools hold students to high expectations for their academic performance and behavior. KIPP schools expect their students to achieve at high levels academically in a rigorous, college preparatory program and demonstrate the desire, discipline, and dedication necessary to succeed at KIPP and beyond. Students are expected to complete up to 2 hours of homework every night, and students must perform at grade-level standards in order to be promoted. Students are also expected to meet a strict code of behavior.

From classroom work to student behavior, all five Bay Area KIPP schools have translated high expectations into actions with visible results. Although the specific curricula and teaching methods vary across schools and across teachers within a school, all five Bay Area KIPP schools have a college preparatory curriculum structured by state standards with rigorous criteria for promotion to the next grade. High expectations for student behavior are embodied in a behavior management system with explicit rewards for following the rules and consequences for failure to do

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<sup>1</sup> As their students reach eighth grade, KIPP is beginning to create a network of KIPP high schools.

<sup>2</sup> The five Bay Area schools are Bayview Academy and SF Bay Academy in San Francisco, Bridge College Preparatory in Oakland, Heartwood Academy in San Jose, and Summit Academy in San Lorenzo.

so. Although implemented differently in each school, the basic structure of rules, rewards, and consequences is similar. Though it is clearly effective in its impact on the vast majority of students, principals and teachers note that the program does not work for every student. Nevertheless, interviews and observations concur that one result of strict rules for behavior and homework completion is more efficient use of classroom time.

**Choice and Commitment.** Students, parents, and teachers in KIPP schools have chosen to be part of KIPP, and have committed to do everything it takes for students to excel. Each year, they actively choose whether to renew their commitments and stay at these schools.

Parents choose KIPP largely because of its reputation for academic rigor and strong disciplinary practices. Recruitment strategies for students shift after the first year, from knocking on doors and media campaigns to relying on word-of-mouth publicity and, in some cases, strategizing about how to attract the students who are targeted by the KIPP program. The five schools vary in their percentages of economically disadvantaged students, their ethnic make-up, and average entering test scores. Most families stay at KIPP; however, there are some who leave each year. Students leave for various reasons, including family moves, challenging student needs that cannot be met by KIPP schools, grade retention avoidance, or an unwillingness or inability on the part of students or their parents to follow through on their commitments to the school.

Teachers choose KIPP for the opportunity to help create a new school and because of their passion for the mission of the program. The rigor of the teacher hiring process varies from one school to the next and on the time of the year. Almost half the Bay Area KIPP teachers come from the Teach for America program; their median teaching experience prior to joining KIPP is 2 years. They tend to be young and without children; few match the ethnicity of the majority of their students. Thirteen of 17 teachers stayed in the job from 2003–04 to 2004–05, similar to national attrition estimates. However, three out of four teachers indicated that the demands of the job may limit their willingness to stay more than a few years.

**More Time.** KIPP schools add approximately 3 ½ hours to the length of the traditional school day and more than 4 weeks to the traditional school year. This dramatic extension of time is clearly one of the primary features of the KIPP model. The longer days and year provide many additional hours of instructional time and are foundational to a model that professes hard work, no shortcuts, high expectations, and a focus on results. More time is amplified by KIPP's nightly homework requirements.

The five Bay Area KIPP schools vary in the amount of time devoted to instruction but the lowest still substantially exceeds that of comparable public schools. While building a school culture of hard work and good behavior is a primary goal of KIPP schools, only a small percentage of the school day is explicitly devoted to this, perhaps because efforts to build the culture are concentrated in the initial summer school and the early part of the school year, especially for fifth graders who are new to the school.

Extended time offers considerable benefits in more instruction and keeping students in a safe place; however, it also exacts costs on teachers and students who find little time left for nonschool activities. The burden of the longer days seems to fall most heavily on the teachers.

**Power to Lead.** The KIPP model relies on powerful school leaders who have substantial autonomy over their budgets and staff. To achieve the necessary autonomy, most KIPP schools are charter schools that have a franchise-like relationship with the KIPP Foundation. KIPP puts applicants through a rigorous selection process, provides intensive initial training and ongoing support in implementing the KIPP model, and retains the right to revoke the KIPP name. Ultimately, however, KIPP empowers school leaders to run their own schools free of interference.

Bay Area KIPP leaders are highly motivated and committed educators, although none had prior experience as a principal. Like leaders in many charter schools, Bay Area KIPP leaders have substantial autonomy and enormous responsibility, from locating facilities to recruiting students and faculty. KIPP leaders especially value their autonomy to hire and fire staff and flexibility in how they spend the budget, although we heard few examples of atypical expenditures. As each school expands, the leader's job shifts from one of launching a start-up to integrating more students and teachers and formalizing policies. Leaders vary in their knowledge of curriculum and instruction and in the time they devote to academic leadership. Given the demands of the job and the KIPP emphasis on culture and discipline, academic leadership varies widely across the five schools. As a result, teachers are mostly on their own to develop their academic programs.

**Focus on Results.** The KIPP model rests its reputation on the ability of KIPP schools to increase student performance on standardized tests and have their graduates go on to college. Given the low incoming performance of many KIPP students, enabling students to succeed “at the nation's best high schools and colleges” requires a substantial increase in performance.

We conducted a preliminary review of results from two sets of standardized tests: The California Standards Test (CST) required by the state and the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT 10) administered in all Bay Area KIPP schools. Because the data are cross-sectional and school-level rather than student-level, we cannot draw conclusions about the impact of KIPP schools; that is, we cannot answer the question, Do students who attend KIPP schools perform better than they would have had they not attended a KIPP school?

With these limitations in mind, standardized test score results suggest that KIPP schools are posting gains beyond what would be expected in most subjects and grade levels, given their demographic composition. Based on publicly available CST data for 2 years, the percentage of students scoring proficient or above is consistently higher for KIPP schools than for comparable schools in the neighborhood—in a few cases dramatically so. Based on cross-sectional fall to spring SAT 10 data, the percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile increased in 16 of 17 cases (as defined by subject area and grade level), ranging from an increase of six percentage points in fifth-grade reading in one school to an increase of 51 percentage points in sixth-grade math in another school.

## **Conclusions and Considerations**

The five Bay Area KIPP schools we studied are still under development, adding a grade each year. They are serving their intended population: on average, 72 percent of the students are economically disadvantaged and 75 percent are African-American or Latino. In addition to evidence of each of the Five Pillars in all of the schools, to varying degrees, we also saw evidence of expected outcomes in student behavior and achievement.

As school reform models go, this is remarkably fast implementation. The speed with which the model is put in place appears related to three factors. First, staff and parents have chosen to be part of KIPP. Unlike a conversion school, KIPP start-ups attract only those who want to participate; consequently, most embrace the emphasis on building a culture of hard work and respect through strict behavior management. Second, principals are immersed in the model for a full year or more prior to hiring staff and opening a school. By the time the school opens, they understand the model thoroughly. Third, the KIPP model does not prescribe a particular curriculum or instructional approach. Although teachers may spend time creating or implementing their curricula, they do not have to learn a new system required by the model, in contrast to many school reform models that embody particular approaches to curriculum and instruction.

Although clearly identifiable through their slogans and procedures, the five schools differ significantly along several dimensions including student body composition, style of leadership and teaching, and the ways in which they implement different aspects of the KIPP model. As a result, the schools vary in the frequency with which they both face and choose to deal with student behavior problems; the efficiency of using time, from classroom instruction to student transitions; and the degree to which students are engaged in learning activities. Both classroom instruction and student engagement in learning vary within and between schools.

**Considerations for KIPP.** Faculty at Bay Area KIPP schools, like those at other charter schools, struggle with the many demands of a start-up. As the numbers of teachers increase, the burdens might correspondingly decrease. If they do not, however, the demands of the job could result in the need to constantly replenish the teaching force. Based on current staffing patterns, new KIPP teachers are likely to be young, with limited teaching experience.

The demands of the job may also affect how well teachers use the time available to them as teachers are pressed to find time to plan lessons and collaborate. Similarly, principals face the challenges of transitioning each year to a larger staff and student body. These demands, coupled with different backgrounds in curriculum and instruction, result in principals struggling to find the time and, for some, the knowledge, to provide academic leadership. Finally, the schools struggle to develop good solutions for the handful of students who are seemingly immune to the behavior management system.

**Considerations for the Study.** The second and third years of our study will provide an opportunity to pursue in more depth important questions raised by this year's findings. In particular, we expect to look more closely at the following questions: How consistent are achievement test scores from one year to the next? What explains the variation in student achievement and to what extent is student achievement growth associated with KIPP? What is the role of the KIPP Foundation in supporting the schools? An ultimate goal of the study is to determine whether the KIPP model suggests lessons for other public schools. Key to this challenge is developing a better understanding of the contributions of extended instructional time and focus on culture in addition to the role of parent and teacher choice.

# 1. Introduction

“Closing the achievement gap” is an imperative of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and of California’s Academic Performance Index (API) accountability system. These policies underscore the urgency to dramatically increase the achievement of historically underserved students—those who are economically disadvantaged; African-American, Latino, and other racial minority students; and English-language learners.

In this policy environment, schools, districts, and reform organizations all struggle to accelerate the learning of low-performing students without sacrificing the needs of their higher-achieving peers. Yet the gap persists, even in the face of many notable efforts to reconfigure resources and redesign instructional activities. Given the size of the gap when students enter kindergarten<sup>3</sup> and the out-of-school learning opportunities available to middle- and upper-middle-class students, the seeming intractability of the problem is not surprising. Low-performing students cannot possibly “catch up” to their higher-performing counterparts without significantly increasing the rate at which they are learning. And the rate of learning cannot increase without a combination of more time spent on learning and more efficient learning during that time. Neither alone is likely to be sufficient.

The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) attempts to do both: to create schools for historically underserved students that significantly increase the amount of instructional time and the efficiency of learning during that time. By emphasizing preparation for college and a strong culture of discipline, KIPP schools expect their students to “develop the knowledge, skills, and character needed to succeed in top-quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond” (KIPP, 2005a).

In 2004–05, the KIPP network included 37 schools in “under-resourced communities” across the United States. Most serve grades 5 to 8 and operate as charter schools.<sup>4</sup> Individual KIPP schools have received notable press for their early results and promise. However, there has been no systematic study of KIPP schools to document how the national model is implemented to meet local needs and what effects it has on student behavior and academic achievement.

This report marks the end of the first year of a three-year study of five San Francisco Bay Area KIPP schools that opened between 2002 and 2004.<sup>5</sup> The ultimate purpose of the study is to understand the extent to which these five Bay Area KIPP schools achieve their goals and the implications of the findings for other public schools. Our goals are to document the implementation of KIPP in five settings, to assess its effects on students, and to draw inferences about the relevance of the findings for other schools and districts.

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<sup>3</sup> Math and reading scores for new kindergartners from the lowest socioeconomic group are 60 percent and 56 percent lower, respectively, than those of students at the highest end (Lee & Burkam, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> As their students reach eighth grade, KIPP is beginning to create a network of KIPP high schools.

<sup>5</sup> The five Bay Area schools are Bayview Academy and SF Bay Academy in San Francisco, Bridge College Preparatory in Oakland, Heartwood Academy in San Jose, and Summit Academy in San Lorenzo.

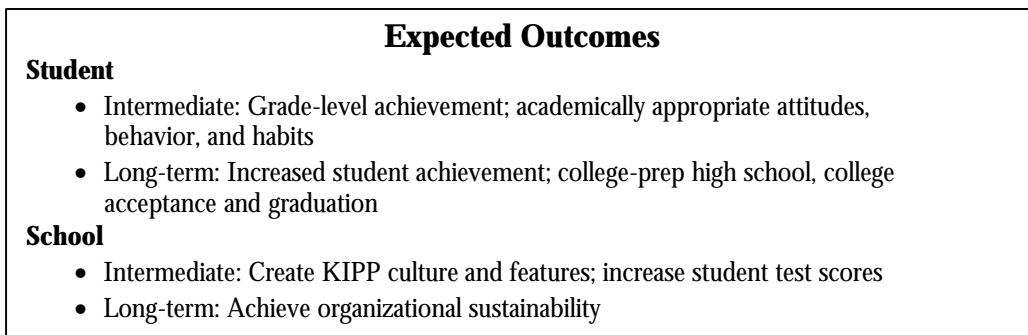
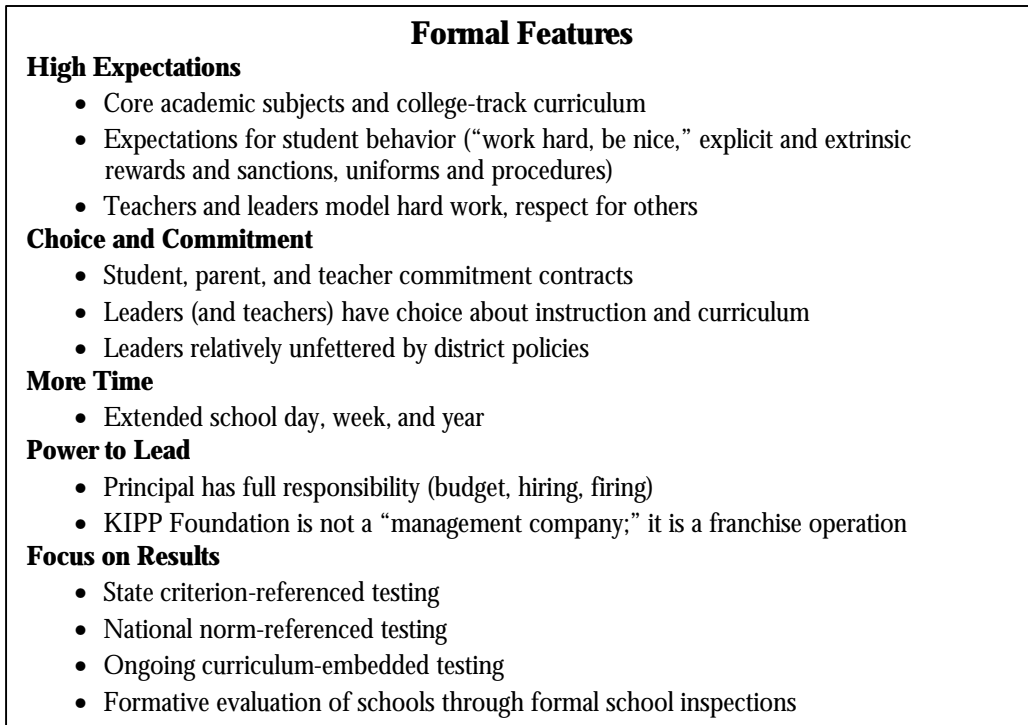
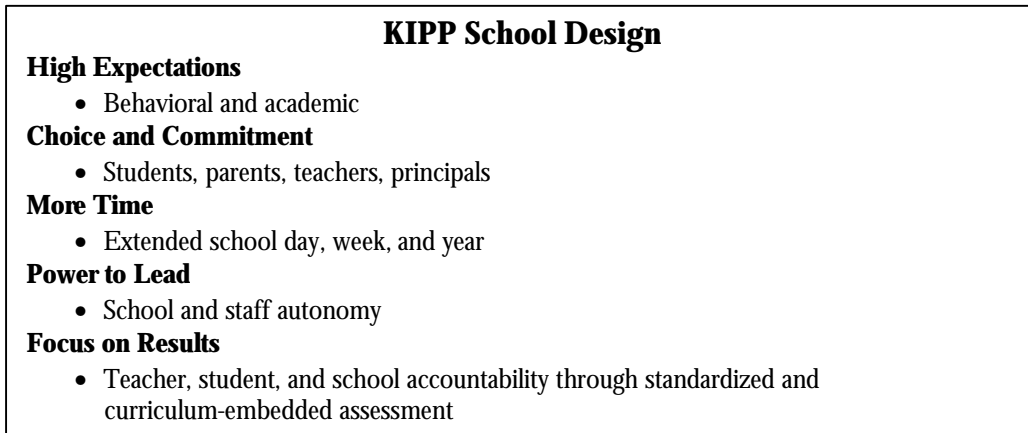
## The KIPP Theory of Action

The KIPP model represents a theory of action, grounded in a set of guiding principles, which emphasizes building school culture and substantially increasing time in school in contrast to most reform models that emphasize a particular approach to curriculum and instruction. These guiding or operating principals are KIPP's Five Pillars (KIPP, 2005b):

1. **High Expectations.** KIPP Schools have clearly defined and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on the students' backgrounds. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior.
2. **Choice and Commitment.** Students, their parents, and the faculty of each KIPP School choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend these schools. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success.
3. **More Time.** KIPP Schools know that there are no shortcuts when it comes to success in academics and life. With an extended school day, week, and year, students have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges, as well as more opportunities to engage in diverse extracurricular experiences.
4. **Power to Lead.** The principals of KIPP Schools are effective academic and organizational leaders who understand that great schools require great School Leaders. They have control over their school budget and personnel. They are free to swiftly move dollars or make staffing changes, allowing them maximum effectiveness in helping students learn.
5. **Focus on Results.** KIPP Schools relentlessly focus on high student performance on standardized tests and other objective measures. Just as there are no shortcuts, there are no excuses. Students are expected to achieve a level of academic performance that will enable them to succeed at the nation's best high schools and colleges.

These five principles translate into to a set of formal features implemented in each KIPP school but in somewhat different ways. For example, all KIPP schools run from roughly 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. 5 days a week, hold school on Saturday and during the summer, and implement a strict behavior management system. Together these features are expected to lead to intermediate student outcomes that include improved school attendance and tardiness rates, better work habits and attitudes toward school, higher expectations for achievement and educational attainment, and a personal sense of efficacy. The KIPP theory of action anticipates that these intermediate outcomes in turn improve student achievement (see Exhibit 1).

**Exhibit 1**  
**KIPP Theory of Action**



## Study Design

Our study of the five Bay Area KIPP schools is designed to capture the implementation of the KIPP model as well as its impact on student behavior and achievement. In the first year we have focused on describing the ways in which the theory of action is implemented in the schools. In Exhibit 1, we focus on the box in the middle and the intermediate outcomes at the student and school level. Thus we looked for evidence of (1) high expectations for behavior and academic achievement and the culture this creates; (2) the role of choice and commitment and the result in terms of who chooses to attend and to teach in KIPP schools; (3) how KIPP schools use time, including the extended school day and year; (4) the autonomy and leadership of KIPP principals; and (5) improved student achievement based on standardized test scores for the KIPP schools and a set of comparison schools.

We look for similarities and differences across the five schools in how they interpret KIPP's five pillars. We are investigating the KIPP model in five schools, not evaluating or comparing individual schools. Each has a unique student body and faculty and operates in a different local context. To this end, we combine both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. During 2004–05, the first year of data collection, we conducted case studies in each of the five schools and carried out preliminary analyses of student achievement data.

The case studies involved visits to each of the five schools on several occasions during the school year, beginning with introductory visits in late summer and fall 2004. In winter and spring 2005, at each site, we conducted two all-day time use observations. During these observations, we selected a “college” within a grade level to follow for a full day and coded the amount of time spent on individual activities into one of five categories: instructional, enrichment, cultural, procedural, and unrelated (see chapter 4, “More Time,” for a detailed explanation of the coding scheme). At each site, we also conducted an interview with the principal, interviews with the universe of teachers (ranging from 3 to 9 teachers at each school, for a total of 34 teachers), two parent focus groups (ranging from 5 to 11 parents at each school, for a total of 42 parents), and two student focus groups (ranging from 3 to 9 students at each school, for a total of 32 students). We used semi-structured protocols for interviews and focus groups in order to make general comparisons between schools. In addition, in the summer 2005, we observed one day of summer school at each site, one day of professional development at three schools, and a parent orientation at one school. Finally, to better understand the KIPP model, we attended two mornings of the KIPP Summer Leadership Institute in July 2005.

To understand how student achievement at local KIPP schools compares with achievement in the state overall, the districts in which they are geographically located, and similar local schools, we compiled student demographic and achievement data. The data used for the achievement analysis are the publicly available California Standards Test (CST) results and student performance on the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT 10), a norm-referenced test sponsored by the KIPP Foundation and voluntarily administered at KIPP schools throughout the country.



## **The Sample**

Five KIPP schools operate in the Bay Area. KIPP Bridge College Preparatory in Oakland began in 2002–03 with an entering class of fifth graders and added a class each year.<sup>6</sup> This is the only school with three grades (5, 6, and 7) in 2004–05, the first year of our study. It is also the only one of the five schools that does not operate as a charter; it is a small, autonomous school in the Oakland Unified School District. Three schools began in 2003–04 and thus had both fifth and sixth grades in 2004–05. These are: KIPP Bayview Academy and KIPP SF Bay Academy, both in San Francisco, and KIPP Summit Academy in San Lorenzo (operating under a charter from the state). KIPP Heartwood Academy in the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District in San Jose opened to a cohort of fifth graders in 2004–05. The students in these five schools range from 50 to 84 percent economically disadvantaged, from 4 to 80 percent African-American, from 3 to 79 percent Latino, and from 3 to 60 percent English learners. (Chapter 3, “Choice and Commitment,” provides additional demographic data on the schools.)

Throughout this report, we make every effort not to reveal the identity of individual KIPP schools and respondents. For example, where we use pseudonyms such as School A or School 1, we intentionally vary the use of these names so that schools can not be tracked across the report. In addition, we use the feminine pronoun for all principal and teacher respondents, male or female. The exception to this is our reports of publicly available demographic data and student achievement results in which cases we do name the individual schools.

## **Overview of Report**

Corresponding to our focus on how the five schools implement KIPP’s theory of action, we have organized the report by KIPP’s Five Pillars: High Expectations, Choice and Commitment, More Time, Power to Lead, and Focus on Results. The introduction to each chapter provides a brief summary of the key findings followed by a description of the implementation of each pillar across the five schools. Chapter 6, “Focus on Results,” presents achievement data. We then turn to conclusions and next steps.

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<sup>6</sup> KIPP Bridge College Preparatory operated under the name KIPP Oak in 2002–03 in a different location.



## **2. High Expectations**

*KIPP schools have clearly defined and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on the students' backgrounds. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior.*

The ultimate goal of KIPP schools is to prepare students, primarily underserved youth from urban communities, for college. To that end, KIPP schools hold students to high expectations for their academic performance and behavior. KIPP schools expect their students to achieve at high levels academically in a rigorous, college preparatory program and demonstrate the desire, discipline, and dedication necessary to succeed at KIPP and beyond. Students are expected to complete up to 2 hours of homework every night, and students must perform at grade-level standards in order to be promoted. Students are also expected to meet a strict code of behavior.

From classroom work to student behavior, all five Bay Area KIPP schools have translated high expectations into actions with visible results. Although the specific curricula and teaching methods vary across schools and across teachers within a school, all five Bay Area KIPP schools have a college preparatory curriculum structured by state standards with rigorous criteria for promotion to the next grade. High expectations for student behavior are embodied in a behavior management system with explicit rewards for following the rules and consequences for failure to do so. Although implemented differently in each school, the basic structure of rules, rewards, and consequences is similar. Though it is clearly effective in its impact on the vast majority of students, principals and teachers note that the program does not work for every student. Nevertheless, interviews and observations concur that one result of strict rules for behavior and homework completion is more efficient use of classroom time.

