Meet Caleb Dolan

The Boston Business Journal released its annual list for Boston's 40 Under 40 in September, an honor that recognizes Boston-area individuals for their leadership in making a major impact in industries such as technology, healthcare, media, politics, and nonprofits. Our very own Caleb Dolan, KIPP Massachusetts' Executive Director, stood out in a field of more than 350 nominees to receive the honor. Under Dolan's leadership, KIPP:MA has grown from a single school in Lynn serving 346 middle school students to a network of four schools serving 1,200 students in grades K-12 in Lynn and Boston. The region is on its way to its growth target of six schools serving more than 2,500 students in grades K-12.

"Caleb has an incredible focus on achieving the best life outcomes for his students, and he has never wavered from this goal in all the time I've known him," says Michael Kendall, Partn

Meet Jiji: Blended Learning at KIPP Academy Boston Elementary (KABE)

Jiji is the common name for STMath, a highly engaging program (kids can't wait to play Jiji) that gradually builds foundational number sense and problem-solving skills. It fosters independence and GRIT as students are challenged to "play the gray" – which means selecting the level that has not yet been mastered (they turn green when they're mastered). The program does not give tips and tricks to kiddos when they fail – instead it scaffolds the question and then gradually increases the rigor as they get it right. The program does give real-time feedback – if the problem is not solved correctly, Jiji is unable to cross the screen due to an obstacle that is left behind by an inaccurate answer – accurate answers clear her path so she can proceed to the next problem.

STMath's main function at KABE is to facilitate engaging and effective independent practice while other students meet with the teacher for Common Core aligned small group math instruction. This allows teachers to use data to build groups that have similar needs and design their instruction accordingly. The combination of daily independent practice and targeted instruction will ensure that our kids are on track to make significant gains regardless of their baseline performance.

Class of 2015: Senior Retreat

The inaugural senior retreat took place in the Berkshires this August, with 75 founding seniors and 10 chaperones spending three days and two nights at the Berkshire Outdoor Center in Becket, MA. The goal was to celebrate our founding seniors by coming together as a team to recognize their past achievements while maintaining focus on the challenges and successes that lie ahead in their final year at KALC. The trip culminated in a group sharing exercise around the campfire, where the seniors were asked to toss a stick, representing one fear they’d like to release, into the fire. The students showed true social intelligence, respecting the stories of others while trusting their peers with their own. They approached the retreat with the appropriate mix of joy and reverence and have all but ensured the retreat will become a KIPP-MA tradition.

Meet the Class of 2027

What is your favorite part of the school day?
Jamaralise: Using computers because I like Jiji!
Katie: Choice time because I can play with my friends and have fun

If you could have one super power, what would it be?
Jamaralise: Frozen power!
Katie: Candy power!

What do you want to be when you grow up?
Jamaralise: A teacher!
Katie: A teenager!
Spotlight on: Six Essential Questions

Helping our students climb the mountain to and through college and achieve their dreams is only possible if we know exactly how we are doing. Data helps us understand our true impact; what is working and what needs to be improved. Our Six Essential Questions provide a yardstick by which to measure our progress, keep us focused as we grow, and most important, help us to keep the promises we make to our students and their families. In this and each future edition of Juntos, we will focus on one of the Six Essential Questions by highlighting a program, person, or statistic that illustrates our commitment to staying on track. In this edition of Juntos, we are putting the spotlight on:

Question 5: Are we building a sustainable people model?

Our teachers and staff are our greatest assets. In order to cultivate, support, and ultimately retain them from year to year, KIPP:MA places a strong emphasis on professional development, coaching and leadership training. To that aim, this year KIPP:MA welcomes our first three Teaching Fellows to KIPP Academy Boston Elementary. Our Teaching Fellows spend the year learning to become KIPP teachers through daily practice in the classroom, intensive coaching, exposure to models of excellent teaching, and professional development. Each Teaching Fellow partners with a Lead Classroom Teacher and is an integral part of the classroom from Day 1, setting and enforcing high expectations for students. Teaching Fellows gradually take on additional responsibility as the year progresses. Throughout the year, Fellows see high expectations and rigorous teaching in action by partnering with Lead Classroom Teachers, and they receive individual, targeted coaching and practice from an Instructional Coach. This year, our Fellows come from a variety of backgrounds—a recent college graduate with little formal teaching experience, a former high school teacher looking to move into the elementary world, and a kindergarten teacher from a community school who is looking to refine and strengthen her instructional practices. Since each Fellow receives individualized coaching, we are able to customize the program to capitalize on the Fellow’s prior experiences and maximize his or her growth. Our ultimate goal is to expand and develop our Teaching Fellowship Program so that each of the elementary classrooms in our growing school has a Teaching Fellow, and each Teaching Fellow ends the year ready to lead kids to and through college.

A Message from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This fall marks a milestone in the growth of KIPP:MA, as we enter our 10th year of serving kids and families in Massachusetts. By the end of our 10th year, we will see our Class of 2015, the first KIPPsters to attend KIPP from grades 5-12, graduate from high school and begin their college careers on the path to living lives of independence and choice. Based on ACT scores and GPAs, 95% of these students are projected to attend a 4-year college next fall and graduate at 5x the national average. This year also marks the first year we are serving kindergarteners at KIPP Academy Boston Elementary. Seventy-two of our littl'est KIPPsters, like Jamaralise and Katie on page 3, are learning the culture of KIPP and getting an early start on their journey to and through college.

As we begin our new school year, we reflect upon the many successes and lessons learned last year. Among them,

• The median MCAS student growth percentile for the region exceeded the state average by 20%.
• Over 93% of our high school students achieved advanced and proficient on the MCAS in English Language Arts and Science.
• 68% of our alumni from the classes of ’12 and ’13 are persisting in college.

In celebration of our first year offering a full K-12 KIPP education, in this edition of Juntos we are focusing on the experiences of our oldest and youngest KIPPsters. This summer, 70% of the Class of 2015 spent their vacations in summer programs, building their resumes, character, and confidence in preparation for the often intimidating college application process. We also take a look at the inaugural KIPP:MA senior retreat, which forced our seniors out of their comfort zones both emotionally and physically and strengthened the bonds between them. We’ll introduce you to Jili, mascot of STMath, which the elementary school is using to supplement small group learning and build independence and GRT. And because the work we do isn’t successful unless we can sustain our brilliant and dedicated teachers, we introduce you to our new Teaching Fellows program, which will help us build a pipeline of excellent teachers and allow us to serve more of the kids who need us.

Many thanks, much love,

Photo courtesy of Melora Balson

Caleb Dolan
Executive Director, KIPP:MA