



COLLEGE PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**2014-15 New Schools Request for Proposals  
Request for Amendments (RFA) for KIPP Chicago**

**1. Explain KIPP Chicago's procedures to support students in transitional living situations (STLS) in each of the following areas:**

**a. Identifying staff members to participate in training;**

A member of each school's office team (typically the Director of Operations) serves in the role of Homeless Liaison and another member (typically the Office Manager) serves as the Homeless Clerk; they attend all required district trainings each year. These roles are chosen to support STLS because of their unique position of having regular contact with all family members, and their ability to help coordinate services across classrooms and grade levels. Additionally, all school-based staff members attend an STLS training once per year (coordinated by the Liaison) which provides an overview of the STLS program, including who is eligible for the program, how to identify signs of homelessness, what resources are available to students, expectations regarding fee waivers, and who to contact with questions.

**b. Notifying students and families of their rights; and**

During the student enrollment process (for new students) and re-enrollment process (for returning students), families are asked if certain living situations apply to them and are made aware that services are available from the school if one of those situations does apply. Eligibility is determined through answers to specific questions, and/or through review of certain enrollment forms which give families an option to check mark a box indicating that they may be experiencing a temporary living situation. In addition to a verbal explanation of rights, families of homeless students are notified of their rights through distribution of a "rights of homeless students" flier (which is sent home twice per year) and via STLS posters which are located in the main office of each school.

**c. Documenting fee waivers.**

Students in STLS are exempt from fees for supplies, uniform shirts, and field lessons. School fee waiver forms are collected from STLS families and the Homeless Liaison tracks fees that were waived in a Google spreadsheet and/or in PowerSchool. The office team at each school keeps an ongoing list of STLS students to ensure they are not charged and sends a list of STLS students by grade level to each grade-level team so that teachers know not to charge those students for uniforms or any other fees.

**2. What academic information did the board and staff consider when determining whether KIPP Chicago was ready to expand an existing school and open two additional schools in the fall of 2016? In the capacity interview, the applicant mentioned evaluating the historic performance of the existing KIPP Chicago schools in comparison to other KIPP schools and regions as one metric demonstrating the readiness to scale. Please share that data and the internal analyses you performed to make that assessment.**

Like KIPP Chicago, the Board places high importance on the NWEA MAP, particularly results of students' academic growth. Since CPS only recently converted to using NWEA MAP as its primary academic barometer, the Board has consistently reviewed KIPP Chicago's performance against the KIPP network, which itself frequently outperforms national norms. Attached is a compilation of slides that reviewed academic performance at KIPP Chicago Board meetings in the last two academic years. Aside from academic measures, the Board also considers long-term outcomes of KIPP Through College (including high school graduation, college matriculation, and college persistence), leadership pipeline (including Fisher Fellowship selection), and financial capacity (including ability to meet or exceed fundraising targets). All factors combined have led the Board to support KIPP Chicago's growth aspirations.

**3. Explain how the network, school leaders, and/or teachers assess whether each digital learning program is advancing students' learning. Please cite any specific metrics that are used to evaluate the effectiveness of each digital learning program.**

Digital learning is woven into the overall instructional approach at KIPP Chicago, and teachers and school leaders evaluate the effectiveness of programs based on regular student assessments including benchmarks and Friday Skills Assessments. If a student is not meeting specific objectives, all approaches to instruction are evaluated including digital learning programs, and adjustments are made accordingly.

KIPP Chicago invests in early and rigorous vetting of digital learning programs before utilizing them in the classroom; this approach helps us ensure that programs will be effective in advancing student learning. Among the approaches we take to ensure quality digital learning is participation in a Technology Action Learning Project (ALP) organized by the KIPP Foundation, and application of a technology rubric before selecting new programs.

**Instructional Technology ALP:** This year, two members of the KIPP Chicago staff participated in the KIPP network's Instructional Technology Action Learning Project (ALP). The ALP is organized and led by KIPP Foundation staff. The ALP brought together teachers, administrators, and central office staff from across the KIPP region. The goals of the ALP are:

- Build a community of ed tech practitioners across the KIPP network
- Identify challenges and brainstorm solutions
- Share ideas and best practices, including feedback on specific tools and resources
- Observe blended learning schools in the KIPP network and externally
- Develop resources to share with the broader KIPP community via KIPP Share, in-person retreats and KIPP Schools Summit.

The participants came back with best practices in implementing instructional technology and worked with other participants to identify the best instructional technology products. In this way, KIPP Chicago has strived to choose and implement the best products and models. The ALP also are putting together deliverables that support KIPP schools in implementing technology. One project specifically addresses

how to consolidate data from multiple software applications and what types of data should be prioritized. Other projects work to provide implementation toolkits to make facilitate leveraging tools at a high level.

The ALP also establishes a network which KIPP Chicago can reach out to in order to tackle problems around educational technology. This is supported by all staff members of the KIPP network being part of KIPP Share, the network's intranet. KIPP Share encourages sharing of resources and collaborative problem solving. Within the Tech and Data room on the KIPP Share portal, KIPP Chicago has access to many resources and conversations pertaining to instructional technology, including program reviews and data displays for digital learning programs.