We describe first how KIPP schools communicate and reinforce expectations for academic achievement and then how KIPP creates a culture of high expectations for student behavior.

### **Expectations for Academic Achievement**

At KIPP schools, all students are expected to “climb the mountain to college.” This clear mission creates a sense of common purpose and cohesion within each KIPP school. Staff, students, and parents are committed to this vision. Teachers believe that every student can learn and be successful and that these shared high expectations will lead to improved student learning: “We’re all here because we believe every single one of these kids is going to college.” KIPP faculty create and reinforce these high expectations for learning by incorporating the college-going mission into all aspects of the school structure and by providing a challenging academic program with a range of supports for students.

### **Reinforcing the Mission**

The expectation that all students will go to college is continually reinforced through daily conversations about college and through a variety of school structures. KIPP teachers at all five Bay Area KIPP schools talk to students about college frequently—from their own college experiences to what it takes to go to college. They constantly remind students that working harder and longer will make a difference for them. To further underscore this expectation, students are grouped into homerooms with college names (typically the names of the colleges attended by their teachers), such as

UC Berkeley, Stanford, Michigan, USC, Northwestern, Duke, and Loyola. Pennants from different colleges and universities are displayed in classrooms and hallways, and each grade level is known by the year that the students will graduate from high school to attend college (e.g., students who started fifth grade in 2004–05 are called the Class of 2012). KIPP faculty also take the students on visits to local college campuses.

Students appreciate KIPP’s focus on college, a topic rarely, if ever, discussed in their previous schools. As one student noted, “[At] this school, they guarantee you’re going to go to college. At the other school, they didn’t even talk about college.” Moreover, KIPP students believe that what they are learning at KIPP will help prepare them for college. The influence of the staff and their high expectations is clear: nearly all interviewed students across the five KIPP schools expressed a desire to attend college. In fact, they have much more to say about their plans and goals for college than for high school.

Because KIPP students believe that working hard will make a difference and lead them to college, most KIPP students do not mind that there are greater demands on them than they faced in schools they attended prior to KIPP in terms of completing homework, behaving properly, and resolving problems with other students. One student reflected, “I’m not putting school before friends, but friends won’t get you to college. I’m busy, but school is more important.” Teachers describe KIPP students as motivated by the concept of going to college and, perhaps as a result, more invested in their learning than students in traditional public schools.

Toward the goal of sending all students to college, KIPP prepares students for selective public and private college-preparatory high schools.<sup>7</sup> As KIPP schools grow, they begin building relationships with top private and public high schools, and hire staff to work on high school placement. One teacher noted that private high schools are interested in KIPP specifically because “KIPP has created a reputation that kids are prepared for a rigorous academic program.”

### **Academic Rigor**

To “climb the mountain to college,” KIPP students are expected to perform at high levels academically in a college-prep curriculum. They are held accountable for completing homework and performing at grade level, and are given the supports to do so, from extra time to access to teachers in the evenings. Students who do not achieve grade level standards are retained.

KIPP schools have a curriculum that includes four years of math, English, social studies, and science, along with numerous enrichment activities, such as music, physical education, drama, foreign language, and art. KIPP schools expect students to do grade level work; however, many begin fifth grade below grade level. One principal described the first 2 years of the program as “catch-up years” used to bring students up to grade level in their basic skills, particularly in reading, writing, and math. Another principal hopes eventually to accelerate learning so that students complete the fifth grade curriculum by the end of April (before standardized testing begins in May) and begin the sixth grade curriculum. The combination of longer school days bolstered by Saturday school and summer school (see chapter 5, “More Time”) and the lack of disruptive behavior makes such acceleration seem possible.

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<sup>7</sup> KIPP alumni have earned more than \$21 million in high school scholarships (KIPP, 2005c).

Bay Area KIPP schools are expected, at a minimum, to ensure that students meet California's grade-level content standards. Although no particular curriculum is mandated, many KIPP schools use state-adopted textbooks. To ensure that students are meeting benchmarks, KIPP schools assess students frequently, through diagnostic tests and formative and summative assessments. These include weekly and biweekly tests (either teacher-designed or provided by a textbook publisher) and cumulative unit assessments every 6 or 9 weeks. Students must also take mandated standardized tests each spring—the California Standards Test (CST) and in grade 7, the California Achievement Test, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey). In addition, to compare KIPP students to national norms, the KIPP Foundation requires all incoming fifth graders to take a norm-referenced test (e.g., the SAT 10) as a baseline and again in the spring or following fall (see chapter 6, “Focus on Results”).

To support student success with grade-level content, KIPP schools stress the value and importance of daily homework and hold students accountable for completing assignments. According to the students, the amount of time they spend on homework is a major difference between KIPP schools and traditional public schools. KIPP students reported having up to 2 hours of homework a night, although many are able to complete some homework at school in the afternoons during study hall. Many students said they had little to no homework in their previous schools. In addition, they face immediate consequences if they do not bring completed homework, signed by a parent, each day. (See the section entitled “Expectations for Student Conduct” in this chapter for more on the behavior management system.) A teacher explained, “If homework isn't done, even if it's a single question, they're going to get a homework deduction. They can't take any shortcuts is one of our mottos.”

Both students and parents contrasted expectations for homework in KIPP with traditional schools. For example, one student said, “At my old school, if we didn't do our homework, we didn't talk about it. Here we can get in trouble because homework is important.” Parents noted that their children are more motivated to complete their homework than they were in their previous schools. As one parent observed, “The kids seem to want to get their homework done....They don't want to let down the other kids. My daughter will freak out if she's not finished. She doesn't want to be the one kid who didn't get her homework done.” Students seem to have internalized the importance of homework. As one student put it: “They give us a lot of homework. But it's worth it. Because if we didn't have homework, we wouldn't be memorizing the new things everyday.”

Teachers also appreciate the accountability placed on students because it allows teachers to use their time in class more effectively. “You can accomplish so much more here because the students are accountable for doing their homework....For me, that's the biggest piece. I know that the kids are going to come to class prepared by and large, so I can make better use of my instructional time,” said one teacher.

To ensure students excel academically, KIPP teachers provide considerable support to students. They are available to students before and after school hours and typically until 9 p.m. by cell phone. Students are given the cell phone numbers of all their teachers and are expected to call teachers if they need help with homework or have any questions. Students and their parents appreciate the commitment and availability of their teachers—especially that they can call any time—and feel the students are learning more than they did in their previous schools because the content is more challenging and the teachers at KIPP take the time to ensure all students understand the material. Two students from different KIPP schools contrasted teachers' expectations at KIPP and at their previous schools:

If you talked in class, at my other school, the teachers don't pay attention to you and you keep talking. Here, they don't let you talk in class. They teach you how to solve the problem so you can do it at home; over there, they just told you the answers.

In my other school, the teachers didn't care if you ran around, if you didn't pay attention. They would shrug their shoulders and walk away. These teachers want you to go to college. They are pushing you to go to college.

Teachers also reinforce expectations through explicit structures and procedures that are consistent from classroom to classroom. Some procedures are the same across all five KIPP schools. For example, all teachers begin their classes by greeting students at the door; and each has written on the board: a Do Now (what students should work on as soon as they enter the classroom), an Aim (the lesson objective), and an Agenda (the schedule for the class). One teacher noted: "All the teachers are in constant communication about what the expectations are in the classroom and outside of the classroom. We all use the same systems as far as checking homework, our behavior expectations, everything from how we write the "Get Down To Business" on the board to the way that we walk in the hallways."

Policies for promotion and retention also communicate expectations. Each school sets grade-level promotion standards. At one school, the policy is that students must pass all of their courses to be promoted. In another school, the students who are retained are those who failed most of their courses during the school year. Despite the supports in place in each KIPP school to help students succeed academically, a number of students are retained each year because they do not meet their school's promotion standards. For example, in the two schools for which we have data, approximately 12 percent of fifth graders in 2003–04 were retained (see Exhibit 2). One principal explained that many of the students who are retained "entered with a big deficit."

**Exhibit 2**  
**Number of Fifth Graders Retained in 2003–04**  
**and Number Who Left to Avoid Retention**

	<b>Fifth Grade Enrollment</b>	<b>Students Retained</b>	<b>Students Who Left to Avoid Retention</b>
School A	74	9	3
School B	80	10	4

Source: Principal interviews.

Although most of the students who are retained choose to stay at KIPP, a few choose to go elsewhere so they will not be held back a grade. (See chapter 3, "Choice and Commitment," for additional data on those who leave and the reasons they leave.) Principals believe that the decision to retain students has a positive effect because those retained tend to be successful; as one put it, the school "couldn't let other kids see that kids who did nothing could move ahead." At one Bay Area KIPP school, students who repeat a grade are called "heroes" because they know they are not ready to move on to the next grade. Focus group parents approved of holding children back, noting that "kids don't tease if they are held back" and "they accept it, they know they need it."

Although KIPP schools have a strong academic program and high expectations for student achievement, establishing a school culture is typically the highest priority for KIPP staff, particularly during the first year of operation. We turn now to a discussion of the development and implementation of systems to regulate student behavior and create strong school culture.

## **Expectations for Student Conduct**

KIPP schools have high expectations for student conduct and are explicit about these expectations. KIPP schools are known for being strict—students are disciplined immediately and publicly for any infraction. Expectations for student conduct are established from the moment that students enroll and are continually reinforced during summer school and the school year through a system of rewards and consequences.

### **Establishing Expectations**

When students enroll in a KIPP school, they sign a commitment form that describes the expectations to which they will be held. They are expected to be on time to school, complete their homework, follow the dress code, and be responsible for themselves. The KIPP school culture is developed during the summer, when students attend a mandatory 2- to 3-week summer session. A significant amount of time in summer school is devoted to establishing expectations for student conduct and teaching students appropriate behavior. They learn how to walk, talk, listen, behave, and work like a “KIPPster.” As illustrated below, students are conditioned to follow KIPP structures and procedures from the first day of summer school.

### **Exhibit 3 The First Day of a KIPP Summer School**

As fifth grade students arrive at their new school, teachers and returning students greet them and direct them to the gym. The students, predominantly African-American, sit silently on the floor and begin their “morning work.” At 7:45 a.m., the staff welcomes the new students and immediately recognizes students who are in proper uniform. Throughout the morning, teachers call the parents of students who are not dressed appropriately, e.g., wearing the wrong color pants, a white shirt without a collar, or sneakers, or not wearing a belt. After the staff and returning students are introduced, students learn how to stand properly in line—silently and with a book in their hand. They are taught that lines should be SILENT, STRAIGHT, and SERIOUS. Students then learn how to walk in a straight line, silently. They repeat standing and walking in line a few times, until they get it right, before they walk to the cafeteria for breakfast.

At breakfast, students are given a few minutes to eat and then continue their morning work. During breakfast, they are taught how to write a KIPP header on a paper and the “Clap Praise” (a teacher counts 1-2-3 and everyone claps in unison). When students return to the gym, the principal singles out students who were late and reminds students the value of being on time. Students then learn silent hand signals for yes and no, the clap that teachers use to get students’ attention, and are taught how to use the bathroom and keep it clean. Throughout the morning, students who are off-task or not in proper attire must apologize publicly to their teammates. Working hard, being nice, and following directions are constantly promoted as values that will get them to college.

The one academic lesson for the day is that students learn to “roll their nines” by repeating “9, 18, 27, 36, 45, ...” over and over, and using their fingers to indicate the multiplier (1 times 9, 2 times 9, etc.). Before students leave for the day, they receive their first homework assignment. They are told that tomorrow, the second day of summer school, teachers will be checking to see that homework is complete and that “agendas” are signed by parents. Teachers will call the parents of students who do not complete their first homework assignments.

In addition, KIPP students are taught during summer school that they must always “Track and SLANT,” terms heard frequently in KIPP hallways and classrooms. Tracking means giving a speaker undivided attention and SLANTing means Sit up straight, Listen, Answer and ask questions, Nod your head if you understand, and Track the speaker. In some KIPP schools, students must “earn” privileges during summer school, from their desks and chairs to the KIPP shirts they wear. At one school, for example, students must “earn the right into the building” by demonstrating knowledge of the school’s ten commitments and prove they are “KIPPsters” in order to receive their KIPP shirt and to sit at a desk.

The school culture is established during the summer session, and reinforced, particularly during the first few months of the fifth grade when students are still getting used to the school. Over the course of the year, the amount of time spent on culture diminishes, but never goes away completely. One principal felt the culture was pretty well established about 6 weeks into the school year; however, the staff continued to focus on culture and put culture before classroom instruction to immediately address any behavior issues. “You design lessons with establishing culture in mind,” noted one teacher. Another said, “I do a lot of culture in the classroom when things are not looking really sunny. I will talk to them for 30 minutes, 40 minutes, if need be. That was the big thing in the beginning of the school year. By October, maybe once every 3 weeks, it’ll be necessary to remind them. [Later in the year] the amount of time culture takes place in the classroom is limited.” To further address school culture issues, schools also hold assemblies to talk about acceptable behaviors, publicly discipline students, and provide extensive direct instruction on procedures, such as forming a line. One principal has built in 30 minutes at the end of the day and padded lunch and breakfast by 15 minutes to provide extra time for teachers to stop classes to address student behavior.

KIPP slogans are prominent throughout KIPP hallways and classrooms and reinforce academic and behavioral expectations (see Exhibit 4 for some examples). Schools also post examples of strong academic work, top test scores, and exemplary homework to acknowledge and reinforce expectations for student learning. KIPP students learn numerous chants for everything from learning multiplication tables to the “Climbing the mountain to college” chant, claps, and hand signals used for nonverbal praise or acknowledgment. For example, noisy chatter turns to silence when a teacher or principal claps twice or when a teacher counts down, students bang on the desk once in acknowledgement, and then there is silence.

**Exhibit 4**  
**The KIPP Credo and Sample KIPP Slogans**

**KIPP CREDO**

“If there is a problem, we look for a solution. If there is a better way, we find it.  
If we need help, we ask. If a teammate needs help, we give it.”

**KIPP SLOGANS**

“Work hard. Be nice.”

“All of us will learn.”

“KIPPsters do the right thing when no one is watching.”

“Team always beats individual.”

“No shortcuts. No excuses.”



For the most part, students have internalized these KIPP slogans and rituals. When asked what it means to be a KIPPster or what it takes to do well at KIPP, students at all five KIPP schools responded with KIPP sayings like: “You don’t act ordinary. You act extraordinary,” and “Work hard, be nice.”

Students also play a role in reinforcing expectations for behavior. KIPP teaches students that they are part of a “team and family” and are expected to look out for and help one another. One student described what it means to be a teammate: “If there was a problem, we help them find a solution. If we needed help, a teammate would help us.” Students are also expected to help teammates with schoolwork and have the phone numbers of all of their classmates so they can call each other, as well as their teachers, for help with homework.

According to students, the way students behave towards each other is a major difference between KIPP and their former schools. Students reported that students get along better at KIPP compared with their previous schools, and they admitted that they themselves behave better. Students appreciate that there is no fighting and teasing. One student commented, “At my other school, kids would fight each other for no reason and they would answer back to the teachers. In this school, they’re not allowed to do that, so it’s better to be here than my old school.” In fact, the majority of students from all five KIPP schools reported that in their previous schools, there was a lot of fighting, teasing, and disrespect towards teachers. Because this type of behavior is not tolerated in KIPP schools, the students feel much safer.

KIPP schools also hold older students responsible for younger students and expect them to model appropriate behavior. This was most apparent in summer school. In one school, for example, juniors (seventh graders) served as “mentors” to freshman (fifth graders) and learned the responsibilities required of older students. In another school, sixth graders monitored the behavior of incoming fifth graders, modeled appropriate behavior, and led some activities, including teaching fifth graders silent signals for yes and no, the clap that teachers use to get students’ attention, and the KIPP credo.

### **Behavior Management System**

All five schools have created multiple structures for communicating and enforcing expectations for behavior. At the core is a strict behavior management system with explicit rewards for following the rules and consequences for failure to do so. Teachers at all five KIPP schools attribute the school culture and results to the consistency with which the discipline system is enforced by staff.

“Every time I give directions or instructions, the first thing I tell them [is] what I expect from them,” said one teacher. “The reason why it works is because the system follows them wherever they go,” observed another teacher, while a colleague added, “In other schools I’ve taught in, every teacher’s expectations were different, and it was exclusively each teacher’s right to interpret a student’s behavior.” Another described: “Because we’re all doing the same thing and we’re so consistent, all the kids know exactly what to expect. There’s no room for them to fool around and mess up and get off task.”

Part of the consistency is accomplished through a detailed system of rewards and consequences. Students earn “paychecks” each week, based on a point system that adds or subtracts value based on both academic performance and behaviors. Students start with a certain dollar amount on their

paycheck and gain or lose points based their behavior during the week. The paycheck is used to buy items from the school store, e.g., snacks, KIPP clothing, and school supplies, and to earn privileges, such as attending an end-of-the-year field trip. The paychecks also are designed for KIPP staff to communicate regularly with parents about their child's behavior. Parents are required to sign and return the paycheck every week. When students do not follow certain rules or their paycheck drops below a certain level, various forms of public discipline and exclusion are triggered (see Exhibit 5).

### **Exhibit 5** **The Paycheck System: Rewards and Sanctions**

Students gain and lose points from their paychecks based on academic accomplishments and infractions of the rules. For example, at one school, each Friday, students nominate their peers for reward points related to excellence, teamwork, curiosity, and integrity and the staff decides which students will earn extra points. Staff at another school award points to students who display “ganas,” or desire, for going above and beyond expectations. Students who maintain a high average on their KIPP paychecks throughout the school year earn the privilege of attending the end of the year class field trip, a week-long trip to places like Los Angeles, Yosemite, or Ashland.

Students lose points from their paychecks for a number of infractions, including not completing homework, not following directions, not being in proper uniform, being disrespectful or off-task, or fighting. Students also receive deductions for not getting their homework signed, not “tracking” a speaker, or not putting a heading on their paper. Students also lose points for being late or absent from school. The paychecks serve as records of students' character development while at KIPP and provide a concrete way for students to understand that there are consequences if they do something wrong.

When KIPP students' weekly paycheck drops below a certain point total or when students commit certain infractions (e.g., failing to turn in homework twice in one week, being disrespectful to a teacher, or consistently violating the dress code), they are publicly disciplined through an “in-school suspension system.” Each Bay Area KIPP school has a different name for this discipline system, such as “Bench,” “Porch,” “Zone,” and “Base Camp.”<sup>8</sup> In each case, students who have been “benched” are identified publicly and separated from their peers. For example, at one school, students must wear a sticker on their shirts that says “BENCH,” while at two other schools, students must wear their shirts inside out. They are not allowed to participate in certain activities or to talk to their peers without permission. Students who are on the bench must eat at a separate “quiet table” away from their peers during meals and/or stand in the back of the classroom during lessons. In addition to being isolated during classes, meals, and assemblies, students must write individual letters of apology to their classmates, teachers, and in some cases, their parents, explaining what they did, why it was wrong, and how they will keep it from happening in the future. In some schools students might have to stay after school or write 50 times: “I will work and behave in the best way I know how and do whatever it takes for me and my fellow students to learn.” Students who are on bench lose privileges, like participating in Saturday activities or attending field trips. In at least one Bay Area KIPP school, the principal solicits student input into appropriate punishment for specific student misbehaviors. Schools also have different criteria for students to get off of the bench. At one school, students must go 3 straight days without getting deductions from their paycheck.

Certain behaviors, such as fighting and teasing, are not tolerated and individual students are publicly disciplined. One parent shared a story about a fight that took place in the boys' bathroom that the boys did not report. The boys ended up having to wear a sign that said, “I witnessed violence and did nothing to stop it.”

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<sup>8</sup> Because the word “bench” is used in two of the Bay Area KIPP schools and in other KIPP schools across the country, we use the term to describe this particular system.

In addition to consistency across teachers, some spoke of the importance of close monitoring of behavior. In one school a teacher noted: “The kids know we’re going to follow through on it [what we say]. Threats, expectations—they mean something.” In another school, a teacher said:

We don’t let anything go by.... They know that teachers will get on them, either by our own consequence system with the bench or talking to the parents, or making them stay after. There are so many different things, they just can’t get away with anything.

The behavior management system works for the majority of students, but not for all. Principals and teachers estimated that the model works for anywhere between 80 to 95 percent of students. Some students simply need more intervention and counseling than the KIPP schools are able to provide. One principal noted that the school does not have the funds to support a social worker or counselor, yet many of these students are dealing with serious personal and family issues. As a different principal put it, “Our school is serving them better than any school has ever done. But some need more than we can provide.”

When the program does not work for students, they may continue to stay on the bench for long periods of time. As one teacher commented with respect to the valued reward of the year-end field trip:

When they take that long to become used to the model here, sometimes I feel that towards the last few months, they give up on the whole thing. They know the trip is coming, but “it’s not coming for me.” So it ceases to have any relevance....Sometimes the deductions for the long-term goal are really too long for children with discipline problems.

Parents too observed that the “bench” system is not always effective. As one parent noted, “Staying in [bench] for 5 to 6 months doesn’t give the children incentives. They get a [bench] clique going.” However, this parent went on to say: “My son has been in [bench] the majority of time, but he has some issues and they addressed them.”

Teachers differed in whether they locate these problems in the school’s culture or in the model itself. Teachers in four of the KIPP schools expressed frustration with the small group of students that “are still resistant to the structure” and “have a hard time following the rules”—students who simply do not respond to the behavior system. One teacher explained, “The behavior system is absolutely in place, but it doesn’t work with all of our kids.” Yet teachers also pointed to some inconsistency in enforcing the rules, especially as the schools increase in size. For example, in one school, second-year teachers were reportedly not as consistent about student discipline as the founding teachers. Students observed these differences and acknowledged that they act up in some classes. Classroom observations also revealed differences in the skill and attitudes with which teachers meted out discipline.

The nature of the discipline problems—and the application of KIPP-style discipline—also varies from school to school, with some schools facing many more challenges than others. KIPP students are generally well-behaved. However, when asked about their most significant discipline problems, principals and teachers across the five schools identified a range of behaviors, from not SLANTing or following directions to student disrespect towards adults. The principal at one school reported few behavioral problems and attributed this to students’ belief that the school is an “extraordinary place”:

We've never had a kid talk back to a teacher, and we've never had kids fight. I don't attribute this to the discipline system. It's from setting expectations from the start. The smallest detail was called out....It's because kids believe that this is an extraordinary place, and we've taught them that. I don't think they don't tease because they are afraid of the [bench]. It's just something that they would not do at KIPP. This is the one school they've been to where there's no teasing. They feel safe, and they are learning more.

KIPP principals and teachers worry about the line between appropriate and inappropriate discipline. Although most support the discipline system, a few teachers and some parents believe the system is too harsh or negative. As one teacher put it, "The program is more to scare kids into behaving well rather than come to an appreciation of how they should behave." Another staff member, however, made the point that, "There is a fine line between public humiliation and making an example out of someone to benefit the group. My feeling is that people give up on our population, and we're doing them a disservice if we let them get away with stuff."

