CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

THE PATH TO EDUCATING MORE STUDENTS, SUPPORTING MORE COLLEGE GRADUATES AND OPENING MORE DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY.
CELEBRATING TEAM AND FAMILY

KIPP ANTIOCH COLLEGE PREP celebrated the opening of its new campus with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, featuring Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and our founding families and students.

“My son started as a founding kindergartener and it’s been an incredible experience for him. He’s growing by leaps and bounds and is surrounded by loving teachers and staff who push him to reach his full potential. I know my son is receiving the solid foundation he needs to continue being successful as a student and person, and that is priceless.”

Deepesh Subedi | KIPP Antioch College Prep parent
SEEING IS BELIEVING

KIPP NASHVILLE COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL seniors participating in the annual tradition of walking through the halls of all our schools in their cap and gowns.

OUR VISION
One day, every student in Nashville will have access to a high-quality college preparatory seat in a public school.

OUR MISSION
We cultivate in our students the academic and character skills needed to succeed in top colleges and life beyond.

KIPP NASHVILLE AT A GLANCE
10 2018-2019 AT A GLANCE: Overview, Academic and Faculty Stats
16 FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE: Becoming a Reward School
18 FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE: Middle School Math

TEAM AND FAMILY FEATURES
20 NINTENDO GRANT: Sparks Joy and Curiosity
22 KIPP ANTIOCH: A Space Designed with Students Front and Center
24 ALL IN THE FAMILY: Three Generations at KIPP
26 COLLEGIATE FEATURE: Unlocking the Secrets of the Internet

COVER STORY
28 CELEBRATING 15 YEARS: A Look Back and Ahead at KIPP Nashville’s Future

PERSPECTIVES
36 KIPP THROUGH COLLEGE: The Persistence Story
42 POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE: Our Education Journey
44 A DAY IN THE LIFE: Director of Operations
52 SPORTS AND ARTS: Opportunities Outside the Classroom
54 HAPPINESS ON A SIDEWALK: Crossing Guard Spotlight

2019-2020 KIPP NASHVILLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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WRITERS Erin Holt, Tasneem Tewogbola
PHOTOGRAPHY Courtney Davidson, Hannah Elaine, Erin Holt, KIPP Nashville schools

WRITERS Erin Holt, Tasneem Tewogbola
PHOTOGRAPHY Courtney Davidson, Hannah Elaine, Erin Holt, KIPP Nashville schools
FROM THE FOUNDER

DEAR TEAM,

In August, we began our fifteenth year in Nashville and welcomed 2,300 KIPPsters across kindergarten through twelfth grade. We opened our seventh school, KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle, and cut the ribbon on KIPP Antioch’s new, shared elementary and middle school facility.

When I reflect on fifteen years of KIPP Nashville, I am reminded of the founding class of fifth graders whose families took a leap of faith when they signed their children up for a promise — a promise that we could provide a different and better option.

Our results prove the possible. Three of our schools are recognized as Tennessee Reward Schools by the Department of Education, and 70 percent of our eighth graders are on track or mastered in math, rivaling the performance of Williamson County peers. Our high school students are college-ready, with an average ACT score of 21, attending some of our country’s most prestigious institutions, such as Vanderbilt, Howard, Princeton, Georgetown, Morehouse, Smith, Spelman and Wellesley.

What started as one group of determined fifth graders has evolved into an army of KIPPsters, filled with trailblazers, advocates, questioners of the status quo and a new generation of leaders.

As more KIPPsters become high school graduates, college students and alumni, we are reminded of the importance of growth. We are committed to pushing ourselves every day in service to our mission of cultivating in our students the academic and character skills needed to succeed in top colleges and life beyond.

One of our 2019 high school graduates, Dylan, put it best, “Set the bar high and don’t move it.” If we have the courage not to move it, we will make this a great year and lay the foundation for future growth.

We are deeply grateful for your support, which has helped us impact so many lives and has us poised to do even more in the years ahead. Join us as we work to build a better tomorrow.