**Technology Rubric:** A rubric was created to support staff in picking instructional technology programs. The rubric includes requirements for programs and weighted decision criteria items. This method ensures that programs that KIPP Chicago uses are adaptive and the data they produce are actionable to best leverage the blended learning models our school uses to maximize learning time for students. (Rubric is attached.)

#### **4. Discuss the status of your existing leadership pipeline for the proposed elementary schools.**

KIPP Chicago utilizes the KIPP School Leadership Programs (KSLP), led by the KIPP Foundation, to develop and provide ongoing training and support for emerging leaders at the classroom and school levels. In particular, the Teacher Leader program is designed for KIPP teachers to strengthen their instructional skills and build new leadership skills in order to take on leadership roles in their schools. Ultimately, staff members who go through the Teacher Leader programs are among the initial leadership pipeline from which we draw when a school leadership opportunity arises. Further, once growth is approved, KIPP Chicago will identify the specific elementary school leaders who will apply to the Fisher Fellowship, the principal training program that all school leaders must attend. At present, our elementary school leadership pipeline includes seven teachers at KIPP Ascend Primary who have gone through the Teacher Leader program.

#### **5. How does KIPP Chicago identify and meet the transportation needs of general education students, including low-income and at-risk students?**

Beginning with the recruitment process, KIPP Chicago informs prospective families that we work with each family on an individual basis to help brainstorm and problem-solve if there is a transportation challenge. Examples of our efforts to help all students get to school regularly include arranging for car pools, providing CTA cards for homeless students, providing information about private vendors that parents can access, and, when applicable, recommending state- or privately-funded programs for which they may qualify. Most importantly, we prioritize recruitment within close proximity to our schools so that most families are within walking distance. Our growth aspirations on the south side will help alleviate the challenges that many families faces by having to travel long distances to their KIPP school. Expanding into primary grades, as well as providing additional campuses will allow us to direct families to a KIPP campus that is convenient, limiting the number of times children are absent due to transportation issues.

**6. Explain plans to expand central office staff and systems to support the proposed network expansion. Discuss the rationale to add only one central office staff member over the next five years.**

KIPP Chicago's core operations model is highly standardized, but decentralized. Rather than operate with increased staffing positions in the Shared Services Center, we do our best to bolster capacity at the school level, where we can fully capitalize on each function. We do this by adapting tested best practices learned from other high-quality operators and older KIPP regions, incorporating technology to increase efficiencies where possible, and train school-based staff in key positions. At present, and dictated by our operation of four schools, our Shared Services Center has critical non-academic functions in place including teacher recruitment, external affairs, HR, finance, and data analysis. We do not anticipate needing to add additional functions; rather we would support growth by adding capacity in key functional areas. This will be achieved through adding leadership positions within our growing schools (Assistant Principals, Grade Level Chairs, Department Chairs) and proving support for them to hold cross-functional roles; utilizing programs like AmeriCorps, Education Pioneers, and alumni summer interns; and investing in technology programs to help with streamlined systems such as InfoSnap, DocuSign, and ADP Workforce Now. Another example of this is our upcoming conversion to a new accounting system this coming year, which will enable us to streamline our accounts-payable system and significantly decrease the amount of hands-on time our accounting team spends on paying bills. At the school-level, we expect that fully grown schools will take on critical roles in student recruitment, teacher recruitment, and data analysis. When absolutely necessary, we will engage in consultative work on a limited basis, which, in many cases, is cost effective when compared with an FTE with benefits. Additionally, we may have an opportunity through grant funding to add SSC positions, which we will leverage if the option arises. This approach is especially prudent given limited financial resources and an uncertain fiscal future; to date, it has served us well as we have kept central costs low and consistently achieved high compliance scores and clean audits from CPS.

The one deviation to this approach worth noting is our staffing model for our KIPP Through College team. This team grows in a linear fashion as our number of alumni grows. You can see this cost growing in line 122 of the Detailed Budget (office).

**7. KIPP Chicago currently has seven voting board members. KIPP Chicago's bylaws require a minimum of three voting members. If the board were ever to decrease to three members, it would require a significant commitment for those three members to provide strong oversight over five schools. Does the board anticipate amending the bylaws as the network expands?**

KIPP Chicago plans to address this point at the upcoming May 29, 2015 Board meeting and we anticipate that members will be comfortable changing the bylaws to increase the minimum number of voting members.

**8. What process will the board use to add more members with K-12 academic expertise? How involved is Mike Feinberg in the board? Does he attend all board meetings? Is he actively involved in any committees or initiatives?**

Consistent with years past, our Board of Directors and, specifically, our governance committee, will continue to review Board membership against a needs assessment and add members with specific skill sets as necessary. A native Chicagoan, Mike Feinberg is actively involved in the Board and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. The Board calendar is planned in accordance with his calendar and he is present in-person for the vast majority of meetings. When a scheduling conflict arises, he makes himself

available via phone. He is an active participant when present, engaging in robust dialogue, asking in-depth questions, and providing examples of other practices from around the KIPP network. He frequently makes himself available for meetings with external stakeholders when he is in town for Board meetings and he has played a central role in KIPP Talk, our annual event that draws ~350 stakeholders together for a high-level conversation about pressing issues in education.