Variations in the culture of each school typically reflect differences in the styles of the principals. For example, principals at two of the KIPP schools pointed out that they "call [students] out on every little thing." They constantly remind students to sit up in class, track and SLANT, say "excuse me" when interrupting a speaker, tuck in their shirts, and look at and engage speakers. In contrast, a different principal noted that the "staff is still learning about whether to get on every little thing." This principal believes the "criteria should be whether it'll help the content better, help the class, help with the culture of the school...I think about everything relating to the purpose—is it to help kids focus or because I want to exert control? Kids walk in lines here, but they don't have to be perfectly straight lines."

KIPP teachers commented on the differences in the school personalities. After visiting more established KIPP schools in the East Coast, one teacher said, "All the schools had a separate identity. We needed to develop ours. We need to put thought into that. Are we strict or do we want a free environment?" Another said, "We're not as smooth or crisp as other KIPP schools. Each school has its own personality. We're still working on being nice to each other, doing the right thing even when no one's watching. At the same time, we've come a long way."

Principals and teachers recognize that the KIPP discipline system needs to evolve along with the students as they move through the grades. Some schools have adapted to different needs by hiring a part-time or full-time Dean of Students to handle student discipline. Teachers and principals believe that students need to take on more responsibility as they mature and that the system needs to shift from external to internal motivation, but they are just beginning to think about how to accomplish this goal.

### **3. Choice and Commitment**

*Students, their parents, and the faculty of each KIPP school choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend these schools. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success.*

Students, parents, and teachers in KIPP schools have chosen to be part of KIPP, and have committed to do everything it takes for students to excel. Each year, they actively choose whether to renew their commitments and stay at these schools.

Parents choose KIPP largely because of its reputation for academic rigor and strong disciplinary practices. Recruitment strategies for students shift after the first year, from knocking on doors and media campaigns to relying on word-of-mouth publicity and, in some cases, strategizing about how to attract the students who are targeted by the KIPP program. The five schools vary in their percentages of economically disadvantaged students, their ethnic make-up, and average entering test scores. Most families stay at KIPP; however, there are some who leave each year. Students leave for various reasons, including family moves, challenging student needs that cannot be met by KIPP schools, grade retention avoidance, or an unwillingness or inability on the part of students or their parents to follow through on their commitments to the school.

Teachers choose KIPP for the opportunity to help create a new school and because of their passion for the mission of the program. The rigor of the teacher hiring process varies from one school to the next and on the time of the year. Almost half the Bay Area KIPP teachers come from the Teach for America (TFA) program; their median teaching experience prior to joining KIPP is 2 years. They tend to be young and without children; few match the ethnicity of the majority of their students. Thirteen of 17 teachers stayed in the job from 2003–04 to 2004–05, similar to national attrition estimates. However, three out of four teachers indicated that the demands of the job may limit their willingness to stay more than a few years.

The first part of this chapter focuses on families who participate in KIPP—including how students are recruited, who they are, why parents choose KIPP, which features of these schools students value most, and the reasons some students leave. The second part of this chapter focuses on KIPP teachers—including a description of who teaches in KIPP schools, why they choose to do so, and teacher turnover.

#### **Who Are KIPP Students?**

KIPP schools must recruit and retain students, convincing parents that KIPP offers a compelling alternative to their current school. Below we describe how KIPP schools recruit and provide a snapshot of each school's student population.

#### **Student Recruitment Strategies**

KIPP principals play a large role in recruiting students and use a variety of strategies. When the schools first opened, they walked the local neighborhoods, going door-to-door, educating families about KIPP and conducting in-home interviews. For many parents, the home visits made quite an impression, signifying the school's commitment to students and their families. As one parent shared,

“I met with the principal at my house. [The principal] spent 2 hours with me. I was impressed with the principal, that [the principal] pays attention to parents and kids.”

All but one of the five KIPP schools in the Bay Area used ads or other forms of media to inform families about KIPP. Principals put ads on the radio, appeared on TV programs, or hosted newspaper or television crews to cover the first day of the school year.<sup>9</sup> These types of publicity efforts have gained KIPP schools exposure in their local communities. One principal reported that a waiting list for fifth grade resulted after the media covered the first day of school. In the one Bay Area KIPP school which did not rely on ads and the media for publicity, the principal found that, after the first school year, relying on the current student body at KIPP to spread the word was more effective. “It’s got to be face-to-face contact,” she said.

As the Bay Area KIPP schools become more established, the number of interested families has increased so less time is needed for recruiting. Increasingly, word-of-mouth efforts serve as a key way in which people learn about KIPP. The schools rely heavily on parents and students to spread the word about KIPP both informally in conversations with friends and family and formally by recruiting people at their places of residence, employment, worship, and recreation, as well as at feeder schools.

By the start of the 2005–06 school year, Bay Area KIPP schools were beginning to use lotteries and waiting lists to select students. KIPP principals and staff still conduct home visits but after students enroll rather than for recruitment purposes. Given increasing interest in KIPP schools on the part of parents and students, some principals expressed concern about “creaming” already high-performing students from local schools when there remains a large number who are low-performing and underserved. One principal expressed dismay with the school’s struggle to enroll Title I students, whom she considers to be her target population. KIPP principals purposively took steps to recruit lower-performing students by targeting specific feeder schools or the local Boys and Girls Club. Also, two of the principals who believe that exposure to diversity is important are trying to recruit students from a range of neighborhoods. One principal recalled, “[We] tried to recruit in [the Latino region of the city] but had no luck—kids maybe felt it was out of their jurisdiction.” Another principal, targeting the Asian community, said it was difficult to get people to participate in KIPP and is now making efforts to make more connections with this group.

### **A Demographic Snapshot of Bay Area KIPP Students**

The five Bay Area KIPP schools are predominantly minority and economically disadvantaged, serving their intended target population. Exhibit 6 presents demographic data for the five KIPP schools and a set of comparison schools. The comparison schools were identified by the KIPP principals as the schools from which they draw the most students. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the five KIPP schools ranges from 50 to 84 percent. African-American students make up from 4 to 80 percent and Latino students from 3 to 71 percent. Similarly the percent of English learners ranges from 3 to 56 percent. Compared to their feeder schools, KIPP schools as a group tend to have fewer English learners and slightly more females. Three have more economically disadvantaged students; two have fewer. Most have higher percentages of minority and economically disadvantaged students than the average for their district.

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<sup>9</sup> According to the KIPP Foundation, their staff help arrange for principals to appear on local television and radio programs, propose stories to print reporters about KIPP’s door-to-door recruiting efforts, and send out press releases about school openings.

**Exhibit 6**  
**KIPP School Demographics Compared with District and Feeder Schools, 2004–05**

	<b>Percent Free and Reduced- Price Lunch</b>	<b>Percent African- American</b>	<b>Percent Latino</b>	<b>Percent English Learners</b>	<b>Percent Female</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>
<i>San Francisco Unified</i>	52.6	13.9	21.7	29.2	48.3	57,144
<b>KIPP Bayview Academy</b>	84.0	79.5	2.5	3.1	60.2	161
Harte Elementary	83.1	42.3	30.4	27.9	48.4	312
Malcolm X Academy	67.5	62.8	5.5	7.7	47.0	183
<b>KIPP SF Bay Academy</b>	84.4	56.7	17.3	13.4	50.4	127
Cobb Elementary	80.3	64.5	8.7	14.2	39.9	183
Swett Elementary	63.5	45.3	21.5	28.3	44.9	265
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	65.5	41.2	34.3	29.0	49.1	49,214
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	49.5	78.9	15.7	2.5	50.5	204
Lafayette Elementary	75.4	69.2	23.5	21.9	49.2	439
Prescott Elementary	83.3	67.4	24.8	23.5	50.2	408
<i>Alum Rock Union Elementary</i>	80.0	3.0	76.3	59.7	49.0	13,629
<b>KIPP Heartwood Academy</b>	78.7	3.8	70.5	56.4	53.8	78
Chavez Elementary	88.4	2.2	89.0	64.9	47.0	764
San Antonio Elementary	86.2	2.0	80.1	72.8	48.9	654
<i>San Lorenzo Unified</i>	33.0	15.1	42.8	25.5	48.7	11,544
<b>KIPP Summit Academy</b>	63.8	24.2	24.8	9.4	49.7	149
Hesperian Elementary	49.9	16.0	54.7	53.2	47.9	698
Hillside Elementary	63.0	33.9	47.6	42.9	51.6	552

Sources: California Department of Education (2005a, 2005b).

The average test performance of entering fifth graders varies across the five Bay Area KIPP schools, based on the SAT 10 administered in the fall of fifth grade. Exhibit 7 presents the fall fifth grade scores for each school to indicate a rough baseline for student achievement. As we discuss in more detail in chapter 6, “Focus on Results,” these data are limited in two respects: (1) the tests were administered over an 8 week period so some students had been in school longer than others (summer school and/or the beginning of the school year); and (2) we have no fall data from the district or comparison schools, so can only compare the scores with other KIPP schools and national norms. Despite these limitations, clear differences are evident across the five KIPP schools. The percent of students performing at the 50th percentile and above in reading ranged from 7 percent at Bayview to 39 percent at Summit. Similarly, the percent of students at or above the 50th percentile in math ranged from 13 percent at Bayview to 62 percent at Heartwood (these two schools had comparable test administration dates).

**Exhibit 7**  
**Percentage of Fifth-Grade Students Scoring at or above**  
**the 50th Percentile on the SAT 10, Fall 2004**

<b>School</b>	<b>Test Date</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Language</b>
Bayview Academy	9/14/2004	7	13	15
Bridge College Prep	9/27/2004	20	30	22
Heartwood Academy	9/15/2004	27	62	*
SF Bay Academy	8/1/2004	26	28	28
Summit Academy	8/1/2004	39	45	40

\* Heartwood Academy did not administer the language portion of the SAT 10.  
 Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).

**Why Do Parents Choose to Send Their Children to Bay Area KIPP Schools?**

Parents who send their children to KIPP schools sign a contract that signals their commitment to getting their child to school on time and supporting their success (see Exhibit 8). Although the parent role in school affairs is limited at KIPP schools, enrolling a child at a KIPP school carries significant responsibility. Parents make this commitment because they value much of what KIPP schools have to offer. When asked what attracted them to—and keeps them at—KIPP schools, parents pointed to academic rigor, staff commitment and accessibility, behavior management, after-school hours, and student growth. Some parents had been so frustrated with their neighborhood public schools that they were at the point of considering home schooling and, in some cases, private schools. In fact, some KIPP students come from private schools trusting that they will get similar benefits at no cost.

**Exhibit 8**  
**Sample Parent/Guardian Commitments Required by KIPP**

- We will make sure our child arrives at school every day by 7:30 a.m. (Monday–Friday).
- We will make arrangements so our child can remain at school until 5:00 p.m. (Monday–Thursday) and 3:00 p.m. on Friday.
- We will make arrangements for our child to come to school on appropriate Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. and remain until 12:00 p.m.
- We will ensure that our child attends the school’s summer session each year.
- We will always help our child in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn. This also means that we will check our child’s homework every night, let him/her call the teacher if there is a problem with the homework, and try to read with him/her every night.
- We will always make ourselves available to our children and the school, and address any concerns they might have. This also means that if our child is going to miss school, we will notify the teacher as soon as possible, and we will carefully read any and all papers that the school sends home to us.
- We will allow our child to go on school field trips.
- We will make sure our child follows the school dress code.
- We understand that our child must follow the school rules so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. We, not the school, are responsible for the behavior and actions of our child.

Source: KIPP (2005f).



## **Academic Rigor**

Parents value academic rigor of KIPP schools. Parents reported that their students experience a more challenging workload and higher quality of instruction at KIPP than in previous schools. They frequently noted a difference in the academic standards institutionalized at KIPP, describing the program as “more advanced,” “in a class by itself,” and “how I imagine a private school to be.” Parents observed that their students are expected and motivated to work hard and learn a lot at KIPP. One parent contrasted his child’s learning at KIPP with his former school, “The curriculum is more intense. Academics are geared to a higher level. My son came from a really good school. He was an honor student. Here, the standards are much higher, so it was a real shock. At first, he was intimidated by the workload.”

Parents also value that KIPP is preparing their children to attend college. For many of the parents, who themselves have not attended college, the promise to get every student to college is a significant draw of the program. “I told my daughter, ‘I put you here because I want you to be somebody, to go to college,’ ” explained one parent. Another, who identified the college preparatory focus of KIPP as a selling point, said, “Most schools don’t mention [college] until you’re in high school. Here, they are going to teach you how to succeed in college. I didn’t go to college....Ever since my children were younger, that has been my focus, college, the only thing that will open doors.” Parents value that KIPP schools teach students about specific colleges; as one put it, “This is very motivating for our children. They don’t have awareness of colleges other than [the local state university] and [the local] community college.” At the same time, they worry about where their students will attend high school in the absence of a KIPP high school. As one wondered, “Will there be a high school that will be able to accommodate the needs of my child in ninth grade because he’s going to be so advanced?”

## **Staff Commitment and Accessibility**

Parents described KIPP staff as exceptionally devoted. Parents like that KIPP feels “family-oriented” and that students know their teachers care about their education. They trust that KIPP teachers will help their children and value the personalized attention they and their children receive. As one parent said, “The teachers are focused on the kids’ learning—they can tell me something about my daughter, and that has made a big difference. They know which kid they’re talking about.” Another commented, “I never saw a school bend over backwards to help someone who doesn’t fit in to fit in—they go to extremes.” In one of the KIPP schools, parents noted that the principal had helped set up a carpool system among parents to help them get their children to school on time.

Across all of the Bay Area KIPP schools, parents described teachers and principals as very approachable. Parents value the open communication channels and the invitation to visit school without an appointment. Parents also appreciate that KIPP schools encourage students to request assistance on homework from teachers. They love that their children can call teachers during the evening for help, and they notice that their children are more comfortable approaching staff than in former schools.

## **KIPP’s Behavior Management System**

Many parents cited KIPP’s behavior management system as a reason for choosing to send their children to KIPP. They reported that students in these schools comport themselves well, are well-mannered, and welcoming to other children. They appreciate that KIPP does not tolerate fighting or

bullying; and that if children are picked on, KIPP staff deal with it right away. Many of the parents like the paycheck system that KIPP uses; they find that it provides incentives to students to behave and not act “wild.” Some parents also appreciate that KIPP supports the same behavior expectations they hold for their students at home. A few think that the system is too punitive and worry about students who are frequently “on the bench.” (See chapter 2, “High Expectations.”)

### **Extended Day**

Many parents feel their children are safe knowing that they are at school for the full day. A few commented that the hours seemed long at first, but they and their children have adjusted to the length of the KIPP school day. Parents like knowing that their children are doing something constructive during “afterschool” hours. For many families, the longer school day means they do not have to worry about childcare. This is significant for parents who work full time during the day.

### **Student Growth**

Parents described major improvement in their children’s grades, learning, and behavior. Mid-way through her child’s fifth grade, one parent noted, “What my daughter didn’t learn in fourth grade, she knows now in this short period of time.” Another said, “My daughter had the hardest time with multiplication and couldn’t get it down—three days at KIPP, and she had it down all the way to the 12s...Math is now her favorite class.” Other parents expressed similar experiences—that their children had struggled at their previous schools but were now making great strides, especially in math, reading and writing. Parents also reported that their students were earning higher grades and surpassing older siblings in terms of academic knowledge. Some parents even noted that their children were learning material with which they themselves were unfamiliar; as one put it, “It feels good as a parent to go to your child [and say], ‘how do you spell this?’ ”

Parents were equally expressive in terms of student behavior, believing that KIPP has taught their children responsibility and to understand that their choices lead to consequences. One commented, “It teaches them responsibility. I’m amazed in the last two years—her behavior and her level of ability...KIPP was able to rein her in. They were able to deal with her attitude issues and difficulties. The staff teach [students] how to deal with their own issues.” Other parents have also noticed their children getting in trouble less frequently now that they attend KIPP. Another parent reported, “My son has changed since he’s been at KIPP—he takes responsibility for things he’s done. He’s done better—educationally, morally.” Parents also described changes in their children’s attitudes, noting that KIPP encourages shy and quiet students to participate. One parent contrasted her son’s experience at his former school with his experience at KIPP, “He thought he was stupid. Now he knows that he can learn.”

Overall, the parents who participated in the focus groups were extremely positive, though they did mention small complaints: for example, physical facilities are often shared with less desirable schools; opportunities for recreation and sports are limited; and transportation is a challenge for some.

### **What Features of KIPP Schools Are Valued by Bay Area Students?**

Students who attend KIPP make a commitment to the school community as well (see Exhibit 9). Though parents typically make the decision to send their children to KIPP—sometimes to the children’s dismay—students also come to value several aspects of these schools. During the student focus groups, some children recounted how their parents had forced them to attend KIPP yet

realize now, if not then, that their parents believed it would be a “better school” than the one they had been attending. One student said, “I keep telling my mom that I want to go to a different school, but she says no. I tell her what I’m learning in class, and she says, ‘that’s the reason why you are staying.’ ” Another parent described the situation as awful the first year, getting her daughter to attend KIPP, “I had to drag her here. No problem this year.”

**Exhibit 9**  
**Sample Student Commitments Required by KIPP**

- I will arrive at school every day by 7:30 a.m. (Monday–Friday).
- I will remain at school until 5:00 p.m. (Monday–Thursday) and 3:00 p.m. on Friday.
- I will come to school on appropriate Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. and remain until 12:00 p.m.
- I will attend school during the summer school session each year.
- I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for me and my fellow students to learn. This also means that I will complete all my homework every night. I will call my teachers if I have a problem with the homework or a problem with coming to school, and I will raise my hand and ask questions in class if I do not understand something.
- I will always make myself available to parents and teachers, and address any concerns they might have. If I make a mistake, this means I will tell the truth to my teachers and accept responsibility for my actions.
- I will always behave so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. This also means that I will always listen to all my teammates and give everyone my respect.

Source: KIPP (2005f).

Students primarily spoke about four areas in which KIPP schools differ from other schools: the shared commitment to learning and getting to college, safety, teachers’ care for students, and the course offerings and quality of instruction.

Students perceive that, at KIPP, “everyone is committed to learning.” As one student put it, “I needed to learn more. The other school was not challenging enough, and I’ve found it has been here.” Another described what he noticed when he first arrived at KIPP: “It seemed like a great school to learn. Before, in my other school, there were not a lot of kids that wanted to achieve what I wanted to achieve.” KIPP students also discussed valuing the expectation—in some ways, a “guarantee”—that all of them will go to college. “College, I used to think you could get there, but now I realize you have to work to get there. It’ll take a lot of work, more homework and stuff,” explained one student. As one teacher put it, “At this school, it’s okay to be smart, and that’s something that is lacking at most inner-city public schools.”

Students also value KIPP because they feel safe in school. Across the five Bay Area schools, students noted that there were fewer fights, if any, than they experienced in their former schools. They like that KIPP does not allow teasing and that students are more respectful of each other. One student who reported that he used to get into fights at his old school said, “At this school, something holds me back from getting into fights. Here we talk about it. People tell you to do the right thing.”

Students perceive that the teachers at KIPP pay more attention and are more committed to their learning than teachers in their other schools. KIPP students report that they are learning more quickly

than they had been prior to KIPP. “The teachers teach us new stuff in a fun way,” commented one student. Another explained, “At my other school, they didn’t teach very well. They would just go over the book and tell us the information, not [work through] the problems or solve anything. [Here] they teach you how to solve the problem so you can do it at home; over there, they just told you the answers.”

Focus group students had some complaints but most were minor. The most common concerned the length of the school day and homework. Some reported that they missed out on activities and time with their families; some would prefer less homework. Among those who complained about the length of the day, some thought school should start later, others thought it should end earlier. But all seemed to appreciate that they were in a protected environment that kept them out of trouble. (For more on the extended school day, see chapter 4, “More Time.”)

### **Reasons Students Leave Bay Area KIPP Schools**

Most families stay at KIPP; however, there are a number who leave each year. Students leave for a host of reasons. Some leave to avoid retention. Others leave because they move, have needs that the school cannot meet (severe learning disabilities, emotional needs, or behavioral problems), or because there is a lack of commitment on the part of students and/or parents.

Based on data from two of the four KIPP schools in operation during 2003–04, roughly nine percent of fifth-grade students left during the 2003–04 school year (15 of 169). Of these 15 leavers, principals estimate that seven left to avoid retention. One teacher explained, “We don’t have social promotion—if the kid’s failing, then they don’t pass. So there are going to be some kids held over who wouldn’t be held over at other schools because our expectations are higher. And, we’re expecting a few of them will go to another school because they don’t want to be held over.”

When asked why students leave KIPP, teachers at three of the schools named exceptional learning needs as one of the most common reasons. One teacher said simply, “Some kids need more than we can offer.” Teachers described KIPP as unable to serve students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who need one-on-one attention or who cannot move from one teacher and one classroom to another. One teacher described the struggle that KIPP staff face working with children with high needs: “We have IEP self-contained kids that changed their IEP to be here, but it was not good for them to sit in a chair for 9½ hours a day. It was not possible. The principal is committed to teaching all kids, but we are learning that kids that are severely impacted are not right for this school because we don’t have the resources for them.” Staff and parents commented that KIPP schools are not a “good fit” for students who are uncontrollable or prone to violence and unable to follow rules and take responsibility for their behavior. As one teacher put it, “Students with emotional and behavioral needs, we aren’t able to provide an environment that is safe and supportive for them. Our strict system is not designed for every kid.”

In some cases, students leave because they are unwilling or unable to fulfill their commitments to the KIPP community. A teacher said, “[The] school is not appropriate for [a student] that is really low and has absolutely no desire....It doesn’t work for kids who don’t respond to our motivational strategies.” Another teacher explained:

A fair number of students—they never really bought into what we were trying to do or they just didn’t want to be a part of it....We talk a lot about the extra 3 hours, and the

extra homework, and the Saturday school, and the summer school, and that's all stuff it takes to catch up to go to college. Most kids believe that they do need it to go to college, but some kids aren't interested in doing that and they just want to be kids. For a few kids, only between 5 to 10 this year, they and their parents decided this wasn't the right place.

In other instances, students leave KIPP because their parents are unable to fulfill their responsibilities. Teachers spoke about the importance of parents valuing and committing to the school's efforts. For example, one teacher summarized what she saw going on with students who leave KIPP:

The main thing is the parents hadn't really bought into the commitment. They fall behind. They're used to being in schools where they'll pass on to the next grade [whether or not they come to school]. I can't think of an instance where we've given up on kids....It's the parents getting sick of us hounding them to get [the students] here and to do their homework. It's not the kids. It's the family situation.

Similarly, KIPP staff members attribute the loss of some students to the problem that parents do not always like what the teachers have to say about their children or the demands they make of them. As one teacher said, "I think there are times when the parents don't like the strictness of the discipline or don't like the idea that their kid has been yelled at or that the expectations are too high for them or that they don't get enough play time or social time."