With gratitude,

RANDY DOWELL
Executive Director
OUR SCHOOLS

KIPP Nashville College Prep Elementary School
Grades K-3
Founded in 2017

KIPP Nashville College Prep
Grades 5-8
Founded in 2013

KIPP Academy Nashville
Grades 5-8
Founded in 2005

KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School
Grades 9-12
Founded in 2014

KIPP Kirkpatrick Elementary School
Grades K-4
Founded in 2015

KIPP Antioch College Prep
Grades K-1 and 5
Founded in 2018
2018-2019 AT A GLANCE

2,039 STUDENTS

75% African American
18% Hispanic
3% White
2% Multi-Ethnic

51%

49%

1% Asian
1% Other
11% Special Education
7% ELL Students

FEMALE STUDENTS

MALE STUDENTS

ATTRITION BY MONTH
(Number of Students)

18 August
40 September
25 October
25 November
11 December
38 January
24 February
15 March
5 April
1 May

90%

93%

STUDENT RETENTION
The most common reason a student left was due to moving out of district.

AVERAGE DAILY STUDENT ATTENDENCE

OUR SCHOOLS ARE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

A majority of our students come from the surrounding communities.

TOP 5 ZIP CODES

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“

I do this work to inspire and motivate students to thrive in the world around us. I take pride in cultivating innovative thinkers and diverse leaders of our future.”

Edwina Onofua
English teacher at KIPP Academy Nashville

OUR TEAM

We are committed to investing in career pathways for our teammates and providing pathways for their continued growth and future development within our region. In the 2018-2019 school year, 19% (1 in 5) of our open roles were filled by a current staff member being promoted or moving roles.

135 TOTAL (LEAD AND ASSOCIATE TEACHERS)

71% TEACHER RETENTION
(18-19 to 19-20, May–July)

32% 68%
MALE FEMALE

22% 48% 30%
0-1 YEARS 3-5 YEARS 6+ YEARS

4.8 YEARS AVERAGE EXPERIENCE

PERCENTAGE OF NEW HIRES IDENTIFYING AS A PERSON OF COLOR

47% 61% 69% 54%
Lead Teachers Leadership Team All Staff

WE’RE BUILDING A TEAM THAT LOOKS LIKE OUR STUDENTS

2017 2019
2018-2019 ACADEMIC RESULTS

TNREADY | MIDDLE SCHOOL RESULTS AT THE END OF 8TH GRADE

MATH % PROFICIENT/ADVANCED
KIPP NASHVILLE
70%
CITY 26%
STATE 27%

ELA % PROFICIENT/ADVANCED
KIPP NASHVILLE
21%
CITY 21%
STATE 27%

CLASS OF 2019 COLLEGE READINESS

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION 100%

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

ACT 20.7 AVG SCORE

50 High school seniors
371 College applications submitted
259 Acceptances

NOTABLE ACCEPTANCES:
Vanderbilt University, Wellesley College, Northeastern University, Mount Holyoke College, American University and Smith College

EARNED A PASSING SCORE ON AT LEAST ONE AP EXAM

56% EARNED A 21+
28% EARNED A 24+
In 2015, KIPP Nashville opened KIPP Kirkpatrick Elementary School with kindergarten and first grade. We were co-located with a traditional Metro Nashville Public School, Kirkpatrick Enhanced Option Elementary School, which was still operating second through fourth grade. Each year, KIPP took on one more grade level. By the 2018-2019 school year, we were fully operating as KIPP Kirkpatrick Elementary School.

In 2018 and 2019, our founding KIPPsters took the TNReady Assessment, giving us a comparative view of their academic growth and progress. The results are exciting, especially in math, and tell the story of the incredible effort and dedication put forth by our KIPP Kirkpatrick team. It’s a before and after tale that indicates a promising and continued trajectory of growth for a school that pre-KIPP, and as recent as 2016, was the third lowest-performing elementary school in Tennessee and the lowest performing in Nashville.

