



# together Juntos

The quarterly newsletter of KIPP Massachusetts

**KIPP:MA**  
MASSACHUSETTS

**Spring 2014**

## FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CALEB DOLAN

Dear Friends,

The KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching states: The future matters; so does every moment between now and then. One year from now our first KIPP:MA kindergarteners will be reading books, something most of them will have started the year unable to do. One year from now our first KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate seniors will be nervously weighing their college and post-secondary offers and mailing in their decisions as their parents fight off tears. One year from now our K-12 academic alignment process will be fully integrated into our curriculum and our dedicated staff will be pushing themselves and our KIPPsters for the most challenging academic and character outcomes ever.

Across KIPP's 25 regions, we have recognized that a KIPP K-12 education is imperative to the success of our kids journey to and through college. For this reason, nearly all the new KIPP schools opening in the 2014/15 academic year will serve elementary grades. Among these new schools will be KIPP Academy Boston Elementary, the first elementary school in the KIPP:MA region. Offering a KIPP education beginning at the earliest stages of our KIPPsters' academic careers will allow us to limit the remediation required to keep our students on a trajectory toward admission to a competitive, public university such as UMass Amherst (pg 2).

KIPP:MA remains dedicated to character development (pg 4), data-driven decisions, and advocacy efforts (pg 3) so that the students who most deserve great schools are able to access a quality education. We look forward to partnering with more colleges that support our KIPPsters (pg 5) and invite you to reach out if you'd like to get more involved with KIPP.

Many Thanks, Much Love,

Caleb Dolan



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# KAB Elementary Founder DoBell Shares School Curriculum

KIPP Academy Boston Elementary School (KABE), opening this August, will become the first elementary school in the KIPP Massachusetts network and will serve as the model for future elementary schools in the region. KABE founder, Emily DoBell, recently shared her plans for how time will be spent for KIPP:MA's youngest KIPPsters. Below are some key points of the KABE curriculum:

**Reading/Writing:** KABE students will spend 2 hours reading and 40 minutes writing each day. Phonics, shared reading, read aloud, and “breakfast & books” will be spread throughout the instructional day. A one-hour guided reading block will allow KABE students to engage in small groups led by a teacher, build their stamina in independent practice, and move at their own pace using I-station, a computer-based curriculum. This is a prime opportunity to build self-awareness and guide students in making choices that will help them grow their strengths and fill their gaps. *KIPP Elementary students will spend 2-3 additional hours per day in the classroom as compared to their peers in corresponding public school districts.*



**Math:** Students will engage in a variety of math tasks throughout the day. Calendar math and Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI math) will both take place in the morning. In the afternoon, students will engage in small group instruction that includes carefully observed independent practice while their teammates are practicing using Math on the computers. *In addition to learning basic math concepts, we will integrate technology, engineering, and science into daily curriculum.*

**Specials:** KIPPsters will further explore their talents in “Specials” which includes performing art, visual art, and foreign language. *At KIPP we believe enrichment activities are as important as academic subjects to building well-rounded, curious, socially-intelligent students.*

**Recharge:** KIPPsters need to be physically and emotionally prepared to learn, so recharge time is essential. Academic concepts will be infused into play time. For example, KIPPsters can always predict how many pretzels will be left after they eat three or count their jumping jacks using multiples of 10. *At KIPP, we teach in schools, not just classrooms. Every interaction is an opportunity to integrate character and develop skills to climb the mountain to and through college.*

Another key piece DoBell (bottom, left) believes will be critical to the growth of kindergarten KIPPsters is leveraging the parent community. “Our ‘Proof of Partnership’ measures include: 100% of parents will engage in on-or-off-campus school events, 15% of families will engage regularly during school hours, 97% of students will return year after year and 100% of families will recommend KIPP to other families.” said DoBell.







## A Meeting with Senator Dorcena Forry

In February, KIPP:MA Executive Director, Caleb Dolan, KIPP Academy Boston (KAB) Principal, Christine Barford, and Assistant Principal, Nikki Barnes, met with Senator Linda Dorcena Forry to introduce KIPP and share ideas of how KIPP has and will continue to engage and serve the Mattapan community. Senator Forry represents the Commonwealth's 1st Suffolk district which includes Dorchester, Mattapan, South Boston, and Hyde Park. The meeting, held at the State House, also included Representative Dan Cullinane, and City of Boston Liaison Walter Applewhite.

One of KIPP's guiding principles is to serve students who mirror the demographics of the students at neighboring public schools, which KAB has achieved. Currently 99% of KAB's student body is African American or Latino, 86% receive free or reduced-price lunch, and 22% receive special education services.

"Senator Forry's excitement around a new school in Mattapan was a high point of the meeting" said Nikki Barnes. "Meetings like this one are an opportunity to show that we want to partner with the community by seeking council with elected officials like Senator Forry before our plans are set in stone. We are all working toward the same goal of providing the children of Mattapan a quality education." Senator Forry serves on many committees including the Joint Committee on Education and the Joint Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with disabilities.