In general, KIPP staff said that they do not get rid of students. "Our philosophy is that we always try to hang onto them," said one teacher. Teachers and principals explained that parents tend to be the decisionmakers about whether a child will stay or leave KIPP. A principal described how she might advise a parent about a child who is not succeeding: "We can say, 'We don't think this is the right spot for him, but it's up to you.' We can't kick him out." A teacher at another school explained that an ongoing conversation usually takes place between the student, parents, and teachers, noting, "I don't think we've ever sat down and said, 'I don't think KIPP is working [for you].' We've said, 'How can we make KIPP work better for you?'"

We now turn to teachers: how they choose, and decide to remain in or leave, KIPP. For students, parents, and teachers alike, each year a renewed commitment must be made to KIPP in order to stay a part of the KIPP community.

### **Who Are Bay Area KIPP Teachers?**

In general, only a certain type of teacher survives here....Teachers who have a clear vision of exactly what they want and what the classroom should look like, and are really good at managing strict, structured, organized classrooms, people who are perfectionists, usually strong personalities, people who are very confident in themselves and will continue to believe what they believe no matter what a kid says to them, what a parent says to them. They're really consistent and follow through and don't back down, they have really high expectations. —KIPP teacher

Most Bay Area KIPP teachers are young and new to the profession. Across the five KIPP schools, the average teaching experience prior to joining a KIPP school was 3.6 years, and the median was 2 years. Overall, 15 percent had no teaching experience, 38 percent had 1 or 2 years, 27 percent had 3 years, 15 percent had 4 to 7 years, and 6 percent had 14 or more years.

Although KIPP teachers came from a variety of teaching backgrounds, most have previous experience in high-poverty, urban schools serving predominantly Latino and African-American students—that is, the student population targeted by KIPP. “It’s good to have experience in similar schools with similar kids...I came in expecting exactly what it is. Nothing has surprised me in terms of the amount of work, and how hard it would be. I think it’s because I had some experience in other [similar] schools,” explained a teacher. Across the five Bay Area KIPP schools, three-fourths or more of the teachers had worked in high-poverty, urban schools prior to joining KIPP.

With mixed success, principals have tried to attract minority staff since the schools primarily serve students of color. Across the five Bay Area KIPP schools, roughly 35 percent of the teachers are nonwhite, but few match the ethnicity of the majority of their students. A few of the teachers expressed surprise at the lack of staff diversity in KIPP schools. For example, one commented, “I anticipated finding a more diverse staff—especially with the diversity of kids.” At another KIPP school, a teacher pointed out, “I’ve always been on a staff of mostly African-American teachers—that’s different [at KIPP]. [I’m used to being] more conscious of teaching kids their particular histories, approaching kids with cultural sensitivity, and less fear of touching the issue of race. [Here] we do nothing as a staff to talk about race.”

Amongst all of the KIPP teachers in the Bay Area with prior teaching experience, 67 percent taught at the elementary level, 44 percent had middle school experience, and 15 percent taught high school. In most cases, teachers had public school teaching experience, though a couple of teachers came to KIPP from private and parochial schools.

The Teach for America (TFA) program serves as a common feeder to KIPP, especially among the younger, less-experienced teachers. Overall in the five Bay Area KIPP schools, 44 percent of teachers began teaching through TFA, and all of these teachers had between 2 and 4 years of teaching experience prior to joining KIPP. Rates of prior TFA participation vary across the five KIPP schools, from 14 to 78 percent of the teachers.

Besides TFA, two of the 34 Bay Area KIPP teachers were former New York City teaching fellows who participated in an alternative certification program. Others, not in TFA, had worked with special needs children prior to KIPP. In addition, some of the teachers at KIPP spent time in other industries before teaching—for example, business, marketing and sales, journalism, counseling, and research.

### **Why Do Teachers Choose to Teach in Bay Area KIPP Schools?**

The majority of Bay Area KIPP teachers were drawn to KIPP because of their passion for teaching the population targeted by KIPP and the ways in which these schools are different from other public schools. They chose to make the commitment to teach in a KIPP school (see Exhibit 10) because the model appeals to them and because they can have more ownership of their school.

**Exhibit 10**  
**Sample Teacher Commitments Required by KIPP**

- We will arrive at school every day by 7:15 a.m. (Monday–Friday).
- We will remain at school until 5:15 p.m. (Monday–Thursday) and 4:30 p.m. on Friday.
- We will come to school on appropriate Saturdays at 8:45 a.m. and remain until 12:05 p.m.
- We will teach during the summer.
- We will always teach in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for our students to learn.
- We will always make ourselves available to students and parents, and address any concerns they might have.

Source: KIPP (2005f).

Many teachers compared KIPP schools to their former schools in explaining why they chose to teach at a KIPP school. One teacher described her interest in making larger changes than she felt able to in her former school because of its size: “Being in a bigger elementary school where some classrooms were working and some just really weren’t, it was frustrating, and that was part of the reason I left. I loved my little classroom, and my kids in [my former school], but I felt like I didn’t understand how to help make the changes that the school needed by myself.” Another described studying the KIPP model and visiting a KIPP school which sold her on the idea: “In [my former district], I worked with traditionally underserved kids and found the schools to be an inadequate solution to kids’ needs....I visited a KIPP school [nearby], and the school was like an oasis.”

KIPP teachers also described teacher commitment and dedication to students as an attractive feature of KIPP. For example, this teacher recalled spending a week visiting a KIPP school: “What I saw is that the teachers truly care about the students....I was blown away by the amount of care and how the teachers here stretch themselves so thin. They go the extra mile for the kids, make themselves more accessible. That made me gravitate to here.”

The idea that other teachers at KIPP are also interested in, and committed to, making a difference is highly valued by KIPP staff. “The other teachers are here because they want to make a difference. When students leave my class, there are teachers there working just as hard as I am,” remarked a teacher. Another teacher referred to the benefit of a staff that gets along well, “working with like-minded people in a small environment.” She went on to say, “It’s hard to imagine going back to a regular public school after teaching in a place like this.”

Finally, many teachers were also drawn to KIPP schools because they are enthusiastic about the prospect of building and working in a small school. They appreciate the ownership they have of the school. “There’s more opportunity to have input into things—having opportunities to fix things that aren’t going as well as you’d like,” said one teacher. Another noted, “If something doesn’t work, we can change it by Monday.”

### **Teacher Turnover and Burnout**

Given that the five KIPP schools have such short histories (from 1 to 3 years) and are still adding a grade level each year, it is difficult to establish rates of teacher turnover. The majority of teachers who taught in the four KIPP schools operating during 2003–04 continued in their jobs in

2004–05 (see Exhibit 11). Across these four schools, 13 of 17 teachers stayed in their jobs. For two schools, all chose to stay; in the two other schools, 4 out of 6 teachers and 2 out of 4 teachers remained in their positions. This amount of turnover is consistent with national trends.<sup>10</sup>

**Exhibit 11**  
**Teacher Turnover in Bay Area KIPP Schools between 2002 and 2005**

KIPP School	2003–04				2004–05			
	Continued	New	Total teachers	Left mid-year	Continued	New	Total teachers	Left mid-year
1	3	3	6	0	4	5	9	1
2		3	3	0	3	4**	7	0
3		4	4	1*	4	4	8	2*
4		4	4	1	2	6	8	0

\* These teachers who left mid-year were replaced mid-year.

\*\* An additional teacher was hired and let go after a week of summer school, prior to the start of the 2004–05 year.

Note: Shading indicates that the school was not operating in the previous school year.

Source: Principal and teacher interviews.

However, based on our interviews with all the teachers, one message is clear: in spite of their passion for the work, three out of four Bay Area KIPP teachers described feeling overwhelmed by the demands of the job and expressed concern about how long they can persist in the job if the demands remain the same. Frequently teachers reported that they liked their work, they just were not sure how long they could keep up the pace.

As is common in start-ups and more generally in the teaching profession, teachers do far more than teach. The KIPP model, however, intensifies these demands. Teachers are required to be on the job from 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. and most come earlier and stay later, plus teachers work at Saturday school and summer school. Moreover, the emphasis on establishing culture and implementing the behavior management system requires constant attention to students’ actions. In the absence of a set curriculum, many teachers create their own. Between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., when the students are present, teachers not only provide instruction but also monitor study hall, lead enrichment activities, tutor, and plan lessons, time permitting. As one teacher described, “It’s not about the job that I’m doing, and it’s not about the kind of satisfaction that I get out of being here. It’s just the exhaustion.” Another said:

For me, it’s not the time. It’s the emotional exhaustion through the day. It’s tough to constantly wear so many hats. You have to do so many different things when we are growing. You are always on. I think the formula works, but we also have to start looking at the staff and how it could be sustainable for them. I see why people get burnt out.

Though planning time is built into the day, in reality, this time is usually spent working with students who need extra assistance, calling parents, or helping with administrative tasks. In addition, KIPP teachers are “on-call” for student and parent phone calls in the evening until a set time

<sup>10</sup> For example, Ingersoll’s study (2001) of turnover among teachers in public schools in 1990–91 revealed that 15.2 percent of teachers in high poverty schools departed from their job. Similarly, from 1999 to 2000, 16.8 percent of teachers left schools with high minority student enrollments (Luekens, Lyter, Fox & Chandler, 2004). Luekens et al. (2004) also found that teachers under thirty left teaching jobs at higher rates than their older colleagues.



(commonly 9 p.m.); this allows students to call with questions about homework and parents to find out how students are performing or behaving in class.

Thus teachers work many hours beyond the already long days and weeks. “This job eats people alive,” one teacher said candidly. Another explained: “I don’t think the KIPP model is designed for keeping teachers around. [The principal] said, ‘Well, you put in 2 good years and KIPP is like dog years.’ It’s not a school that will encourage me to stay for 5 years.” A few worried that the lack of time and energy for planning and collaborating with other teachers take a toll on instruction. One teacher commented, “At the end of the day, I don’t have anything left to develop creative lessons, to teach the way I want to teach.”

Bay Area KIPP teachers also find that working at KIPP has a huge impact on their personal lives. The teachers spoke about this in a number of ways, some related to balance in their lives, others directly about effects on their personal relationships and families. Though only 2 of the 34 teachers we spoke with had young children at home and could attest first-hand to the difficulty of raising a family and keeping up with the demands of working in a KIPP school, teachers who identified themselves as being close to the point of having children expressed doubt that they would be able to keep up with the workload and persist as KIPP teachers.

Teachers also described the job demands as having an impact on their lives in that it is almost impossible to miss a day of work because some of the schools have no access to or are reluctant to call on substitute teachers. One teacher said, “At my other school, if [a teacher] is out, you call a sub; here you have to cover for someone else.” Another explained, “None of us have been to the doctor or dentist all year. If your colleagues have to cover for you, you don’t want to not come in.”

Feelings of burnout were more prevalent at some schools than others. In two schools, several teachers reported that the job is the most difficult they have had. Many described the work as draining and feel they did not receive the support, feedback, and resources they need. Similarly, at two schools, a few teachers expressed concern that they may push themselves and each other too far in striving to be perfectionists, and that this is somewhat contagious and can lead to unhealthy competition.

The extent to which teacher’s reports of job stress is a result of the start-up and early implementation phase is difficult to know. Some of the teachers noted that their responsibilities might not be so heavy if they had more funding and could hire additional teachers, as more established KIPP schools in other states have been able to do. One teacher who had recently visited a much larger and established KIPP school noted:

It’s designed to burn you out, making me miserable, but it doesn’t have to. The KIPP school in New York has a stable staff—we should look at them and see what they are doing. Part of it is budget—in New York, they have bigger staffs, more money.

Teachers at some schools had ideas about ways to make the job more manageable, for example, freeing regular teachers during the last 2 hours of the day. Two schools are relieving teachers of some Saturday school obligations. Some also believe that as teachers gain experience, the demands of curriculum development and instruction will decrease. One teacher reflected on how the hours she puts in have changed somewhat over the years:

I finally feel like I have a pretty good handle on it... I do all my prep and grading and everything here....I'm not really working that much on the weekends or bringing much home....But that's after [several] years of teaching the exact same grade, and I'm finally getting to that place where I can do it in 50 or 55 hours a week. I don't think hours-wise it will really get much better. If I were teaching at a school that went from 8:30 to 3, I'm still going to be working on either end to make the preparations ready. If you can get it done in 10 hours a day or 55 hours a week, that's pretty standard for a teacher who's doing a good job in their classroom every day.

However, teachers need to persist in teaching long enough to gain that experience. As the five schools mature, we will have a better sense of the toll on teachers and how much of that is a function of the KIPP model versus staffing, resources, and teaching experience. One common motivation for staying, mentioned by teachers in all five Bay Area schools, was an interest in seeing the student cohort they came in with move through KIPP. "I'd like the opportunity to see these fifth graders graduate and go on to high school. I want to see the growth, the finished product. I want to see the impact that I've had, not myself alone but the school as a whole," remarked one staff member about her decision to stay another year.

## 4. More Time

*KIPP schools know that there are no shortcuts when it comes to success in academics and life. With an extended school day, week, and year, students have more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges, as well as more opportunities to engage in diverse extracurricular experiences.*

KIPP schools add approximately 3 ½ hours to the length of the traditional school day and more than 4 weeks to the traditional school year. This dramatic extension of time is clearly one of the primary features of the KIPP model. The longer days and year provide many additional hours of instructional time and are foundational to a model that professes hard work, no shortcuts, high expectations, and a focus on results. The Bay Area KIPP schools vary in the amount of time devoted to instruction but the lowest still exceeds that of comparable public schools.

This chapter examines the extended time model in Bay Area KIPP schools. The first section describes the extended time at Bay Area KIPP schools and contrasts KIPP school hours and traditional public school hours. The second section examines the use of this extended time within the school day. In order to maximize positive effects on student learning, the longer school days must be managed such that the extra time is well used. This section highlights the patterns of time use and their variation among schools. The third section reports on the costs and benefits of the longer school hours. While they may positively affect learning, they may also take a toll on teachers and families.

### Extended School Time

Bay Area KIPP students attend school roughly 206 days a year. They begin early, at about 7:30 a.m., and do not head home until 5:00 p.m. In addition to the regular school week, students also attend school on Saturday every other week and a 2- to 3-week summer school.

Students begin their KIPP experience with summer school. The length of the summer school day is shorter than a regular school day, typically running from 4 to 5 hours. During summer school students engage in core academic work, but the time is devoted largely to the establishment or reinforcement of KIPP culture and expectations. New students are taught these expectations and also learn many of the particulars of KIPP. They are taught KIPP school chants and hand signals for cheering fellow students or responding yes or no to teachers' questions. The students also rehearse group tasks such as lining up and entering the classroom appropriately as well as how to open and close school binders in unison (in order to cut down on disruptive noise). Returning students are given consistent reminders of KIPP rules and procedures. (See Exhibit 3 in chapter 2, "High Expectations," for more detail.)

Saturday school starts later than regular days, at about 8:30 a.m. or 9:00 a.m., and lasts from 3 to 4 hours. In contrast to weekday school sessions that focus on core academic classes, Saturday school is typically filled with elective classes while academic work consumes a smaller portion of the day. There is a great deal of variation among Bay Area KIPP schools in the amount of academic work they schedule and the elective courses they offer on Saturdays. Three schools provide from 45 to 90 minutes of academic work each Saturday, typically reading or math, and then provide elective courses. The other two schools provide no academic core courses, focusing instead on a day of enrichment classes and electives.

The Saturday elective classes differ across the schools and are often linked with the talents and interests of the faculty. However, some schools have chosen one enrichment course in which all students participate and that serves to define the school. For example, one school makes its mark in theater, another requires orchestra class, and a third offers photography. In addition to these signature classes, the Saturday school classes vary from art, journalism, Mexican dance, and soccer to robotics, cooking, science lab, and Girls' Club. Saturday sessions require additional time from the teachers. However, two of the schools require teachers to attend only half of the Saturday sessions. Also, in some cases, Saturday courses are taught by community volunteers thus helping to relieve teachers of the extra duty.

The addition of Saturday sessions and summer school to long weekday schedules substantially increases the time KIPP students spend in school. The KIPP Foundation states that KIPP students across the country spend at least 60 percent more time in school than traditional students (KIPP, 2005d). Although Bay Area KIPP schools get close to this national average, their actual hours of operation vary as a result of differences in the length of both the school day and year.

While each Bay Area KIPP school drastically increases the school day, the hours of operation vary slightly across the Bay Area schools. The shortest school day among the five schools was 9 hours 20 minutes and the longest was 9 hours 45 minutes, with an average of 9 hours 30 minutes. Similarly, there is variation in the length of the KIPP school year. The shortest school year was 199 days and the longest was 214 days, for an average of 206 days. Though supplemental Saturday and summer days are not the full 9½ hours, according to school calendars KIPP students rack up an average of 1700 hours of attendance each year. As seen in Exhibit 12, the difference between the school with the longest overall school schedule and the shortest overall school schedule amounts to approximately 340 hours of school time across one school year. For the sake of comparison, if traditional school students were to attend full 6½ hour days for each of their 180 school days, a best case scenario, they would accumulate a maximum of 1170 hours (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Linver, & Hofferth, 2003). Under this scenario, the average Bay Area KIPP school would offer 45 percent more school time than a school on a traditional schedule—a substantial increment. A more typical 6 hour school day yields a total of 1080 hours. The Bay Area KIPP average exceeds this by 57 percent.

Although the data are incomplete, state level comparisons suggest that KIPP students spend considerably more time in school than the average student in California. Available data for the five Bay Area KIPP schools, compared to the requirements of the state of California, are reported in Exhibit 12. The table provides the total number of school days for a 12-month year (summer school plus school year), the total number of school hours as recorded in the individual school calendars, and the total number of instructional minutes of schooling each year as reported on the California school accountability report cards (SARC). (Only one of the five KIPP schools had data available on the number of instructional minutes in the school year.)

**Exhibit 12**  
**Extended School Time**

	<b>School A</b>	<b>School B</b>	<b>School C</b>	<b>School D</b>	<b>School E</b>	<b>California</b>
Total School Days	201	199	214	206	208	180
Total Hours for the Year	1,670	1,548	1,886	1,691	1,714	NA
Total Instructional Minutes *	NA	NA	NA	NA	83,500	54,000

\* According to California law, instructional minutes include teacher-supervised school activities except for lunch and recess.

Sources: School calendars and School Accountability Report Cards.

The California Department of Education requires schools to provide a minimum of 54,000 “instructional minutes” each year for students in grades 5 to 8. (According to California requirements, “instructional minutes” do not include recess or lunch time but are inclusive of other school day activities, including up to eight teacher professional development days.) The one Bay Area KIPP school that reported instructional minutes on the state school report card listed 83,500 instructional minutes for the 2003–04 school year. This is 55 percent more instructional minutes than required by California law.

Finally, it is plausible to add to the total number of KIPP school hours by incorporating time spent on homework assignments into an accounting of learning time. Teachers, students and parents report that up to 2 hours of homework are commonly assigned each weeknight, or at least on Monday through Thursday. The homework expectation then adds many additional hours of instruction-related time to student schedules.

While more time is likely to be an important factor in student learning, the efficiency with which that time is used is another major contributor to student learning. We turn next to how the time is used.

**Time Use Within the Day**

While it is apparent that KIPP students attend more hours of school, it does not necessarily follow that they receive more instruction. The distinction between the number of hours in the school day and the number of hours devoted to instruction is an important one. Moreover, the efficiency of the instructional time is also important. KIPP aims to do both to significantly boost student achievement. So one question is whether the extended day leads to more instruction and the other is whether the time is used efficiently.

Although the structure of the school day varies somewhat from school to school and from day to day, the basic time allocations are similar. Exhibit 13 presents a typical school day structure. Students have 90 minutes of ELA and math every day. They also have 90 minutes of social studies and science on alternating days.

**Exhibit 13**  
**A “Typical” KIPP Day**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>7:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Breakfast and Morning Work</b>
	Students enter the school cafeteria, sit together as a class group, and begin work on a morning worksheet while eating breakfast. The teachers walk around and check for completed homework.
<b>8:15 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>
	After a quick transition into the classrooms the students quietly begin work on a “do-now” assignment and then transition into reading a story together from a textbook.
<b>9:50 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.</b>	<b>Math</b>
	A quick review of the previous day’s work begins the class and is followed by a KIPP math chant about the nine times tables called “rolling the 9s.” In a back and forth conversation, teacher and students begin to review material for tomorrow’s quiz.
<b>11:25 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Writing Class</b>
	At the beginning of class the teacher asks, “What do you want to do today?” and the students respond, “We want to write! The more we write the more we learn!” And then they begin writer’s workshop and a review of how to write paragraphs.
<b>12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Lunch and Recess</b>
	In fairly straight lines the students walk to lunch in the cafeteria, supervised by the teachers and principal. The students that are “on the bench” sit quietly at a separate table and are not allowed outside with the others for recess.
<b>1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
	The students greet the teacher in chorus and are then separated into small groups to begin preparing together their presentations of sections of the Declaration of Independence.
<b>2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Enrichment Class</b>
	Students separate into small groups to attend art class, orchestra, language class, or journalism.
<b>3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Reading or Math Skills</b>
	Teachers work with small groups of students organized by level of mastery of specific reading or math skills.
<b>4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>PE</b>
	The students head outside to the playground for quasi-structured activities and games taught by a teacher or school volunteer.
<b>4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Study Hall</b>
	Sitting quietly the students begin working on their homework. If they complete their work early, they “assign themselves,” often by taking out a book and reading.
<b>5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Students Dismissed</b>

We conducted 2 full-day observations of time use at each KIPP school during the middle and near the end of the school year. We followed one group of students through their entire day. The observations took place on weekdays and did not include Saturday school or summer school sessions; therefore they provide a snapshot of the KIPP school activities but are not necessarily representative of the KIPP schedule or school year. As a result, our findings may not be an accurate

representation of how time is spent across the school year. The observations represented all three grade levels: one observation of seventh grade, three observations of sixth grade, and six observations of fifth grade.

Each observation classified school day activities into one of five categories: instructional, enrichment, culture building, procedural, and unrelated. *Instructional* tasks are those directly related to core academic curriculum and include teacher lectures, group work, and individual student work. *Enrichment* activities are skill-based learning tasks that are not directly part of traditional academic curriculum but include physical education, music courses, and electives. *Culture building* activities are related to the instruction in KIPP behavior and procedures as well as the management of discipline issues and the paycheck system. *Procedural* tasks are those that are required by the school or teacher for the smooth operation of the school but are not directly related to instruction such as lining up, taking attendance, and moving between classes. Finally, *Unrelated* activities include recess, lunch, and other activities not related to student learning or school procedures.

Across ten observations, two for each school, an average of 56 percent of the day was spent directly on core academic instructional activities (see Exhibit 14). When enrichment activities (such as art and music classes and physical education) are added to the instructional time total, the proportion of the day spent on learning activities increased to an average of 64 percent. Research on time use in regular public elementary schools reveals similar levels of efficiency—i.e., approximately half of the school day is devoted to core academic instruction; when nonacademic subjects are included, the proportion increases to roughly two-thirds (Karweit, 1985; Smith, 1998). However, the same level of efficiency (64 percent) translates into almost 60 percent more instructional time on average for KIPP students comparing the 9½ hour KIPP day to a more typical 6-hour school day.