Turnaround work is hard work. Serving a neighborhood community and serving an intense need is challenging. This work has pushed our team to be flexible, critical thinkers and problem solvers in order to keep student learning front and center. We’ve been doing that in addition to the important and necessary work of relationship-building, while providing our students and families with the support they need in order to make this happen.”

Amy Galloway | KIPP Kirkpatrick Elementary School Principal
Five years ago, KIPP Nashville began piloting a new approach to teaching math, which we have been codifying and implementing across all our middle schools. The shift lies in posing a challenging question to students and asking them to work to solve the problem without teachers telling them how to solve it. Rather than following a set of step-by-step directions, students are challenged to participate in a deep analysis of the multiple strategies they and their classmates used to solve the task. This process is essential to developing flexible and critical thinking skills.

Our middle school students are reaping the benefits of this shift, and their performance over the past four years is a reflection of this work. As we’ve seen this model take root in our middle schools, we’ve also begun the work of shifting our elementary approach to a task-based model as well, with the end goal being that our students are engaged in deep mathematical thinking from kindergarten through senior year.

By the end of eighth grade, 70% of KIPP Nashville students are on track or mastered in Math, matching the performance of Williamson County students.

Note: Williamson County is ranked among the wealthiest counties in the United States.

“I wish I had learned math the way I teach math now. After I’ve explained the problem, I give students a few minutes to work on it by themselves. As I walk around the room, I can see in real-time if most of the class is catching on. It’s nice to have flexibility so I can teach based on what I’m seeing. It’s a collaborative environment where all students participate, share their work and discuss how they solved the problem.”

Jasmine Jacobs | 6th grade Math Teacher at KNCP
NINTENDO GRANT
SPARKS JOY AND CURIOSITY

Kevy and Kylun are second graders in Mr. Baker’s STEM class at KIPP Nashville College Prep Elementary School. They’re working on piecing together components that include the Nintendo Switch and are part of Nintendo’s Labo invention system.

“We found out that we received the Nintendo grant from the Institute of Play in November 2018, and I was so excited to introduce the program to our students,” says Mr. Baker.

“KNCPE is one of 100 classrooms around the United States who were awarded this grant, which bring Labo kits for Nintendo Switch—previously only available for consumer purchase—to schools.”

“The kits are really neat,” explains Mr. Baker, “They come with cardboard and other materials that let our Kings and Queens build different kits that interact with the Nintendo Switch. So far, our classes have built a race car, but we also have materials to build a motorbike, house and fishing rod.”

Students can make the cardboard car move by using vibration controlled through the Switch. It’s the same technology as in Nintendo Wiis.

“Look, you stick this part in here!” shouts Kylun, as he proudly attaches a corner and gets one step closer to making his cardboard look less flat and more like a car.

Kevy notices, “The cardboard car is moving without batteries, it’s just so cool!”

Kylun adds, “I can’t believe it’s moving by itself, but we’re controlling it!”

“I definitely feel like this is a sneaky and fun way for our Kings and Queens to learn,” says Mr. Baker. “Some of the things they’re learning are the very beginning of coding and it’s basically just a way to spark that love and joy of science, technology and engineering at a young age.”

For Mr. Baker, the Nintendo grant combines his love of teaching and STEM with a personal passion of his too.

“Yes, I will admit I love gaming and am kind of a geek,” he laughs. “It’s really fun to bring something I enjoy into the classroom, especially because a lot of our students have Nintendo Switches or are at least already familiar with the technology.”

As students work to figure out how to build the models, Mr. Baker says it teaches problem-solving skills and encourages them to collaborate.

“The goal is eventually our students will be running the set up part by themselves and won’t actually need any help building the models. The hope is that our older students can teach our younger students.”

With a background in science, Mr. Baker understands that the earlier students are exposed to STEM curriculum, the better the chances are that they will fall in love with it, just as he did.

“IT’s at the forefront of my mind every day that our kids are exposed to a teacher who looks like them, who likes science and has made a career out of it,” says Mr. Baker. “I didn’t have my first African American male teacher until seventh grade. The world is shifting more and more toward science and technology, so I want to do my part to be a positive influence at this early stage in their lives.”