## Spelling Bee Champion Crowned

By: Jasmairy Marte, Carla Collymore, and Abigail Beaver

*This article was written by KIPP Academy Lynn students and was featured in the KAL newspaper, "The KIPP Item"*

Victoria Kadiri in the 6th grade won this year's spelling bee. During the Spelling Bee it was down to the last two people, Isabelle Beaver in the 5th grade and Victoria Kadiri in the 6th grade. It was Isabelle's turn and her word to spell was very hard. Unfortunately she didn't spell it correctly. The rule said that if Victoria spelled the next word correctly she would win the Spelling Bee. It was Victoria's turn and her word was "Mewling."

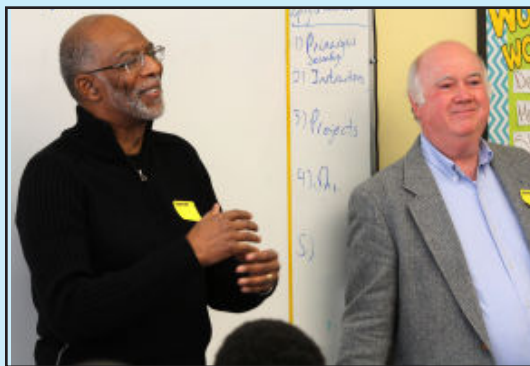
Victoria spelled the word correctly! Victoria became the Spelling Bee champion for the 2nd time! Now she will represent KIPP Academy Lynn in the city Spelling Bee.

Good luck Victoria!



## KIPP Lynn Celebrates Black History Month with Civil Rights Era speakers

On February 27, KIPP Academy Lynn (KAL) and KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate High School (KALC) hosted John Bilheimer and Henry Jones to discuss the American Civil Rights Movement. Both Bilheimer and Jones grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas during the height of the battle over school desegregation in the south. Bilheimer and Jones wanted to share their diverse experiences through their personal lenses as a white man and black man of the time.



The speakers were first engaged last year when then 7th grade KIPPster, Juliana Murkison, along with KIPP volunteer, John Kane, reached out to individuals around the country soliciting short personal essays from

participants of the Civil Rights Movement. Miss Murkison was inspired by the accounts of her maternal grandparents, who moved to Lynn from Birmingham, AL, and experienced the Civil Rights Movement first hand.

KAL and KALC have hosted school and community events throughout February to promote Black History awareness, including a viewing of the documentary film *American Promise*, a book discussion, and a Black History trivia night. Over 85% of the students at KIPP Academy Lynn are Black or Latino and the events were both a celebration of culture, and an opportunity to emphasize key KIPP character strengths such as social intelligence, grit, and curiosity.

## Help Us Grow Our School--KIPP:MA Is Hiring!

KIPP:MA will need to recruit and select over 50 teachers to serve our kids and families in the 2014-15 school year. This is almost double last year's new hire total and represents a third of our current school based staff.

If you know any talented individuals who are passionate about seeing students grow and achieve, please contact:

**Ryan McCarthy, KIPP:MA Director of Talent at [talent@kippma.org](mailto:talent@kippma.org)**



### Measuring Grit

Melissa Savage, KIPP Academy Lynn 5th grade science teacher, has consistently seen strong academic growth among her KIPPsters (her 2012/13 MCAS results were in the top 30 out of over 800 schools in the state). Savage is now applying KIPP's data-driven philosophy to measuring her KIPPsters' "Grit"—one of the key character strengths KIPP works to develop in students.

#### **Q: Why did you decide to take the step of formally measuring "grit"?**

A: We have always measured grit through our paycheck system, but I wanted to go a bit deeper. Since I feel very comfortable with my academic curriculum, my [professional development] coach recommended I create a plan to further track character as a developmental goal. I wanted to push myself so I did some further research into Angela Duckworth's work on character as well as work that had been done with grit nationally across the KIPP network.

#### **Q: KIPP emphasizes several character strengths designated as indicators of success in students. Why did you focus on "grit"?**

A: If you look at people from all walks of life—politicians, athletes, world leaders—the ability to persevere and overcome failure or challenges is a commonality among many of them. The most successful people are often very "gritty" people.

#### **Q: How are students assessed on their "grit" and their growth?**

A: Students were initially given a diagnostic quiz at the beginning of the year to see how much grit they were already displaying. They now assess themselves once per week on one of nine "grit indicators" in which they felt they did well, and an area in which they felt they needed improvement [see side panel for each indicator]. At the end of each quarter, they do a full assessment on each of the nine areas, and then I provide formal written feedback on their growth overall and based on their weekly self-assessment.