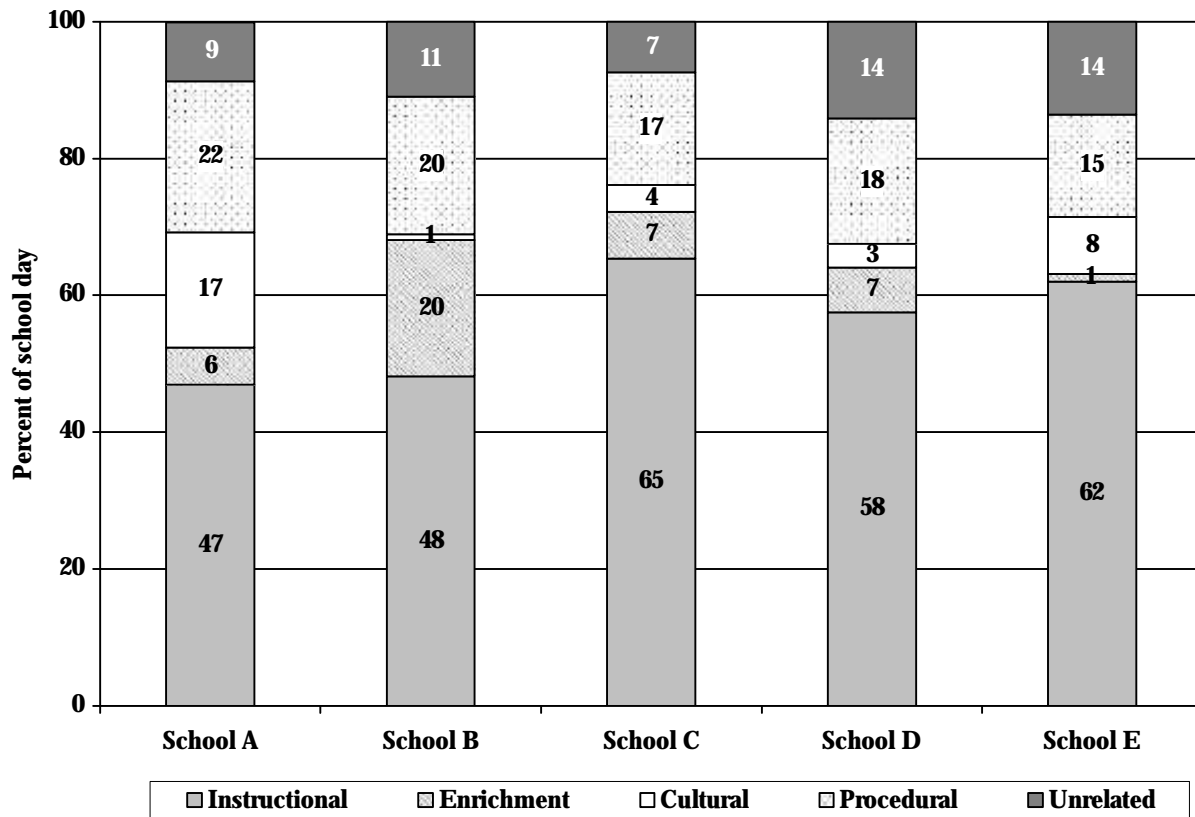
The efficiency of time allocation and use varied across the five Bay Area KIPP schools. For example, the percentage of time spent on core academic instruction extended from a low of 47 percent to a high of 65 percent. In terms of actual time, this is a difference of 102 minutes a day from the least efficient to the most efficient school. Over a 180-day school year this adds up to a 306 hour difference in core academic instructional time for students.<sup>11</sup> This 306 hour difference is roughly equivalent to 32 KIPP-length school days.

Nevertheless, even the lowest percent of academic instructional time in KIPP results in more instructional time than in regular public schools. The Bay Area KIPP schools average over 300 minutes a day for core academic instruction and 365 minutes a day when enrichment activities are included. The latter figure exceeds the length of the entire day for most regular public schools which typically run six hours or 360 minutes. A study based on observations of over 200 teachers in 15 elementary and secondary schools in Chicago found that students experience roughly 185 minutes of core academic instruction and 220 minutes of total instruction per day (Smith, 1998). Whether the comparison is for core academic instruction or total instructional time, KIPP schools average approximately 60 percent more instructional time than those in the Chicago study.

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<sup>11</sup> The instructional efficiency of Saturday school and summer school sessions were not measured and so they are not included in these comparisons.

**Exhibit 14**  
**Daily Time Use by Category**



Source: Time use observations.

Looking beyond the time spent on instructional and enrichment activities, procedural activities took up the next largest part of the day at 18 percent on average, ranging from 15 percent to 22 percent. Unrelated activities took up about 11 percent of the day, with a low of 7 percent and a high of 14 percent. Culture building activities consumed about 7 percent of the day, ranging from 1 percent to 17 percent.

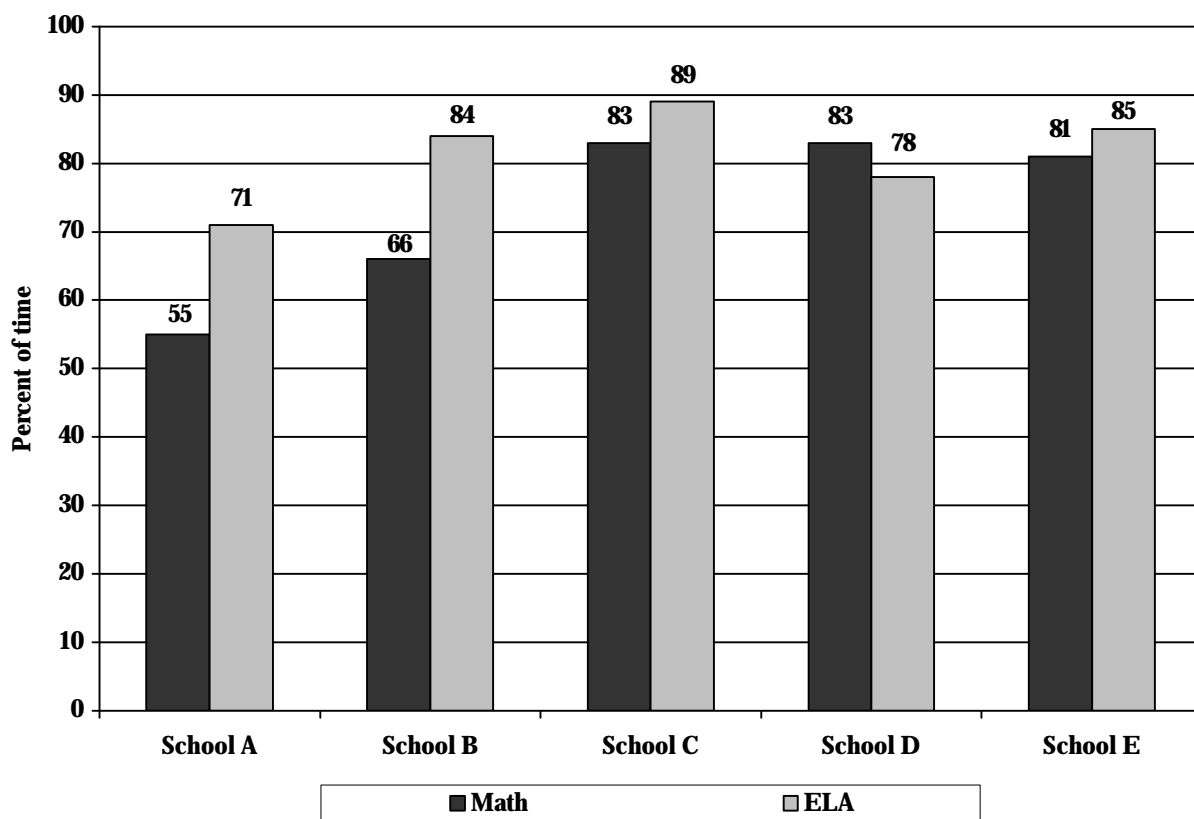
Because the KIPP model depends on building strong cultural expectations and patterns of behavior, we were surprised that the culture building activities took up the smallest portion of the day on average. These activities include enforcing and talking about KIPP standards as well as managing poor behavior. The observations recorded small changes in classroom activity and assigned even short classroom behavioral interruptions as culture building activities, thereby capturing the most common student disruptions no matter how small. Nevertheless, the percent of time devoted to culture building was quite small. We infer that the small percent of time devoted to explicit culture building and behavior management is a function of the time of year when we observed. As noted in chapter 2, “High Expectations,” teachers reported spending substantial time in summer school and during the early part of the school year establishing expectations for student conduct. The observation data suggest that the emphasis on culture building within KIPP schools does not require a substantial portion of the school day once routines have been established.



Moreover, each day's opening routine of quiet breakfast time and morning work provides an opportunity for staff to issue praise and reminders of behavioral expectations.

Exhibit 14 reports the percentage of time devoted to instruction across the whole school day. Observations also reveal the amount of instructional focus within specific class periods. Core academic instruction can often be limited by school and classroom procedures, behavioral disruptions, or just poor time management. On average, each of the schools allocated about 90 to 95 minutes each for math and English language arts classes (this total does not include additional writing classes or tutorial type instruction that may occur at other times of the day). Yet, the efficient use of that allocated time for instructional activities differed greatly across schools. Exhibit 15 provides a comparison of the average percent of time focused on instruction at each school during individual math and English language arts classes.

**Exhibit 15**  
**Percentage of Allocated Time Spent on Instructional Activities**



Source: Time use observations.

Most classes spent more than 80 percent of the designated time on the task at hand, made possible by the culture of good behavior and having completed homework. Yet, there was an extensive range among the observations, both within and across schools. In one class observed, for example, a guest speaker provided an enrichment activity rather than an academic one. In another, the teacher spent most of the class dealing with behavior and culture building issues. For math class, the percentage of allocated time used for instruction ranged from 55 percent to 83 percent, or from

approximately 52 minutes to 79 minutes of instruction based on a 95 minute class period. Assuming that math is taught Monday through Friday over a 180-weekday school year, this difference of 27 minutes a day between the most efficient and least efficient math periods equals 81 hours of instructional time. For English language arts classes the efficiency was generally higher, ranging from 71 percent to 89 percent of the allocated time focused on instruction. During a 95 minute class, this is a difference of 17 minutes. If English language arts classes are taught each weekday of a 180-weekday year, this difference amounts to a 51 hour difference in English instruction in one year. Thus differences in the percent of time focused on instruction can translate into large differences over the course of the year.

It is important to reiterate that these observations are snapshots of the school days and as such may capture unusual uses of time that are not typical of the majority of the school days. Therefore, the comparisons between schools and extrapolations are limited to the extent that they may record activities that are atypical for any individual school.

Finally, the KIPP model extends the school day beyond the traditional ending time of around 3:00 p.m. Because an important notion of the model is that extending the day provides many more instructional hours, it is useful to look at the instructional efficiency of the last 2 hours of the day, the hours from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. During the earlier parts of the day, KIPP schools adhere to a typical school schedule with core courses scheduled in the morning hours and one or two academic periods after lunch. The last 2 hours of the day vary among the schools but, in general, they provide some time for core academic study along with time devoted to enrichment classes, culture building, or study hall.

Four of the five schools schedule a core academic class in the last 2 hours of the day. In addition, most of the schools scheduled a reading or math skills class that supplements earlier math and English language arts classes. However, not all of the late afternoon hours are focused on core academic work. Time is also assigned to enrichment classes, particularly to PE or music. A couple of schools also schedule “team” time or KIPP culture lessons for those later hours. The most common afternoon period is study hall. Each of the schools offers a 30–45 minute study period, perhaps reducing the amount of time that students are required to spend later on homework.

On average, the schools spent 49 minutes, or about 41 percent, of the last 2 hours of the day on core academic instructional activities. But the variation among schools was large, ranging from no time on academic instructional activities to almost all the time (105 minutes). The time not spent on academic instruction was predominantly used for enrichment activities; this time ranged from none to just over an hour. This arrangement of enrichment periods at the end of the day could be seen as a way to free up the earlier school hours for core academic work. Yet, across the observed school days some of the afternoons seemed to be used well and some were seemingly squandered in procedural or unrelated tasks. At one extreme is the example above with most of the time devoted to academic instruction. Yet, in 6 of the 10 observations, roughly a half hour or a quarter of the last 2 hours were spent on procedural tasks or on activities unrelated to instruction, enrichment, or culture.

## **Benefits and Costs of Extended Time**

The potential benefits of extended time are clear: more instruction is likely to lead to higher achievement. At the same time, such long days can lead to stress for teachers as well as students and their families. Our interviews provided more insights into both the costs and benefits of extended time.

### **The Benefits of More Time**

As described above, the extended day model provides substantially more instructional time than the traditional school model. The most likely, and hoped for, benefit of this increased time is growth in student achievement. The direct link between time and achievement is not possible to make in this study of Bay Area KIPP schools. However, the expressions of students, parents, teachers, and principals suggest that extra time is integral to KIPP and to student success. Their comments fell into three general areas that describe the benefits of more time: additional learning time, better use of students' time, and a mark of commitment.

**Additional Learning Time.** In the KIPP model, the primary purpose of extending the school day is to increase student learning. And, despite a commonly expressed hesitancy to get out of bed early, many students remarked on the academic advantages of a long school day. One student stated that her favorite thing about the school was how much time there was to learn. Another student said, “[The days] are long but I don’t want to change anything because I get smarter every day.” Still another added, “It helps us go to college and learn all we can.”

Parents too expressed support for the extra time requirement as part of the effort it takes to succeed. The link between long hours and hard work was important to parents. As one mother said, “My son likes to come here because of the hours—he likes the time and the [rigor]—he recognizes that he is learning.” And another parent explained, “Sometimes it is a long day, physically that is a lot on me and my son. But if you are going to college you have to work hard. I like the fruits of the commitment and the time spent here.”

Despite the tremendous demands on their time and physical stamina, most teachers talked about the academic advantages to the extended day. Some saw it as a chance to teach subjects, such as science or social studies, which were too often forgotten. Others saw the time as a boon to their ability to teach well. Said one teacher, “[there is] time to go over the same concept until all kids get the concept. I can shoot for 100 percent accuracy.”

The longer day also seemed to provide more flexibility around instruction. A couple of teachers remarked on the ability to do more hands-on learning with the extra time, more student-centered instruction, independent projects, or writing assignments. One teacher expressed her surprise at the value of the long day:

When I was hired, I was told that I would have to teach for an hour and a half, and I had no idea how I was going to fill that time. Now we have an hour and forty minutes a day and I beg for more time. So there’s a lot more actual class time, the kids are in class a lot more. As a result, they know a lot more.

**Better Use of Students' Time.** Some students saw advantages to the long day that were unrelated to academic growth. As one student remarked, “We get out at 5:00 so we won’t get into trouble. Other schools get out at 2:00 or 3:00 and that’s when all the bad stuff happens.” His

companion stated, “I don’t want to get out earlier because when I used to get out early I’d get in trouble. My cousins get out at 2:00 p.m. and they get in trouble a lot.” One student also thought that it was a positive thing that her homework kept her from playing video games. For another student the extra work was teaching a self-discipline that he was proud of: “When I’m at home my friends call me [to play] and I say no. It makes me responsible for myself.”

A number of parents suggested that the long hours at KIPP were a substitute for the long hours their children would have spent in daycare or at Boys and Girls Clubs. Parents balanced concerns about missing valuable out-of-school activities with a recognition of the nonvaluable activities the students were missing such as after school TV, Saturday morning cartoons, or more time at daycare centers.

**Mark of Commitment.** In addition to its potential impact on student achievement, more time is a mark of commitment that sets apart KIPP families and teachers. Because of the long hours, parents recognize that teachers are working hard, teachers admire students for their commitment, and students express pride in their extra effort.

Many parents credited the teachers for staying such long hours. They saw it as a sign of commitment and devotion. As one parent stated, “You can tell the teachers love the students. You can tell the teachers want their students to learn. You can call the teachers anytime.”

A few teachers suggested that more time seemed to facilitate better relationships with students. As one described her experience, “We spend a lot of time together here. It’s hard. There is a lot of emotion out on the table. Everyone is a family. We work through things. We know about everything. It brings us closer together.” In effect, the extra time required by the KIPP model is a shared sacrifice for everyone involved and as such may increase feelings of communal mission and purpose.

By itself, the extended day may not be KIPP’s most vital feature. Students, teachers, parents and principals suggested that other aspects of KIPP were equally important, or even more important, for advancing student achievement. Nevertheless, the extended day is intrinsic to what KIPP is. It is representative of the KIPP message that hard work underlies academic success; it is the foundation of the KIPP credo that “there are no shortcuts.” In this way, the extended school day becomes a symbol of the KIPP way. As one teacher explained, “Like a sports team that works harder, [the students] are putting in more time for learning than their peers.”

### **The Costs of More Time**

The upsides of the extra school hours are balanced by the downsides of those additional hours for teachers, students, and parents. The burden of the longer days seems to fall most heavily on the teachers. Their commitment to improving the achievement of underserved students is tested by the difficulty of giving so much time and energy to their work. For teachers, the long hard days begged questions of efficiency, quality, and sustainability: Are they really using the time well? Would they be better teachers if they had more time to plan? Is there any way to sustain such a demanding school model? So far, the growth of the KIPP model suggests that there are many teachers and families willing to pay large costs in exchange for the benefits of greater student achievement. As expressed by teachers, students, and parents, the downsides to the longer day are the missed activities, changed family schedules, extra demands on teachers, and questions of sustainability.

**Missed Activities.** Students' comments suggest that although they recognize the value of the long day for their learning, many feel that they miss out on sports activities or other after school events because of the long day and homework demands. They often mentioned sports teams or playing with friends as activities that were limited by the KIPP schedule. One parent explained the downside of the hours and the homework, "[My daughter] has no time to play with friends. It is a sacrifice." The Saturday school schedule in particular appears to limit students' participation in community sporting activities.

**Changed Family Schedules.** A second complaint about the day focused on the early start to school. If they were to change one thing, the students often suggested starting at the hour of 8:00 a.m. or a bit later. For some, a long commute created a very early morning.

A couple of parents echoed this concern but in general they focused on how it altered their family schedule. One parent said, "[The routine at home is] she eats, then takes a shower. If we don't go straight home, if I have a little errand in the evening, she's thrown off." Another parent concurred, "If I have any complaints, there's too much homework. My daughter stayed up until 1:00 a.m. last night."

**Extra Demands on Teachers.** The extra time demands were most salient for teachers. When queried about the most challenging aspect of teaching at KIPP, teachers across the board talked about the difficulty of the long days. They were described by a couple of teachers as "brutal" and "exhausting." One teacher described her first year at KIPP: "[Working here] is the hardest thing I have ever done by a long shot. The demands of your time, energy, person, the sacrifices in your personal life. You don't have a life; you work from 7 to 5 and the job is far from done. Phone calls, prep, meetings, prep for the next day. The first year was hell, straight up." (See the section entitled "Teacher Turnover and Burnout" in chapter 3, "Choice and Commitment," for a more detailed discussion of this issue.)

Some teachers questioned the effectiveness with which they used the extra time and suggested that a shorter day may be sufficient. A teacher asked, "Can the kids meet the goals without being here [until 5:00 p.m.]? Does it have to follow that intense time model is my question, and I know that a lot of teachers feel that way." A different teacher stated it more strongly, "I don't believe in the model of KIPP. I think you could have the same test results with fewer hours if you've got the same good instruction." Another teacher expressed her uncertainty about the usefulness of the extra hours:

I often question, honestly, is it really worth it? Is it really worth the extra time? And I'm not really sure. If we weren't here the extra time, they wouldn't get [enrichment classes] which are super valuable...but from a purely academic point of view, if we were here from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and the teaching was the same way, I think we'd get the same results. Sometimes it's like overkill.

The costs associated with the extra time demands may influence the amount of teacher turnover and limit the pool of qualified teachers to a small group who are willing to give their all to the cause. Ultimately, extra time demands may affect long-term sustainability. However, our data are based on schools that were launched at most 3 years ago and which are staffed by relatively inexperienced teachers. Thus it is premature to draw conclusions about the impact of the extra time on teacher turnover or the sustainability of the model.



## 5. Power to Lead

*The principals of KIPP schools are effective academic and organizational leaders who understand that great schools require great school leaders. They have control over their school budget and personnel. They are free to swiftly move dollars or make staffing changes, allowing them maximum effectiveness in helping students learn.*

The KIPP model relies on powerful school leaders who have substantial autonomy over their budgets and staff. To achieve the necessary autonomy, most KIPP schools are charter schools that have a franchise-like relationship with the KIPP Foundation. KIPP puts applicants through a rigorous selection process, provides intensive initial training and ongoing support in implementing the KIPP model, and retains the right to revoke the KIPP name. Ultimately, however, KIPP empowers school leaders to run their own schools free of interference.

Bay Area KIPP leaders are highly motivated and committed educators, although none had prior experience as a principal. Like leaders in many charter schools, Bay Area KIPP leaders have substantial autonomy and enormous responsibility, from locating facilities to recruiting students and faculty. KIPP leaders especially value their autonomy to hire and fire staff and flexibility in how they spend the budget, although we heard few examples of atypical expenditures. As each school expands, the leader's job shifts from one of launching a start-up to integrating more students and teachers and formalizing policies. Leaders vary in their knowledge of curriculum and instruction and in the time they devote to academic leadership. Given the demands of the job and the KIPP emphasis on culture and discipline, academic leadership varies widely across the five schools. As a result, teachers are mostly on their own to develop their academic programs.

This chapter includes a brief description of the individuals who lead the Bay Area KIPP schools and insight into their perspectives on the importance of Power to Lead. We then turn to a discussion of two key aspects of school leadership—organizational leadership, including how it changes over time, and academic leadership.

### **Who Leads KIPP Schools?**

The KIPP Foundation uses a rigorous selection process to screen prospective school leaders, followed by extensive preparation (see Exhibit 16). The Bay Area principals who opened schools in 2003 and 2004 were among five percent of applicants offered admission to the KIPP School Leadership Program. Successful candidates embrace the KIPP vision of high-performing public schools and demonstrate the leadership skills and dedication to implement that vision. In addition, KIPP requires a minimum of 2 years teaching experience in public schools with demonstrated student progress.

## **Exhibit 16**

### **Principal Selection and Training**

Candidates must pass through a six-phase selection process: (1) a written application; (2) a subset of those who have applied are invited to participate in a telephone interview; (3) a subset are then invited to a weekend of in-person interviews and a KIPP school tour; (4) KIPP staff visit the candidates in their professional settings; (5) successful candidates go through a verification process of their references plus credential and background checks; and (6) a final interview weekend during which candidates meet KIPP staff and participate in further interviews. Within 3 weeks candidates are notified of acceptance decisions.

Once accepted, future KIPP principals, known as Fisher Fellows, participate in the year-long KIPP School Leadership Program. The program begins with a 6-week summer Leadership Institute that focuses on instructional and organizational leadership and operational management. This intensive coursework is followed by two “residencies” in high-performing KIPP schools. Fisher Fellows then participate in a 10 day “Bootcamp” before returning to their communities to begin the work of opening their own school.