Sam Baker | STEM Teacher at KNCPE
Students feel cozy in their environment, even though this is a large building. Not only are the large windows beautiful and bring natural light into classrooms, but they also provide a practical purpose. One of our school-wide initiatives is including a peace corner in every single classroom. Our students can go there if they're feeling like they need a minute to calm down and focus, or if they're feeling sleepy, they can go take a rest. A lot of our teachers chose the peace corner by a window. The peace corner isn't only for students who might be upset, but it's also if you're under-stimulated, so being in the sunlight has a positive impact on the level of alertness.”

Caitlin McCollister | Dean of Student Culture for KACPE
ALL IN THE FAMILY

Everyone who walks into the front office at KIPP Academy Nashville is bound to see Ms. Fuller and Ms. Barnes. Ms. Fuller is the Operations Coordinator and Ms. Barnes is a volunteer, as well as a KIPP Nashville Bus Monitor.

From their welcoming spirit, general knowledge of the school and occasional cooking tips, this is one special group of women - they happen to be mother and daughter. Up until recently, Ms. Fuller’s daughter, Shelby, was a student at KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School. Shelby graduated in 2018 and is currently a sophomore at Berry College. You can find Shelby supporting at the front desk during the summer in between her internships.

These three generations of women with deep ties truly represent what KIPP is all about.

“Being away at college, I’ve learned to appreciate my mom more. I’m very grateful for her, and not being at home has made me realize how much she always did for me. She’s always there for me.”

Shelby Fuller | KIPP Nashville alumna and sophomore at Berry College

“She’s such a giver. Even when we were younger, she’d always take someone in, she’d always open up her doors. I’m grateful for the fact that we genuinely enjoy one another. We laugh and have such a great time together.”

Ms. Fuller | Operations Coordinator

“I feel so blessed spending this time together. I’m here, my daughter is here and my granddaughter is here. When I was younger, I had a feeling that I wasn’t going to see past thirty, but I’m double past thirty. I even have great-grandchildren. I definitely don’t take it for granted.”

Ms. Barnes | Volunteer and Bus Monitor
UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF THE INTERNET

Students in Ms. Garrett’s tenth grade AP Computer Science class are hunched over their laptops. You can hear the clacking of keyboards and every now and then a loud laugh and a “Woah!”

In this assignment, students are working with hexadecimals, creating their own images by using numbers in specific patterns to make a certain color. The “Woah!” typically comes after a student has figured out the right pattern and their creation begins to emerge.

“I am designing a heart and my initials. Heart for compassion and caring, and initials for identity,” explains Joseph.

Over the past several months, students have spent time talking about how information is sent across the Internet. Using that knowledge, they went through the same process of creating the Internet that the founders of the Internet went through when it was created.

“I’ve never heard any of this before, but it surrounds us every day, all day,” says Abibi. “I’m really enjoying learning about it.”

As a generation who has been surrounded by technology for their entire lives, herself included, Ms. Garrett says, “Few people actually stop to examine what is going on when they post a picture on Instagram, listen to a song on YouTube, or send a text message to a group of friends. In this class we learn about all of that and more! Students now know how filters on Instagram work and how to create them. They know why certain songs sound better on YouTube than others, which is based on the type of file and file size. They now know how information, like text messages, are sent across the Internet. It’s always great to see a student have a lightbulb moment in class and see them get it, but it is especially nice for these students to have lightbulb moments about things that they experience in their everyday lives.”

“I really enjoy this class because I never thought the Internet would have so many secrets,” says Estrella. “So much of it is coded in zeros and ones. Since I got into computer science class, I also see it as an opportunity to help everyone have access to the Internet.”

The computer science class, along with a robotics club, is made possible by a grant from Amazon’s Future Engineer program, and FIRST, a STEM nonprofit (For the Inspiration & Recognition of Science and Technology). The Amazon Future Engineer program is designed to facilitate STEM education in classrooms and is being implemented in 53 KIPP schools across the country.