#### **Q: What do you hope students take away from this exercise?**

A: When I started this exercise, I wanted my students to walk away with a higher self-awareness of their behavior, and I believe that's taking effect. When students experience a conflict in class they are saying things directly from the survey like "I'm having trouble working independently with focus." I want them to be able to self-regulate and take these skills with them for the rest of their lives, to other grades, college, and later in their workplace.



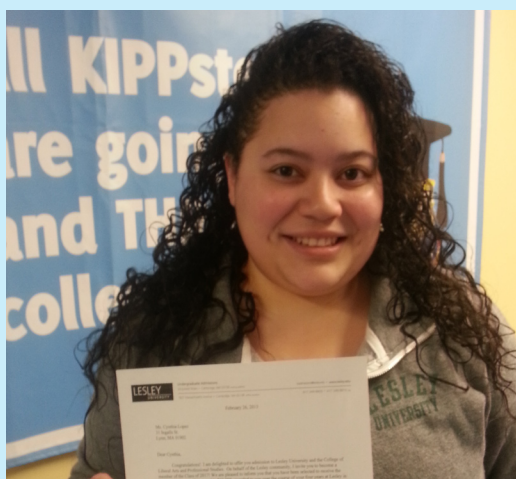
### Grit Indicators

- 1. I believe that with hard work I will improve my future*
- 2. I finish whatever I begin*
- 3. I try very hard even after I fail or get frustrated*
- 4. I work independently with focus*
- 5. I get to work right away rather than putting things off*
- 6. I get over frustrations and setbacks quickly*
- 7. I use "I can" statements rather than "I can't" statements when talking about challenging tasks*
- 8. I set a goal and stick with it until I achieve the goal*
- 9. I use the resources around me to help me solve my problems*





## KIPP:MA Partners with Lesley University



This spring, Lesley University became KIPP:MA's first official college partner. KIPP works with colleges and universities across the nation to help close the achievement gap for all first-generation students and students of color. KIPP's relationship with Lesley has been several years in the making and began when a teacher at KIPP Houston connected KIPP Through College (KTC) Director, Alexis Rosado, with Randy F. Stabile, Vice President of Advancement at Lesley, illustrating the power of KIPP's national network.

There are many reasons Lesley University was chosen to partner with KIPP and help students *to and through college*. Lesley's Urban Scholars Initiative is a key program that directly aligns with KIPP:MA's goal for 75% of alumni to graduate from college as well as serving the same students KIPP serves. The USI focuses on:

- Increasing opportunities for talented, urban, ethnically-diverse, low-income students to prepare for college success and fulfilling careers
- Collaborating with non-profit organizations to maximize the impact of collective resources and programs
- Achieving higher than average retention and graduation rates among undergraduate students whose demographic profiles would suggest that they are at-risk students

Two KIPP alumnae are enrolled at Lesley: Class of 2012 graduate, Natalia Rosa, and class of 2013 graduate, Cynthia Lopez (pictured above). Though the Urban Scholars Initiative was not yet in place when Natalia began at Lesley, she was able to join retroactively. Through the work of the USI and KTC, Natalia was able to receive support to move onto the school's campus this semester, furthering her engagement with the school's community. Recently, class of 2014 senior Leonela Rami was accepted to Lesley, which remains her top-choice college.

"The KTC department is excited about partnering with Lesley because we know that they are serving our students with the same high level of support they receive at KIPP. Although it is still a small cohort of students who are attending, the Lesley staff is aware of the needs of our students so they are able to properly assist with a successful transition from a KIPP school to college," said Alexis Rosado.

## Amanda Fernandez Joins the KIPP:MA Board

Amanda Fernandez, Vice President of Latino Community Partnerships at Teach For America (TFA), has joined the Massachusetts region of KIPP (the Knowledge is Power Program) Board of Trustees.

In her current role at TFA, Fernandez serves as the primary liaison between TFA and Latino organizations, including recruitment for new corps members at Latino-serving institutions. "We are very excited to have Amanda join our team. She brings a wealth of experience in serving our community as well as a deep commitment and passion for ensuring all children have access to a quality public school education" said Mike Kendall, KIPP:MA Board Chair.

Fernandez, who has worked with TFA since 2010, holds an M.S. in Human Resources Education from Fordham University and a B.A. in Journalism and Communications from Western Illinois University. Fernandez's professional experience includes more than 20 years in consulting and in-house human resources and a track record of achieving results for organizations focused on attracting, retaining, and advancing diverse talent.



"I'm honored to be part of the KIPP MA Board and to play a role along with all of the committed board members in ensuring children served by KIPP get a great education all the way to and through college" said Amanda Fernandez.



Do you or someone you know want to TEACH at KIPP?  
Visit [www.kippma.org/teach](http://www.kippma.org/teach)

**In this issue...**

- Learn about the plans for KIPP Academy Boston Elementary
- Meet our new Board Member
- Celebrate our partnership with Lesley University



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