Consistent with the KIPP Foundation’s priorities, the Bay Area KIPP principals exhibit an intense passion for their work. They share a deep commitment to their students and a strong belief in their mission to do “whatever it takes” to prepare them for college. All of the Bay Area KIPP principals had previous experience teaching in traditionally underserved communities—either urban or rural. Most entered the teaching profession through nontraditional routes (e.g., Teach for America) and stayed in the classroom for a limited period of time (approximately 2 to 5 years). Several of them had experience either teaching in or supporting charter schools. Devoting the time and energy to achieve KIPP’s goals requires each principal to make significant personal sacrifices. Bay Area KIPP principals were young (in their 20s and 30s) and none had children.

Although KIPP’s guidelines for applicants specify that successful candidates must demonstrate an understanding of “the challenges associated with an underserved student population” as well as “the unique history and needs of the community” (KIPP, 2005e), there is no mention that candidates come from the communities they serve. Among principals at the Bay Area KIPP schools, none reflects the race or ethnicity of the majority student group at their school.

### **The Importance of “Power to Lead”**

Principals believe that autonomy is critical to their success. They cited many areas in which having the power to make decisions is essential. The power to hire and fire is the most important, according to all five principals. Another critical dimension is autonomy with respect to budgeting. When asked about the importance of Power to Lead, one principal compared it to the importance of More Time (i.e., the extended school day and year):

I think it is more key than time. Most important to me is the fact that I can hire without the district’s input...Hiring is the most important freedom. Second, the ability to spend money based on students’ need. The Power to Lead piece is absolutely instrumental....[Not having this autonomy] would make it much more difficult to be successful—the teachers and the staff are the heart of the school.



Another principal echoed these sentiments:

It means so much, we can hire the teachers we want to and not settle. We can allocate funds in the way we want...[and] make tough decisions about staffing without the bureaucratic mess. It means we can be creative when we need to.

A third principal also commented on the lack of administrative bureaucracy. She said the key aspect of Power to Lead is that it “allows for really quick decisions” regarding scheduling, allocating resources, and determining curriculum.

KIPP principals have the autonomy to hire and fire teachers because they operate outside of their districts’ collective bargaining agreements, and KIPP teachers are not part of the local teachers’ associations. As one principal said, “Because there’s no union, I hire people who realize that they are going to work 12 hours a day and are willing to do it.” Another principal made a similar observation: “There is not a culture working against doing whatever it takes....If we were in the district, I’d be battling in a culture of, ‘Well, yes, but only until 3 p.m.’ ” In fact, as discussed in the previous chapter, “More Time,” KIPP teachers work long days, they work on Saturdays, and they work during the summer. Many teachers noted that these requirements limit the pool of teachers willing to work in a KIPP school.

The principal’s autonomy is somewhat constrained in one of the five schools because it operates as a small autonomous school within a larger district. Additional bureaucratic requirements add to the job, including the hiring process and certain budgetary reporting. However, because all of the teachers have volunteered to teach at the school, the principal and the local teachers’ union have worked cooperatively.

When asked for specific examples of how KIPP principals allocate resources differently than they might at a traditional public school, several mentioned the field trips for students: “We go on these huge crazy trips at the end of the year. We can choose to spend our money that way and we can raise money to spend that way.” In general, however, school leaders did not allocate their resources in substantially different ways. One likely reason for this is that their small size translated to tight budgets that did not allow for a great deal of innovation. Nonetheless, teachers reported that their principals were more responsive than administrators in their previous schools and districts. As one teacher said, “They’re kind of polar opposites....If we need something, we can pretty much get it.”

We turn now to a discussion of two aspects of the KIPP leader’s role: organizational and academic leadership.

### **Organizational Leadership**

Although principals were reluctant to identify any drawbacks associated with autonomy, it is clear that one disadvantage is that it can lead to overload. As one principal said, “It’s like drinking from a fire hose....It’s impossible to have a moment of the day not filled with work.” Of course, principals of any urban school may feel this way. And certainly principals of start-up schools do. The difference with KIPP schools is the principal does *everything*. At a KIPP school, this includes locating a facility, recruiting students and teachers, creating the KIPP culture, managing the budget, raising private funds, serving as the point of contact for parents and the community, and much more.

The 2004–05 year was the second full school year for four of the five principals. Most talked about how their role had changed from the first year to the second and they anticipated more change in the years ahead. The change is a function of several things. Each year the schools add a new grade level so the number of students they serve and staff they employ grow substantially each year. In addition, the developmental needs of the students change as they move through their adolescent years. As a result of the changing demands on principals, their focus changes from establishing the school to managing growth. A principal described this evolution as follows:

My role has changed...Before I started, my role was getting people to believe in the idea. Last year, it was making sure it was running. This year, it's putting in procedures and processes so that as we grow, it doesn't overwhelm everything.

We turn now to a discussion of principals' priorities and challenges during both the first year start-up phase and the second year expansion phase.

### **First Year: Start-up Phase**

As the school founder, each principal took responsibility for all aspects of getting the school up and running. Before each school opened its doors, this included establishing the school vision, writing the charter and getting it approved, hiring teachers, recruiting students, securing a facility, and arranging for transportation and food service among many other things. As the principal cited above noted, one key aspect of this is getting people—prospective school board members, teachers, community members, parents, and funders—to believe in the idea. In this sense, KIPP school leaders are entrepreneurs.

A regular public school opens in the fall, and whoever trickles in trickles in. [In contrast] we have to bring the school to kids and families, funders, teachers and we have to create the product that we promise. At KIPP you make the promise nobody makes. You need to promise and then deliver on that promise. We prepare kids for college....You look the parent in the eye and say, "If your child shows up and does the work, we will get your baby to college. We will do whatever it takes."

Principals differed in their feelings about whether they were entrepreneurs in the sense of needing business skills. While one said that she sees herself as running a business ("What's our business? Preparing students to go to college."), another said, "I don't think you have to have the skills to start a business, but you have to have the heart and the drive. KIPP gives you the skills."

Once the schools opened, several principals identified setting the tone and culture of the school as a critical first year activity. As one said, "I see myself as the person who sets the vision, the culture—setting expectations for teachers, kids, all of our values. I see that as my priority." Another agreed: "If the only thing we do in the first year is culture, that's fine." Establishing the school culture in the first year involved getting to know each child and their family, serving as a resource for teachers, determining the behavior management system, and motivating everyone—students, teachers, and parents alike.

In addition, all principals needed to raise outside funds. KIPP school budgets are comprised of state, local, and federal funds as well as private dollars that they bring in through grants and individual donors. The gap between what it costs to operate a KIPP school and what California

schools receive in per pupil funding is significant. The size of this gap varies for KIPP schools; analyses of 2003–04 budget information from two of the four Bay Area KIPP schools in operation that year reveal a gap ranging from just over \$2000 per student to nearly \$5000 per student. As one principal said, “In California, fundraising is essential.” As a result of this funding gap, KIPP school leaders need to fundraise between 20 and 40 percent of their annual budgets from private sources. One principal estimated that fundraising takes up about 10 to 20 percent of her time.

One aspect of the work that surprised and challenged principals was their role in interacting with families and communities. In some cases, school leaders faced fairly significant problems with a few families and recognized that they would need to approach community relations differently in the future.

Difficult parents...have made it miserable for us....That’s the hardest thing for me—you see how hard teachers work and rarely see a thank you....Next year, I want to work on having more difficult conversations with staff [about how to deal with parents], earlier on, nipping things in the bud. We could have solved some problems that way.

In other cases, the relationships were not so antagonistic, but still posed a challenge for principals. One principal cited parent relations as the biggest start up challenge: “Really making sure that our parents understand why their kids are working this hard—why they get 2 hours of homework. Most get it, but some still don’t.” In some cases, negative interactions with parents may be exacerbated by cultural and class differences. One principal explained:

I’m still working on getting messages across to parents in a way that they hear me. There’s still—where I grew up, how I grew up causes barriers. Not with every parent, but when parents refuse to believe that their child does these things. And, anger that people have that doesn’t have anything to do with me, but it’s directed at me.

Some of these start-up responsibilities and challenges were one-time events (e.g., recruiting the first cohort of students, locating a facility). Others, such as fundraising and parent relations, will remain constant throughout the years. In addition to these responsibilities, principals were faced with new challenges in their schools’ second year.

### **Second Year: Expansion Phase**

As schools expand—and the number of students and staff increase—KIPP school leaders work to establish systems and processes. Such systems were not needed in the schools’ first year because they typically had staffs of five: the principal, three teachers, and a business manager. A teacher described how the size of the school facilitated communication:

Last year there were only three teachers, and there were three classrooms so I would just talk to both the teachers in the hallway between classes every single day. We were constantly in each other’s rooms asking for advice, about lessons, how to make what we’re learning in math match what they’re learning in social studies.

In the second year, principals recognized the need to focus on managing growth. As one principal explained, “We have a culture now. It needs to be grown and maintained. It can change, but we’re not starting a new school.” Another principal described this process as “getting more of the schema

of the school created.” Teachers also understood this shift. As one said, “This year we’re building on our strengths, figuring out how to grow.”

While principals were aware of the need to develop systems to manage growth (e.g., establishing processes for gathering input from teachers), they still faced significant challenges in keeping up with these changing demands. Teachers at two of the four schools in the expansion phase expressed varying degrees of concern about some of these challenges:

Most decisions are made by a team or group, you feel like you have input. It worked a lot last year with a small group. Now it’s challenging to create a more effective management system with a larger group.

We are going to be a full-size middle school [soon], and our school does not have enough policies in place. Last year...we could get away with “oh, there’s not a policy for that, we’ll make one up as we go.” There’s not enough organizational backbone at our school, and that’s something that needs to change.

Because leading a school is a new experience for these principals, these challenges are not surprising. The individuals leading these schools were identified as having strong leadership skills, but they do not necessarily have experience managing a start-up organization. In addition, in their early years, KIPP schools do not benefit from economies of scale. In other words, the small school size means that budgets are relatively tight and there are fewer people to take responsibility for the many tasks that need to be carried out. In the future, some of these fixed tasks can be distributed over more people.

While many aspects of managing growth proved challenging for principals, instilling new teachers with the KIPP norms and practices may have been the greatest second-year challenge. KIPP schools have strong cultures at least in part because they are run by like-minded people who share a common vision for students. As new teachers join the faculty of KIPP schools, principals struggled with managing staff and “getting everyone on the same page.”

Several principals expressed concern about potential divisions between new teachers and founding teachers. Their comments, however, reflected different concerns. One focused on how to teach the new teachers to emulate the founding teachers. She said, “[Founding] teachers may be concerned about new teachers not being in sync. We need to show them ‘the way.’ ” Another thought the founding teachers could benefit from the perspectives of the new hires. She reported: “The most challenging thing about growth is the feelings and attitudes of the founding teachers, the ‘we don’t need new ideas’ issue.” Regarding this rift between founding and new teachers, several founding teachers acknowledged that they had closer working relationships with those teachers who started the school with them.

To address concerns about integrating founding and new staff, principals talked about using summer school and summer professional development to orient new teachers to the KIPP way:

Enculturating new teachers is hard....We do 2 weeks of professional development. We did OK last year, but it could have been a lot better....[During the summer] existing staff will do a majority of the teaching and introductions while newer staff sits back and watches. Then, it’s just time. Lots and lots of conversations. We meet a lot and talk a lot.

To support ongoing dialogue among teachers, principals talked about holding more staff meetings and creating new structures such as grade team meetings. One principal talked about the need to be more explicit with teachers regarding expectations:

I learned this year that we need some things—like written lesson plans. I saw I needed them when a couple teachers were not doing well. . . . Another is yard duty—like don't sit on the bench during yard duty.

As mentioned above, start-up schools take several years to benefit from economies of scale. Fortunately, as the Bay Area KIPP schools mature and, importantly, student enrollment increases, school leaders have more resources available to add staff positions. For example, in their second years, some schools added Dean of Students positions to handle discipline. Others planned to add Chief Operating Officers in 2005–06. These new staff members have the potential to help to reduce some of the principals' organizational leadership responsibilities. Many hoped this would help them focus on academic leadership, the subject we turn to next.

### **Academic Leadership**

As a result of the school leaders' initial focus on school operations as well as the demands of creating and enforcing the KIPP culture and expectations, academic leadership received less attention. Principals varied widely in the extent to which they took on the role of instructional leader, from those who carved out time to spend in classrooms and brought strong backgrounds in curriculum and instruction to those who did neither.

Teachers at two schools were more likely to identify the principal as their main source of instructional support:

[The principal is] the first person I'll go to for academic [support], and kids' social and personal needs. She knows a lot about the kids. She knows everything. She's the one I go to. She's knows her stuff in terms of my content area. She's the first person I'd talk to.

In one of these schools, this instructional leadership is beginning to translate into a working environment that is strongly focused on instruction:

In terms of my own practice, I'm definitely getting better as a teacher. That's something emphasized here. It's a strength of this school—this is an environment where I feel I'm being effective and getting better.

We're getting into peer observation. . . . talking to each other about curriculum and what we're doing in the classroom every day. . . . I am thinking about what I'm doing, I'm asked to think about it, talk about it, observe others, have them observe me. It's a very dynamic situation.

Interestingly, the principals at these two schools expressed frustration about their inability to focus on instruction. As one said, "My priority is instruction, but I spend the most time on operations." The other commented that her ability to focus on instruction increased from year one to year two: "I didn't have the time to think the first year. It was all: let's go, let's go. I didn't do much instructionally the first year."

In contrast to the teachers quoted above, teachers at the other three schools noted a lack of instructional leadership. To varying degrees, they reported minimal supervision and support and little development of a professional culture focused on instruction.

It's challenging not to have someone on staff to be instructional leader. I've only been observed once. It's hard to grow in your teaching when you don't get feedback.

What's hard is working without so many pats on the back or leader support...The hours I don't mind. But the working a lot becomes challenging when I'm not getting the support and feedback.

In particular, teachers at these schools noted that their staff meetings and professional development activities rarely focused on instruction. As one teacher said, "We have great teachers with good ideas but most of our discussions go around kids and discipline. We need a more strategic approach to curriculum and instruction." At another school, staff had identified professional development as an area of weakness, but teachers were not sure what was being done to address it. At still another school, teachers reported that staff meeting times were not used in a focused way; as one said: "Honestly, all we do is sit around and talk about how we can make things better."

Across all five Bay Area KIPP schools, the leaders' limited focus on instruction meant that teachers had almost complete autonomy with respect to what and how they teach. As one principal said, "Teachers have a lot of freedom—this is selling point for teachers." For the most part, teachers seemed to agree:

I have a tremendous amount of freedom to do what I want in my classroom...Here, there's a sense of, "You probably know. Figure it out, what do you need?" There's a lot of trust put on us to make it happen in our classrooms. Part of that is because the teachers have been teaching longer than some of the administrators. So it's like, "I'm going to work on the administration piece. You work on the instructional piece."

At the schools with stronger instructional leadership, this autonomy was paired with more support and accountability. One principal described how she gives teachers autonomy and holds them accountable: "I tell them: 'You are the expert.' [Then] I'm in their classes everyday. They are accountable for the California standards." Another principal said that her approach evolved from year one to year two:

I was hands-off around instruction at the beginning. No longer. Especially this year [I had a couple teachers who needed to improve]...I was in every teachers' classroom every week. And [I was] giving written and talking feedback.

While teachers at all of the Bay Area KIPP schools appreciated the autonomy that they had, many would have liked more support. As one teacher said, "[We have] more autonomy to the point of not being supervised at all—almost to a fault. I'm free to do what I want." A teacher at another school said, "Because the administration is so strapped, they are not in our rooms. We don't need people in the room to be sure we're teaching or have the objective on the board. We need a comrade who can observe and discuss."

Substantial teacher autonomy extended to the area of curriculum. Several principals reported that they had no set curricula, although most did make state-adopted materials available to teachers. In most cases, principals and teachers reported that teachers were developing their own curricula. How this worked in practice seemed to vary by content area. In math, many teachers reported relying on the KIPP Foundation's math binder. As one math teacher said, "[There's] not a set curriculum but [there are] a lot of resources available: lesson plans, ideas on how to teach certain concepts." For English language arts, some principals reported having purchased off-the-shelf curricula such as Open Court and Corrective Reading while others said their teachers were using Readers Workshop. In most cases, however, teachers had the freedom to decide whether or not they wanted to use these programs. Many opted to develop their own curriculum rather than use the purchased materials.

Minimal instructional leadership combined with a lack of instructional materials seemed to impact science and social studies teachers the most. In 2004–05, each school typically employed only one science teacher and one social studies teacher. As a result, teachers of these subjects had few opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. As one teacher with limited experience explained, "I wish that I were sharing time with somebody so that we could just bounce ideas off each other. I wish I had somebody who had done a lot of this before...I feel very overwhelmed." In addition, most science and social studies teachers were not content area specialists (i.e., they had multiple—rather than single-subject credentials and limited content-specific experience). Teachers acknowledged the challenge this posed for them: "Teaching science [without a science background] is really hard. Ideally, I would have [another] teacher to work with."

In the same way that school leaders began hiring new staff to reduce their organizational leadership responsibilities, some also began appointing staff (typically from the ranks of teachers) to serve as Deans of Instruction to provide more academic leadership.





## 6. Focus on Results

*KIPP schools relentlessly focus on high student performance on standardized tests and other objective measures. Just as there are no shortcuts, there are no excuses. Students are expected to achieve a level of academic performance that will enable them to succeed at the nation's best high schools and colleges.*

The KIPP model rests its reputation on the ability of KIPP schools to increase student performance on standardized tests and have their graduates go on to college. Given the low incoming performance of many KIPP students, enabling students to succeed “at the nation’s best high schools and colleges” requires a substantial increase in performance.

This chapter presents a preliminary review of results from two sets of standardized tests: The California Standards Test (CST) required by the state and the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT 10) administered in all Bay Area KIPP schools. Because the data are cross-sectional and school-level rather than student-level, we cannot draw conclusions about the impact of KIPP schools; that is, we cannot answer the question, Do students who attend KIPP schools perform better than they would have had they not attended a KIPP school?

With these limitations in mind, standardized test score results suggest that KIPP schools are posting gains beyond what would be expected in most subjects and grade levels, given their demographic composition. Based on publicly available CST data for 2 years, the percentage of students scoring proficient or above is consistently higher for KIPP schools than for comparable schools in the neighborhood—in a few cases dramatically so. Based on cross-sectional fall to spring SAT 10 data, the percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile increased in 16 of 17 cases (as defined by subject area and grade level), ranging from an increase of six percentage points in fifth-grade reading in one school to an increase of 51 percentage points in sixth grade math in another school.

### Overview of Analysis

Each source of readily available data—the SAT 10 and the CST—has its advantages and disadvantages for assessing KIPP student achievement. We discuss each in turn.

All five Bay Area KIPP schools administered the SAT 10 in 2004–05 as offered by the KIPP Foundation.<sup>12</sup> All of them gave the SAT 10 to incoming fifth graders; four of the five schools also gave it in the spring. Two schools gave it in the fall and spring to sixth graders. The advantage of the SAT 10 data is that the fall scores serve as a rough proxy for pre-KIPP achievement, although in many cases students had already attended KIPP summer school and/or the first few weeks of school. Comparing fall to spring scores within a school year also suffers less from student turnover than comparing across years. On the other hand, no comparable SAT 10 data exists from other schools so it is not possible to determine whether KIPP students made greater gains than their peers at non-KIPP schools. Consequently, we simply present fall and spring scores, expressed as the percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile and use as an external referent the percent expected to meet or exceed the 50th percentile (50 percent).

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<sup>12</sup> All KIPP schools are expected to give a pretest and posttest using nationally recognized norm-referenced assessments each year; they have some discretion over when to administer the tests.

Unlike the SAT 10, the CST is administered to all students in California in grades 2 through 10. Therefore a key advantage is the ability to compare KIPP scores with state, district, and comparison school results, as well as specific subpopulations. The disadvantage is that it is given only in the spring so it does not provide a pre-KIPP baseline measure of student performance. Moreover, these data are only available in the aggregate so estimates of year-to-year growth could be due to changes in the composition of the cohort. Our approach for this report is to present CST scores (percent Basic or above and percent Proficient or above) for KIPP schools by grade level. For each score we present several frames of reference: statewide scores, district scores, and scores from a set of comparison schools.

In an ideal world we would make two comparisons as a basis for determining if KIPP students are performing better than if they were not attending KIPP schools. The first would be to compare achievement growth of KIPP students to their growth trajectory prior to KIPP. However, this requires individual student data for several years prior to enrollment in KIPP that is not publicly available. School-level data cannot serve as a proxy for this because students attend many different schools prior to enrolling in KIPP and the composition of the cohort changes due to attrition, retention, and the addition of new students. The second would be to compare KIPP students' achievement with that of a comparison groups of students, defined based on KIPP school waitlists (which do not yet exist), or matching students in the district based on demographic characteristics. Again, this comparison requires access to student-level data for both KIPP and non-KIPP students.

In the remainder of this section, we provide an overview of the available achievement results looking first at the SAT 10 scores and then the CST. We do not attempt to compare student performance across the KIPP schools, both because they have different school contexts and demographics, but, more importantly, because such comparisons do not address the question of whether KIPP students achieve more in KIPP schools than they would have otherwise.

## **SAT 10 Results**

Exhibits 17 through 22 display changes in the percent of students at or above the 50th percentile on the SAT 10 between the fall of 2004 and the spring of 2005 by school. In total, 17 fall-to-spring comparisons were possible. Bayview Academy and SF Bay Academy had data for fifth and sixth grade on all three subtests: Reading, Language, and Math. Summit Academy and Heartwood Academy had only fifth grade scores and Heartwood did not administer the Language subtest.<sup>13</sup>

Across the 17 fall-to-spring comparisons, all but one reflect an increase in the percent of students at or above the 50th percentile. The increases range from 6 to 51 percentage points. Although we have no direct frame of reference for these school scores, one way to interpret the data is in comparison with national norms which by definition have 50 percent of the norming sample at or above the 50th percentile. Seven of the spring scores have over 50 percent of the students at or above the 50th percentile. Four of these are substantially higher, ranging from 63 percent to an extraordinary 96 percent.

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<sup>13</sup> Bridge College Prep did not administer the SAT 10 in the spring, and Summit Academy did not administer the SAT 10 to sixth graders in the fall. As a result, we were unable to assess growth using the SAT 10 for any of the grades at Bridge or for sixth graders at Summit. See Appendix for SAT 10 data for all Bridge students and for Summit sixth graders.

Another general finding is that the math trajectories are steeper than the other subjects. Heartwood is an exception here, but that may be due to a ceiling effect since the spring percent is so high (96 percent). This occurs even though students tended to start the year higher in math than reading or language.

One general caveat: we know that the group of students that took the test in the fall is not the same as the group that took the test in the spring. We did not access data on student turnover from the KIPP Foundation<sup>14</sup> but we have estimates from two schools on the number of students who left during the 2003–04 school year, the number added during that year, and the number of students retained. These data suggest the magnitude of the differences in the fall and spring samples. Based on these data, we estimate that of approximately 75 students tested in the fifth grade in the spring, roughly 10 percent were not part of the fall testing because they had not yet enrolled in the school. In addition we estimate that, for schools in their second year of operation, another 5 to 10 percent of students were repeating fifth grade. We do not know how these differences in the composition of each cohort might have influenced achievement growth.