“I think that it is extremely important that our students have access to a computer science class before college, because at this point everything involves technology,” says Ms. Garrett. “In this ever-changing world, society is becoming more reliant on technology. Giving students the opportunity to take an AP Computer Science class before college, gives students the opportunity to access jobs in the field. In this class, students learn the foundation skills that all computer scientists and introductory technology jobs need, and hone other skills that are relevant to a variety of careers, like problem-solving, critical thinking and collaboration.”

For students like Joseph, who have dabbled in computer science outside of school on their own, this class is an exciting opportunity to dive deeper. “I’ve been waiting for this class for years,” says Joseph. “I want to create games or write computer programs, or maybe both. I’m going to make the most technologically-advanced car and house. I’m going to make it all. I love it all and I love computers.”

More than half of the students taking computer science at Collegiate are female, and Ms. Garrett says she takes the responsibility seriously.

“STEM and Computer Science specifically are male dominated fields. I think when my students see me teaching it, it sends the message that no matter what, no matter your background, or gender, race or orientation, Computer Science is something that they can excel in. It is a field that has many opportunities and they should not be hesitant to dive in based on demographics.”

Throughout the rest of the year, students will spend time learning how to program and code in JavaScript, where they’ll work on designing apps and websites. The year will end with a unit on data and privacy, along with discussing the impact of big data collection. By the end of the year, KIPPsters will have “created the Internet” and will be able to discuss the implications – both beneficial and harmful – to society.

The impact of the Internet is something Estrella says she’s very interested in, “Since I got into computer science class, I see it more as an opportunity to help everyone have access to the Internet.”

I enjoy seeing students that were extremely nervous at the beginning of the year, excel in class now. I love seeing their passions come out in projects and in class. The greatest joy I have from teaching the class is knowing that in about ten years, these students will be in a job or career field, computer science or not, and they will remember something from this class that will help them in the future.”

Danielle Garrett
AP Computer Science Teacher at KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School
PROMISES TO KIDS ARE SACRED

FIFTEEN YEARS OF KIPP NASHVILLE
A LOOK BACK AND AHEAD AT THE FUTURE OF NASHVILLE’S LONGEST OPERATING CHARTER SCHOOL.

THE BEGINNING
Before ever setting foot in a classroom, Randy Dowell remembers feeling a tug toward helping people.

“I was working as a consultant in the IT field and I was doing a lot of volunteer work doing youth ministry through Young Life. I was at a place where I’d been a consultant for two years and contemplating my next step and really just had this strong desire to teach.”

Thanks to an open-minded and supportive manager, Dowell was given an opportunity to change the trajectory of his life – and with it, thousands of lives he was still years away from meeting.

“My manager knew I wanted to try teaching, so she encouraged me to give it a shot and let me know that if I didn’t love it, my job would be waiting for me.”

Dowell adds, “Without that initial push, I would not have been able to take a risk.”

That was the last time Dowell ever consulted in the IT field again. He spent the next two years teaching eighth grade science, math and reading at Sedgefield Middle School, one of the lowest performing schools in Charlotte, North Carolina.

“The work was really hard, especially in the beginning. I relied on friends and core, veteran teachers in the school. Those teachers would stop in my classroom and coach me up by talking to me in front of the kids, and I remember being in awe that the kids listened to them.”

Dowell’s hunger for feedback and opportunities to grow drove his obsession with creating systems, rules and procedures in his classroom to create the right learning environment. His second year at Sedgefield, he was determined to do things differently in his classroom to create the right learning environment.

“I had read a book by Harry Wong called The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher. I did everything he said to do. I did that all before the first day of school. It’s stuff to this day we expect our teachers to do. Our principal walked in and said ‘Mr. Dowell, what are you doing that these students are so quiet and so focused?’ I remember looking at him and wanting him to leave. I was thinking, ‘They’re doing what I’ve asked them to do. They’re doing what students should be doing, they’re getting ready to learn.’”