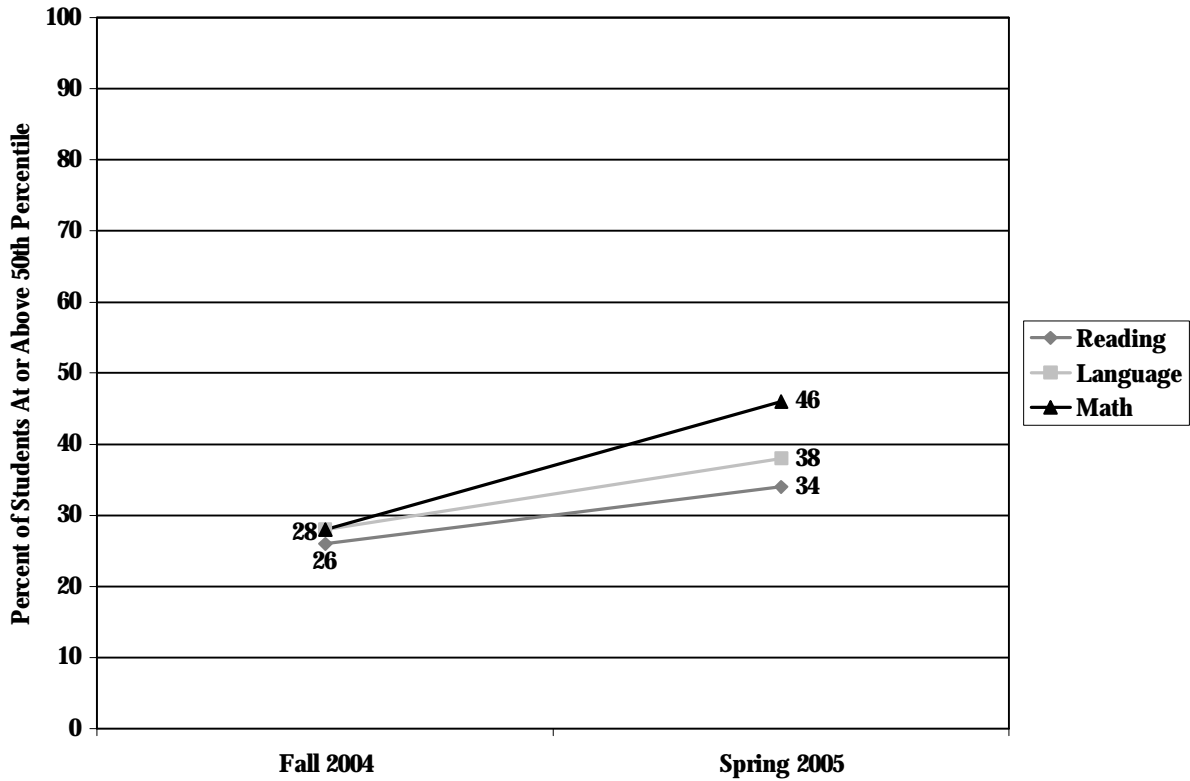
Another caveat is that the fall test was given at different times, all within the norming window, but including different amounts of summer school and/or the first few weeks of school. We did not observe a relationship between length of time between the fall and spring test administrations and the magnitude of the increase in scores.

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<sup>14</sup> The KIPP Foundation maintains a database of student-level testing results and has offered to work with SRI in the future to conduct analyses of student turnover.

**SF Bay Academy.** From fall 2004 to spring 2005, the percentage of SF Bay Academy fifth graders at or above the 50th percentile increased by 8 percentage points in reading, 10 percentage points in language, and 18 percentage points in math (Exhibit 17).

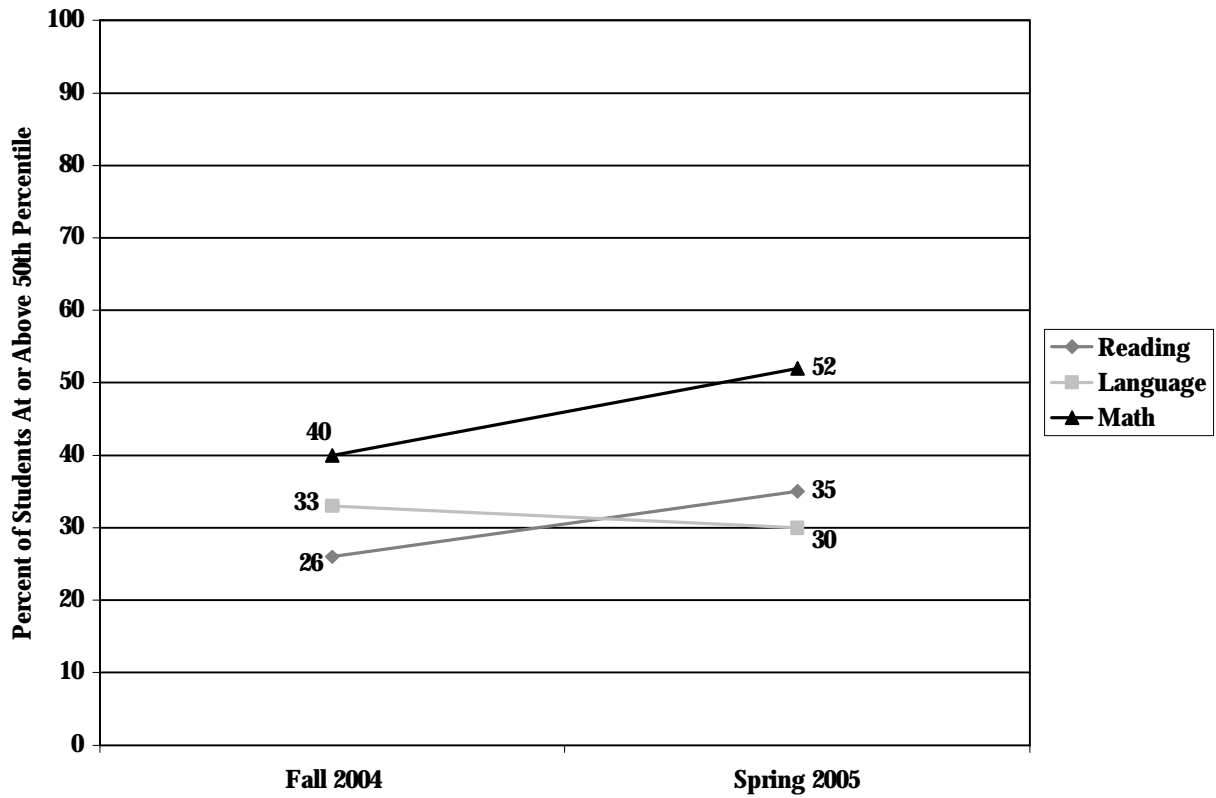
**Exhibit 17**  
**SF Bay Academy, Fifth Grade, SAT 10, Fall 2004 to Spring 2005**



Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).

SF Bay Academy sixth graders also demonstrated gains but not consistently across the subject areas. From fall 2004 to spring 2005, the percentage of sixth graders at or above the 50th percentile increased by 9 percentage points in reading and 12 percentage points in math (Exhibit 18). The percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile in language dropped by 3 percentage points.

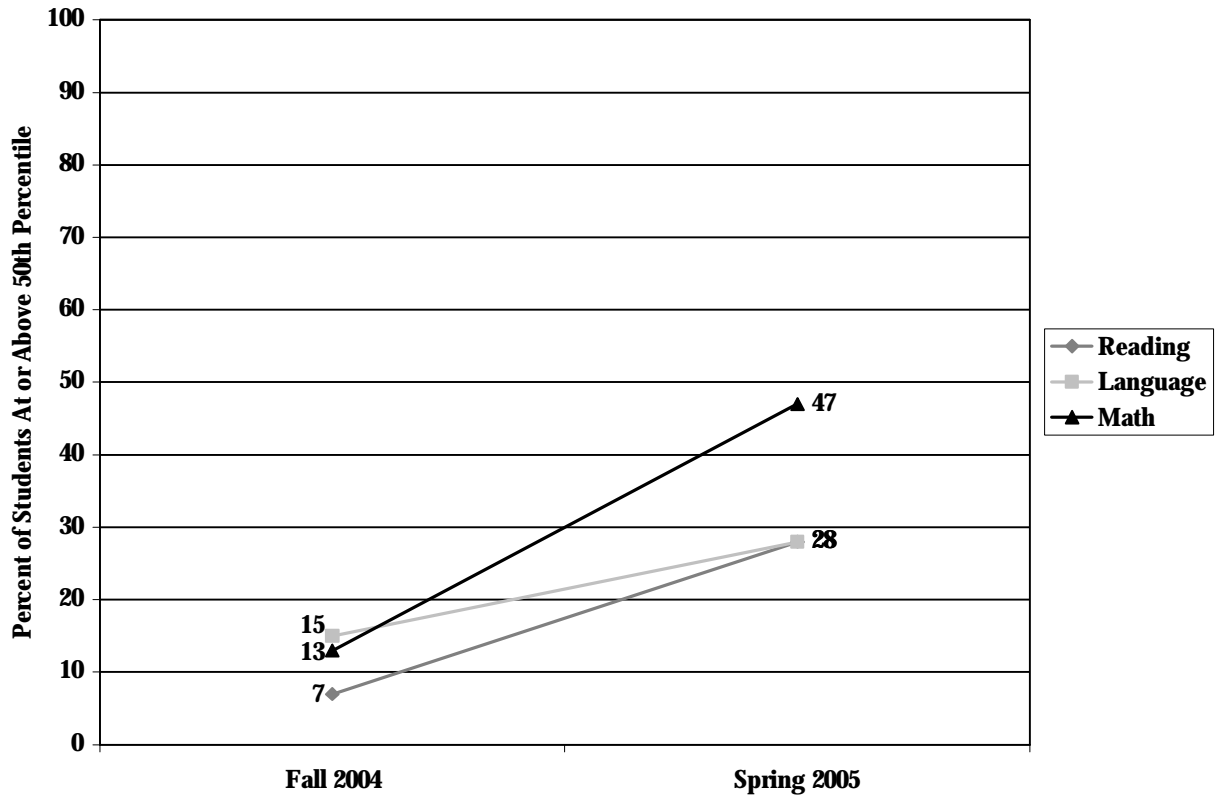
**Exhibit 18**  
**SF Bay Academy, Sixth Grade, SAT 10, Fall 2004 to Spring 2005**



Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).

**Bayview Academy.** Bayview fifth graders began the 2004 school year with small proportions of students at or above the 50th percentile in each of the subjects tested—7 percent in reading, 15 percent in language, and 13 percent in math (see Exhibit 19). By spring 2005, the percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile increased by 21 percentage points in reading, 13 percentage points in language, and 34 percentage points in math.

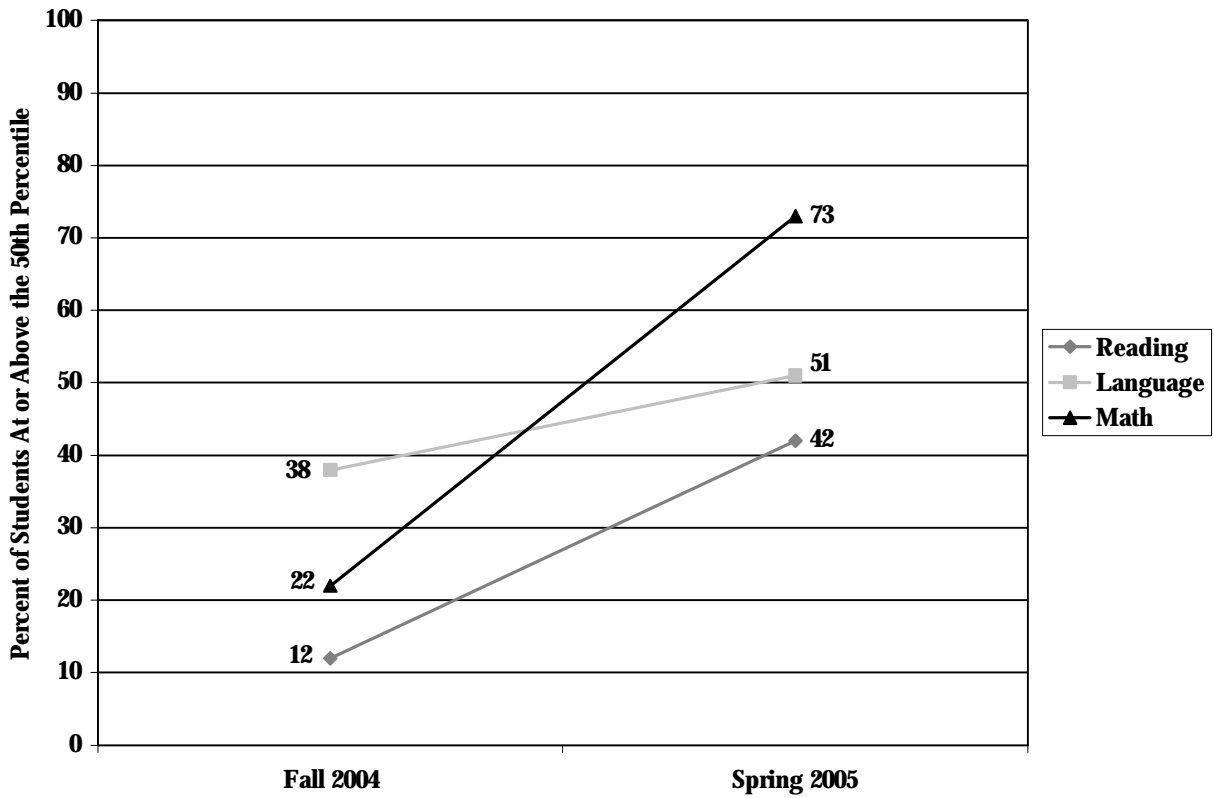
**Exhibit 19**  
**Bayview Academy, Fifth Grade, SAT 10, Fall 2004 to Spring 2005**



Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).

Sixth graders at Bayview also demonstrated growth in all test areas, although more steeply in reading and math. From fall 2004 to spring 2005, the percentage of sixth graders at or above the 50th percentile increased by 30 percentage points in reading, 13 percentage points in language, and 51 percentage points in math (Exhibit 20).

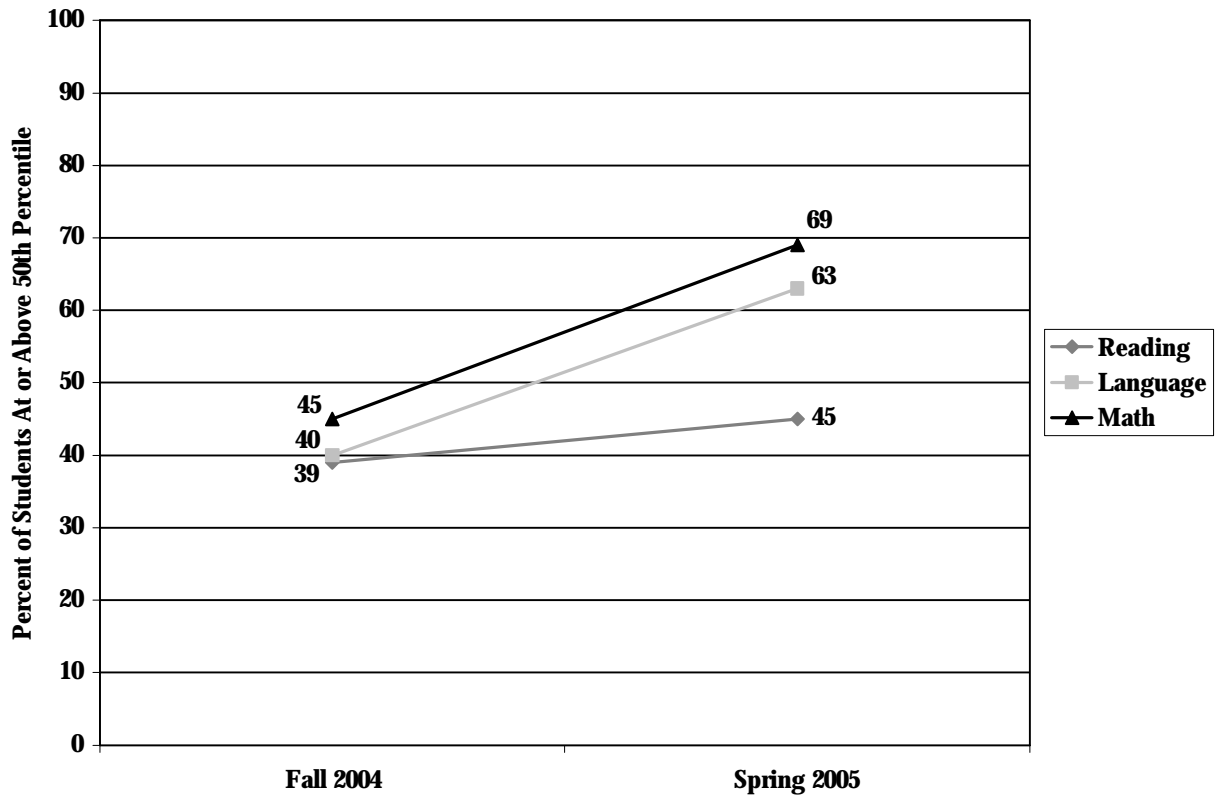
**Exhibit 20**  
**Bayview Academy, Sixth Grade, SAT 10, Fall 2004 to Spring 2005**



Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).

**Summit Academy.** From fall 2004 to spring 2005, the percentage of Summit fifth graders at or above the 50th percentile increased by 6 percentage points in reading, 23 percentage points in language, and 24 percentage points in math (Exhibit 21). Summit does not administer the SAT 10 to sixth graders in the fall, so there are no comparable fall-spring growth data for Summit sixth graders.

**Exhibit 21**  
**Summit Academy, Fifth Grade, SAT 10, Fall 2004 to Spring 2005**

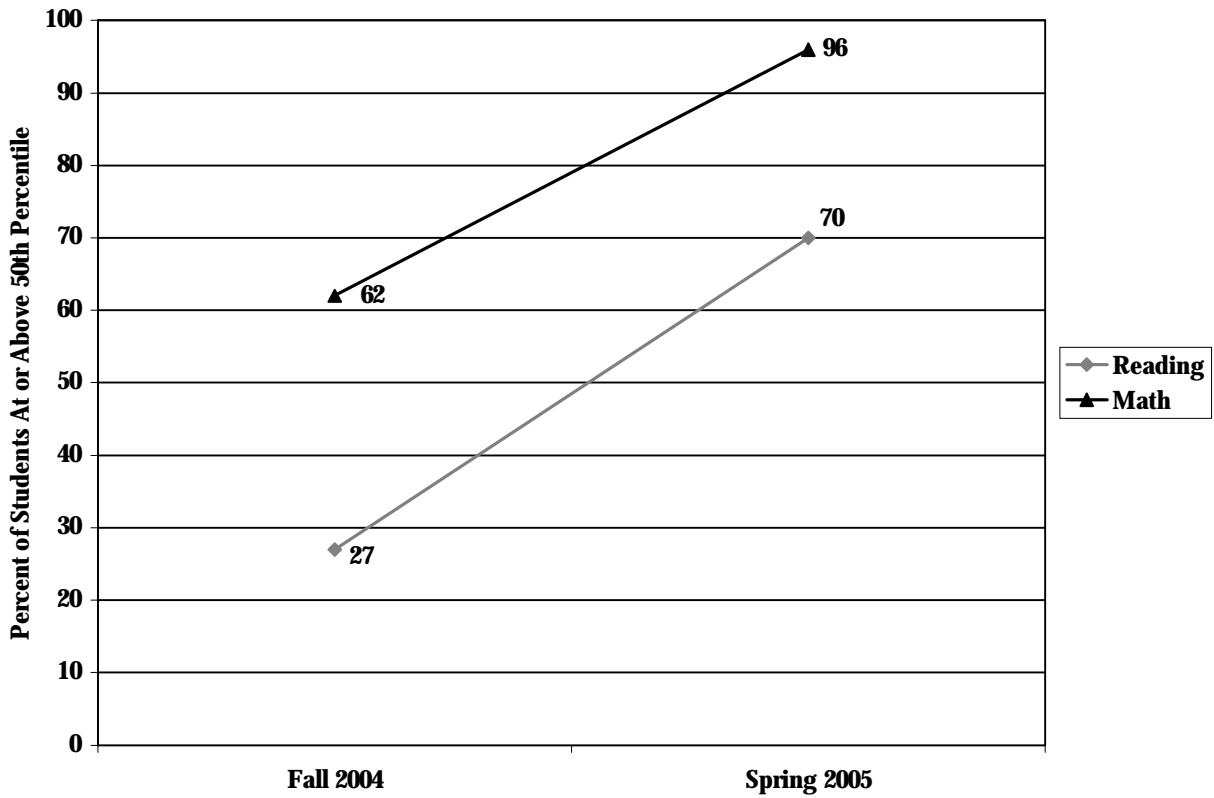


Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).



**Heartwood Academy.** From fall 2004 to spring 2005—the school’s first year of operation—the percentage of fifth graders at or above the 50th percentile increased by 43 percentage points in reading and 34 percentage points in math (Exhibit 22). Heartwood did not administer the language portion of the assessment.

**Exhibit 22**  
**Heartwood Academy, Fifth Grade, SAT 10, Fall 2004 to Spring 2005**



Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).

## California Standards Test Results

A clear advantage of the CST data is that it enables comparisons between KIPP schools and other frames of reference: the state as a whole, the districts in which KIPP schools are located, feeder elementary schools, and comparison middle schools. It also allows for comparisons across demographic subgroups, although the sample sizes get quite small. The feeder elementary schools came from our request to KIPP principals to name the schools from which many or most of their students came as fifth graders. This was harder for some than for others, depending upon the number of schools from which they draw students. Similarly, KIPP principals identified two comparison middle schools that many or most of their students would have attended had they not enrolled in KIPP. These comparisons do not tell us how well KIPP students would have performed in those schools since KIPP students are clearly different in at least one respect: their parents chose to enroll them in KIPP.

A disadvantage of the CST data is that analyses of growth are limited because data are aggregated to the school level and do not enable us to account for student attrition, in-grade retention, and the arrival of new students. (Exhibit 23 presents an illustration of the problem of interpreting growth with school-level data.) As a consequence, we do not attempt to draw inferences about growth by comparing grade-level cohorts from one year to the next.

The CST results we discuss in this section are cross-sectional, that is, scores at fifth grade and sixth grade are for different groups of students during the same academic year, 2004–05. (Student achievement data from 2002–03 and 2003–04 are presented in the Appendix.) We draw on data presented in Exhibit 6 in chapter 3, “Choice and Commitment,” to describe how the composition of each KIPP school’s student body differs from that of the district overall as well as from feeder and comparison schools.<sup>15</sup>

The spring 2005 CST data indicate that the overall percentage of students performing at a proficient level or above is consistently higher for KIPP schools than for comparable schools in the district—in some cases dramatically so (see Exhibits 24 through 26). Similarly, when comparing students in KIPP schools to all students in the state, more fifth graders in two of the five KIPP schools scored at or above proficient in ELA than students statewide; in three of five KIPP schools, the percentage of fifth-grade students who scored at or above proficient in math was higher than for the state. Likewise, in three of the four KIPP schools with sixth-grade scores, a higher percentage of sixth-grade students reached proficiency in math and ELA compared to the state as whole. In the one KIPP school with seventh-grade scores, the percent proficient in both ELA and math exceeded the state.

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<sup>15</sup> Exhibit A-5 provides demographic data for comparison middle schools.

**Exhibit 23**  
**The Challenge of Assessing Growth with Publicly Available CST Data**

Several problems inhibit our ability to interpret and rely on the publicly available CST data to chart achievement growth among KIPP students. Group data at any level mask changes in the composition of those groups over time, changes that may affect achievement growth. The publicly available data do not allow us to track assessment results by individual student over time. Arguably, we can infer grade-level cohorts from one year to the next; however, in-grade retention and attrition data from two KIPP schools indicate that their student cohorts change significantly from year to year. Without more knowledge of the students who leave and the students who take their place, we do not know whether such student turnover systematically influences the schools' achievement results, and as a result student turnover undermines any conclusions that we might draw from looking at growth in group results over time.

Comparing the results on the CST between 2003–04 fifth graders and 2004–05 sixth graders at any of the Bay Area KIPP schools with two years of student achievement data shows that the percentage of students reaching proficiency increased from one year to the next. However, drawing on data gathered from two Bay Area KIPP schools for 2003–04, we can provide a rough estimate (based on an average) of student attrition and in-grade retention to illustrate the problem of interpreting growth from group data. Assume a school tested 77 fifth graders in 2003–04 and 72 sixth graders in 2004–05. Of the 77 fifth graders tested in 2003–04, if 9 left the school and another 6 were retained, then 15 students (or 19 percent) of the 77 students tested in spring 2004 were not part of the sixth-grade cohort tested in spring 2005. In addition, in 2004–05, the 62 students who completed fifth grade and continued on to sixth were joined by 18 new sixth graders (representing 23 percent of the sixth-grade cohort), for a total of 80 entering sixth graders. We do not know sixth grade student turnover during 2004–05, but we know that 72 sixth-grade students took the CST in 2004–05, representing a net loss of 8 students (10 percent of total enrollment at the beginning of 2004–05). If any or some of these changes over 2003–04 and 2004–05 track with student achievement, estimates of growth using group data would be misleading.

Hence, turnover data from these two schools raise multiple questions that affect what sense we make of the achievement results. For example, is turnover similar for district and comparison schools? Are students leaving KIPP schools for systematic reasons? And are leavers consistently low-performing students or poorly behaved students, resulting in biased student achievement scores and gains, or do they provide a more conducive instructional environment for the students who remain? Are retention rates higher or similar to district and feeder schools? Without a better understanding of academic retention and student turnover, we cannot use group-level achievement results to infer gains.

**Exhibit 24**  
**Fifth-Grade Student Performance on the California Standards Test (CST), Spring 2005**  
**Bay Area KIPP Schools, California, Local Districts, and Feeder Schools**

	Number of Students Tested*	English Language Arts Percent Basic or Above	Percent Proficient or Above	Mathematics Percent Basic or Above	Percent Proficient or Above
CALIFORNIA	489,325; 489,008	75	43	67	44
<i>San Francisco Unified</i>	4,305	76	45	70	50
<b>KIPP Bayview Academy</b>	73	67	26	57	27
Harte Elementary	50	58	30	42	22
Malcolm X Academy	28	61	15	50	25
<b>KIPP Bay Academy</b>	55; 54	69	33	63	41
Cobb Elementary	29	62	17	48	24
Swett Elementary	46	66	20	46	18
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	3,693; 3,691	68	33	61	38
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	68	83	42	81	60
Lafayette Elementary	91	51	17	32	7
Prescott Elementary	63	50	13	38	16
<i>Alum Rock Union Elementary</i>	1,452; 1,450	63	26	59	38
<b>KIPP Heartwood Academy</b>	73	93	69	98	93
Chavez Elementary	59	52	16	52	27
San Antonio Elementary	99	69	31	67	44
<i>San Lorenzo Unified</i>	850	69	32	58	30
<b>KIPP Summit Academy</b>	64; 63	72	44	80	56
Hesperian Elementary	96	61	20	37	14
Hillside Elementary	88	54	13	33	9

\* Two numbers are included where different numbers of students took the ELA and math assessments. The first number represents the number of students who took the ELA test, and the second number represents the number who took the math test.

Source: California Department of Education (2005c).

**Exhibit 25**  
**Sixth-Grade Student Performance on the California Standards Test (CST), Spring 2005**  
**Bay Area KIPP Schools, California, Local Districts, and Comparison Middle Schools**

	<b>Number of Students Tested*</b>	<b>English Language Arts Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Percent Proficient or Above</b>	<b>Mathematics Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Percent Proficient or Above</b>
CALIFORNIA	486,589; 486,091	72	38	67	40
<i>San Francisco Unified</i>	4,056; 4,051	72	42	67	46
<b>KIPP Bayview Academy</b>	73	85	41	87	49
King Middle	173; 172	59	27	53	29
21st Century Academy (4-6)	79	38	13	34	11
<b>KIPP SF Bay Academy</b>	67	69	33	56	31
AIM High Academy (6-8)	74; 72	65	21	54	24
Everett Middle	143	39	13	34	16
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	3,177; 3,166	53	21	47	23
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	68	80	48	75	47
Cole Middle	157; 155	38	8	19	7
Westlake Middle	212	60	29	60	35
<i>San Lorenzo Unified</i>	779; 778	64	23	56	25
<b>KIPP Summit Academy</b>	76	92	54	91	73
Bohannon Middle	278	62	24	57	25
Edendale Middle	254; 253	53	12	41	15
Washington Manor Middle	245	78	34	70	34

\* Two numbers are included where different numbers of students took the ELA and math assessments. The first number represents the number of students who took the ELA test and the second number represents the number who took the math test.

Source: California Department of Education (2005c).

**Exhibit 26**  
**Seventh-Grade Student Performance on the California Standards Test (CST), Spring 2005**  
**Bay Area KIPP Schools, California, Local Districts, and Comparison Middle Schools**

	<b>Number of Students Tested*</b>	<b>English Language Arts Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Percent Proficient or Above</b>	<b>Mathematics Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Percent Proficient or Above</b>
CALIFORNIA	485,979; 485,346	73	43	64	37
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	3,269; 3,261	55	24	42	18
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	41	100	63	94	74
Cole Middle	68	52	24	37	17
Westlake Middle	204	55	30	49	26

\* Two numbers are included where different numbers of students took the ELA and math assessments. The first number represents the number of students who took the ELA test, and the second number represents the number who took the math test.

Source: California Department of Education (2005c).

**Bayview Academy.** Among Bayview fifth graders, 26 percent scored at Proficient or above in ELA, and 27 percent achieved at this level in math. Bayview students exceeded the performance of students at Harte Elementary in math (22 percent Proficient or above) and exceeded the performance of students at Malcolm X Academy in both subjects (15 percent Proficient or above in ELA and 25 percent in math).

In both ELA and math, Bayview's sixth graders outperformed comparison middle schools, King and 21st Century. Sixth-grade math achievement at Bayview is also higher compared to district performance: forty-nine percent of Bayview students reached Proficient or above compared to 46 percent districtwide. In ELA, 41 percent of Bayview sixth graders scored at Proficient or above, almost on par with the district (42 percent Proficient and above). It is important to note that Bayview's student population differs substantially from the district as a whole. A large majority of Bayview Academy students are African-American (80 percent) and poor (84 percent), far greater than the district overall (14 percent and 53 percent, respectively).

**Bridge College Prep.** Bridge has a substantially smaller percentage of economically disadvantaged students (50 percent) compared to the district overall (66 percent) and feeder schools, Lafayette Elementary (75 percent) and Prescott Elementary (83 percent). Bridge also has a minute proportion of English learners (3 percent) compared to the district (29 percent), Lafayette (22 percent), and Prescott (24 percent). In 2004–05, Bridge College Prep had three cohorts, fifth through seventh grade students. Forty-two percent of Bridge fifth graders reached Proficient or above in ELA, compared to 33 percent of the district's fifth graders, 17 percent of Lafayette fifth graders, and 13 percent of Prescott fifth graders. Similarly, Bridge fifth graders outperformed the district, Lafayette, and Prescott in math (60 percent Proficient or above compared to 38 percent district-wide, 7 percent at Lafayette, and 16 percent at Prescott).

The patterns are similar at sixth and seventh grade. Nearly half of sixth grade Bridge students reached the Proficient mark in both ELA and math (48 and 47 percent, respectively) compared to fewer than a fourth of their Oakland (21 and 23 percent), Cole Middle School (8 and 7 percent), and Westlake Middle School peers (29 and 35 percent). Similarly, 63 percent of Bridge's relatively small cohort of seventh graders (41 students) scored at Proficient or above in ELA and 74 percent met this target in math. These percentages are substantially higher than those for the district (24 and 18 percent), Cole (24 and 17), and Westlake (30 and 26).

**Heartwood Academy.** Heartwood Academy has similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students as Alum Rock Union Elementary district; however, it has somewhat smaller proportions of poor (79 percent) and Latino (71 percent) students and English learners (56 percent) than its two feeder schools, Cesar Chavez (88 percent poor, 89 percent Latino, and 65 percent English learners) and San Antonio (86 percent poor, 80 percent Latino, and 73 percent English learners). In both ELA and math, a substantially higher percentage of Heartwood fifth graders scored at Proficient or above (69 percent and 93 percent) than in Alum Rock district (26 percent and 38 percent), Chavez Elementary (16 percent and 27 percent), and San Antonio Elementary (31 percent and 44 percent).

**SF Bay Academy.** In 2004–05, 33 percent of SF Bay Academy fifth graders scored at Proficient or above in English language arts (ELA) and 41 percent reached this mark in math. Moreover, a higher proportion of Bay's fifth graders are Proficient or above in both ELA and math

compared to the feeder schools, Cobb Elementary (17 percent in ELA and 24 percent in math) and Swett Elementary (20 percent in ELA and 18 percent in math). Among SF Bay Academy sixth graders, 33 percent scored Proficient or above in ELA and 31 percent in math, higher than comparison middle schools AIM High Academy (21 and 24 percent) and Everett Middle (13 and 16 percent).

A smaller percentage of SF Bay fifth- and sixth-grade students reached the Proficient target relative to the district as a whole. It is, however, important to keep in mind that the composition of SF Bay students differs from the district as a whole. SF Bay students are on average poorer than the district overall (84 percent economically disadvantaged at SF Bay compared to 53 percent districtwide) and African-American students make up a much larger proportion of SF Bay enrollment than districtwide (57 percent compared to 14 percent).

**Summit Academy.** Summit Academy has a much higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students than the San Lorenzo district from which it draws most of its students (64 percent compared to 33 percent); however, it has a much smaller percentage of English learners (9 percent versus 26 percent). Overall, a greater proportion of fifth grade Summit students scored at Proficient or above in ELA and math (44 percent and 56 percent) compared to the district (32 percent and 30 percent), Hillside Elementary (13 percent and 9 percent), and Hesperian Elementary (20 percent and 14 percent). Sixth-grade Summit students also outperformed their district peers in both ELA (54 percent compared to 23 percent) and math (73 percent compared to 25 percent), as well as all three comparison middle schools—Bohannon, Edendale, and Washington Manor.





## 7. Conclusions

The five Bay Area KIPP schools we studied are new schools. One opened its doors as our study began (late summer 2004), three began the prior year (2003), and one got its start in 2002. Not only are they new, but they are expanding rapidly; each adds a new grade level each year. Hence, we are studying schools as they develop.

In spite of their young age, all five are readily identifiable as KIPP schools. They are serving their intended population: on average, 72 percent of the students are economically disadvantaged and 75 percent are African-American or Latino. We set out to determine if KIPP's Five Pillars and associated structures and procedures were implemented, that is, whether the pieces of their theory of action were in place. We saw evidence of each of the Five Pillars in all of the schools, to varying degrees, and we observed all the formal features in place. We also saw evidence of expected outcomes in student behavior and achievement.

As school reform models go, this is remarkably fast implementation. The speed with which the model is put in place appears related to three factors. First, staff and parents have chosen to be part of KIPP. Unlike a conversion school, KIPP start-ups attract only those who want to participate; consequently, most embrace the emphasis on building a culture of hard work and respect through strict behavior management. Second, principals are immersed in the model for a full year or more prior to hiring staff and opening a school. By the time the school opens, they understand the model thoroughly. Third, the KIPP model does not prescribe a particular curriculum or instructional approach. Although teachers may spend time creating or implementing their curricula, they do not have to learn a new system required by the model, in contrast to many school reform models that embody particular approaches to curriculum and instruction.

Although clearly identifiable through their slogans and procedures, the five schools differ significantly along several dimensions including student body composition, style of leadership and teaching, and the ways in which they implement different aspects of the KIPP model. As a result, the schools vary in the frequency with which they both face and choose to deal with student behavior problems; the efficiency of using time, from classroom instruction to student transitions; and the degree to which students are engaged in learning activities. Both classroom instruction and student engagement in learning vary within and between schools.

KIPP students expect to go to college and understand much about what it takes to get there, although they are less knowledgeable about high school options. Most adhere to the strict rules for behavior although the system does not work for all students. By and large, both parents and students like the long hours and the emphasis on discipline. Students feel safe and most are respectful to their peers and adults. This situation sharply contrasts their descriptions of their prior schools.

KIPP students spend at least 50 percent more time in school than their peers in regular public schools, including time spent in summer school, Saturday school, and the 9½ hour school day. The emphasis on behavior, including requirements for completing homework, means that classroom instructional time can be spent efficiently. In addition, the longer days allow for many of the enrichment and even academic classes that have received short shrift in other schools because they are not included in state or federal testing and accountability systems. At the same time, the long days exact a cost on teachers and students alike—but it is a shared sacrifice which may increase feelings of communal mission.

Standardized test data suggest growth in student achievement among KIPP students, with wide variation across schools and subjects. The percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile on the SAT 10 increased from fall to spring in all five schools, across all grades and subtests, with one exception. The increases ranged from six percentage points in fifth-grade reading in one school to 51 percentage points in sixth-grade math in another. Based on publicly available CST data for 2 years, the percentage of students scoring proficient or above is consistently higher for KIPP schools than for comparable schools in the district—in a few cases dramatically so. However, these data are all based on school-level, cross-sectional groups of students. Hence it is not possible to separate the impact of KIPP from that of differences in the groups compared.

### **Considerations for KIPP**

Faculty at Bay Area KIPP schools, like those at other charter schools, struggle with the many demands of a start-up. Typically beginning with one principal and three teachers, each must wear multiple hats to get the school up and running. When the time demands of the KIPP model are added, the job becomes overwhelming for some and may be unsustainable beyond a few years for many teachers. Thus, a possible future scenario is one of high teacher turnover. As the numbers of teachers increase, the burdens might correspondingly decrease. If they do not, however, the demands of the job could result in the need to constantly replenish the teaching force. Based on current staffing patterns, new KIPP teachers are likely to be young, with limited teaching experience.

The five schools vary in how effectively they use the last 2 hours of the day, whether it is used for academic instruction or enrichment. This challenge is related to how much energy staff have at the end of the day and their ability to rely on part-time enrichment teachers. Teachers are also pressed to find time to plan lessons and collaborate. Again, as staff sizes increase, more flexibility in teachers' time may permit greater differentiation of roles, freeing up time for teachers to plan.

Principals, in particular, face the challenges of transitioning each year to a larger staff and student body. This shift requires integrating new people into the KIPP culture and creating more formal policies and procedures that are not needed when the staff consists of the principal and three teachers. These demands, coupled with different backgrounds in curriculum and instruction, result in principals struggling to find the time and, for some, the knowledge, to provide academic leadership.

The schools admittedly are not equipped to handle students with severe learning or emotional disabilities. Nor do staff have good solutions for the handful of students who are seemingly immune to the behavior management system. Staff are also beginning to struggle with ways to shift responsibility for behavior more to students as they move into the higher grades, rather than relying primarily on an external system of rewards and sanctions.

### **Considerations for the Study**

The second and third years of our study will provide an opportunity to pursue in more depth important questions raised by this year's findings. In particular, we expect to look more closely at the following questions.

How consistent are achievement test scores from one year to the next? At the end of next year we will be able to analyze multiple years of data for all five schools: three schools will have 3 years of data and one each will have 4 years and 2 years, respectively.

What explains the variation in student achievement and to what extent is student achievement growth associated with KIPP? We will investigate the feasibility of analyzing student-level data to better estimate achievement growth associated with KIPP. In addition, we plan to explore student turnover and retention. We intend to look more closely at how many students leave KIPP, why, and how their achievement compares with that of the remaining students. We also plan to focus more on the variation in curriculum and instruction and the opportunities for learning available to teachers.

What is the role of the KIPP Foundation in supporting the schools? KIPP operates as a franchise operation granting full autonomy to each school. It also provides certain kinds of support and infrastructure, including professional development and other targeted support. Understanding these supports and how they are evolving will be a topic of study in future years.

An ultimate goal of the study is to determine whether the KIPP model suggests lessons for other public schools. Key to this challenge is developing a better understanding of the contributions of extended instructional time and focus on culture in addition to the role of parent and teacher choice. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that the five Bay Area KIPP schools are quite new. They could, and likely will, look quite different when they have become established with their full complement of students and staff.

The findings from the first year of our study show that the Bay Area KIPP schools have made impressive progress implementing the components of the KIPP model. These components of the KIPP theory of action appear to put the schools on a path to produce the intended goals for its students: increased achievement and college acceptance.



# Appendix

**Exhibit A-1**  
**Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above the 50th Percentile on the SAT 10, 2004–05**

School	Grade	Test Semester	Number of Students			
			Tested*	Reading	Language	Math
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	5	Fall	76; 77; 77	20	30	22
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	6	Fall	73; 72; 73	36	44	40
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	7	Fall	51; 49; 49	33	53	51
<b>KIPP Summit Academy</b>	6	Spring	73	58	78	62

\* Three numbers are included where different numbers of students took the reading, language, and math assessments. The numbers represent the number of students who took the reading, language, and math tests respectively.

Source: KIPP Foundation (2005).

**Exhibit A-2**  
**Fifth-Grade Student Performance on the California Standards Test (CST), Spring 2003**  
**Bay Area KIPP Schools, California, Local Districts, and Feeder Schools**

	Number of Students Tested*	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
		Percent Basic or Above	Percent Proficient or Above	Percent Basic or Above	Percent Proficient or Above
CALIFORNIA	485,061; 484,953	72	36	61	35
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	4,296; 4,289	58	21	48	24
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	80	62	16	49	26
Lafayette Elementary	49	43	14	36	14
Prescott Elementary	78	65	26	51	24

\* Two numbers are included where different numbers of students took the ELA and math assessments. The first number represents the number of students who took the ELA test, and the second number represents the number who took the math test.

Source: California Department of Education (2003).

**Exhibit A-3**  
**Fifth-Grade Student Performance on the California Standards Test (CST), Spring 2004**  
**Bay Area KIPP Schools, California, Local Districts, and Feeder Schools**

	<b>Number of Students Tested*</b>	<b>English Language Arts Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Language Arts Percent Proficient or Above</b>	<b>Mathematics Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Mathematics Percent Proficient or Above</b>
CALIFORNIA	484,221; 483,956	71	40	65	38
<i>San Francisco Unified</i>	4,254; 4,255	74	45	66	40
<b>KIPP Bayview Academy</b>	75; 76	63	20	62	29
Harte Elementary	41	59	22	36	2
Malcolm X Academy	45	46	17	37	13
<b>KIPP SF Bay Academy</b>	67	68	26	58	22
Cobb Elementary	30	63	36	60	37
Swett Elementary	42	82	39	43	26
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	3,926; 3,918	61	27	55	29
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep**</b>	76; 75	78	43	76	44
Lafayette Elementary	62; 61	61	18	36	11
Prescott Elementary	71; 70	39	11	19	3
<i>San Lorenzo Unified</i>	780; 781	68	34	55	27
<b>KIPP Summit Academy</b>	74	71	51	72	61
Hesperian Elementary	97; 98	61	28	56	28
Hillside Elementary	69	58	18	23	7

\* Two numbers are included where different numbers of students took the ELA and math assessments. The first number represents the number of students who took the ELA test, and the second number represents the number who took the math test.

Source: California Department of Education (2004).

**Exhibit A-4**  
**Sixth-Grade Student Performance on the California Standards Test (CST), Spring 2004**  
**Bay Area KIPP Schools, California, Local Districts, and Comparison Middle Schools**

	<b>Number of Students Tested*</b>	<b>English Language Arts Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Language Arts Percent Proficient or Above</b>	<b>Mathematics Percent Basic or Above</b>	<b>Mathematics Percent Proficient or Above</b>
CALIFORNIA	481,143; 480,790	72	36	66	35
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	3,548; 3,537	49	16	40	14
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	60	83	25	60	20
Cole Middle (4-8)	79	50	11	34	6
Westlake Middle	216; 215	55	22	49	20

\* Two numbers are included where different numbers of students took the ELA and math assessments. The first number represents the number of students who took the ELA test, and the second number represents the number who took the math test.

Source: California Department of Education (2004).

**Exhibit A-5**  
**KIPP School Demographics Compared with District and Similar Middle Schools, 2004–05**

	<b>Percent Free and Reduced- Price Lunch</b>	<b>Percent African- American</b>	<b>Percent Latino</b>	<b>Percent English Learners</b>	<b>Percent Female</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>
<i>San Francisco Unified</i>	52.6	13.9	21.7	29.2	48.3	57,144
<b>KIPP Bayview Academy</b>	84.0	79.5	2.5	3.1	60.2	161
King Middle	61.6	21.5	20.5	27.1	47.6	521
21st Century Academy (4-6)	70.6	73.1	7.7	5.8	51.9	208
<b>KIPP SF Bay Academy</b>	84.4	56.7	17.3	13.4	50.4	127
AIM High Academy (6-8)	55.6	47.9	25.4	20.7	50.3	169
Everett Middle	63.5	18.7	63.2	50.4	48.8	508
<i>Oakland Unified</i>	65.5	41.2	34.3	29.0	49.1	49,214
<b>KIPP Bridge College Prep</b>	49.5	78.9	15.7	2.5	50.5	204
Cole Middle	75.9	77.6	13.4	12.4	53.5	299
Westlake Middle	72.5	44.2	17.9	18.4	45.3	643
<i>San Lorenzo Unified</i>	33.0	15.1	42.8	25.5	48.7	11,544
<b>KIPP Summit Academy</b>	63.8	24.2	24.8	9.4	49.7	149
Bohannon Middle	33.0	10.1	48.0	13.3	49.1	979
Edendale Middle	46.3	27.4	47.0	22.1	48.0	846
Washington Manor Middle	23.4	9.5	31.7	9.3	48.6	856

Sources: California Department of Education (2005a, 2005b).





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