After two years in Charlotte, Dowell accepted a middle school teaching position at (Continued, Next Page)
As Dowell canvassed the neighborhoods surrounding the location of the new school and met with interested families in their homes, he remembers, “Parents got excited about two words, ‘safe and structured.’” In some cases, it was students who convinced their parents to let them try out KIPP. “I heard about KIPP because they came to my elementary school,” says TeAndrea Jackson, a founding fifth grade KIPPster. “They were talking about how they would be different from our zoned middle school. I distinctly remember they said, ‘We really believe you can go to college and we want to make sure you can get there.’ I took the flier home and told my mom I wanted to go to this school. I never once thought twice. I wanted to try something new, and she had this entrepreneurial spirit of the city would support a charter school.

FIND A WAY OR MAKE ONE

“It is unrealistic to assume that all students can and/or want to attend college.” – MNPS School Board, February 12, 2004

The Metro Nashville Public School Board rejected Dowell’s first application in 2003. His second application was also rejected and amidst the resistance, the KIPP Foundation asked Dowell to move his operation to Memphis. During this time, Dowell remembers feeling a real conflict over whether he could make this happen, “The biggest question was, ‘Can I do this? Can I open a school in an area that isn’t friendly to me?’ Dowell simultaneously searched Nashville for teachers who also craved something new and would be willing to commit to a different way of doing things: a way that would undoubtedly be harder and require more of their time.

One of those teachers was Misty Caldwell, who remains as a fifth-grade math teacher at KIPP Academy Nashville. Caldwell says she chose Nashville, because he loved the city and felt like the entrepreneurial spirit of the city would support a charter school.

As Dowell canvassed the neighborhoods surrounding the location of the new school and met with interested families in their homes, he remembers, “Parents got excited about two words, ‘safe and structured.’” In some cases, it was students who convinced their parents to let them try out KIPP. “I heard about KIPP because they came to my elementary school,” says TeAndrea Jackson, a founding fifth grade KIPPster. “They were talking about how they were starting this new school and explained how they would be different from our zoned middle school. I distinctly remember they said, ‘We really believe you can go to college and we want to make sure you can get there.’ I took the flier home and told my mom I wanted to go to this school. I never once thought twice. I wanted to try something new, and she had this mentality of let’s do it and so I did, and here I am.” Jackson, along with 59 other students became the founding class of KIPP Academy Nashville. Dowell was accepted as a 2003 Fisher Fellow and spent a year studying, learning from exemplar schools around the country and preparing the application for KIPP Academy Nashville. Dowell says he chose Nashville, because he loved the city and felt like the entrepreneurial spirit of the city would support a charter school.
to Caldwell. There was talk about preparing students for college, holding everyone to high standards and creating a safe, structured and nurturing environment for KIPPsters with alignment across classrooms and grades.

“It was like he was reading my mind,” explains Caldwell. “I let him know that it had been a concern of mine, and I had seen firsthand students once loving school in my classroom start to hate it the next year. Students who used to feel safe being bullied the following year. All of this was happening in the same building. Randy assured me that that kind of thing was not going to happen at KIPP.”

Caldwell says she didn’t think twice about accepting a position and going all in on the mission and vision of KIPP. “I knew I wanted to teach since freshman year of high school. My first year at Harpeth Hall, I remember being three grade levels behind, which Dowell said gave their team the added motivation to keep pushing themselves and trying new things.

Through a personalized approach to teaching, aligned standards, a partnership approach with parents and a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum, the founding class grew by leaps and bounds. At the time, there was no KIPP high school, so Dowell and the teachers worked to connect students with opportunities in Nashville and around the country.

Jackson attended Harpeth Hall, Azariah attended Exeter in New Hampshire and several KIPPsters went on to attend the University School of Nashville and 12 other local high schools. In 2017, the founding class of KIPPsters graduated college at more than double the rate of their peers. Jackson is a first-generation college graduate and now works for KIPP Nashville.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SCHOOL

As founding KIPPster, TeAndrea Jackson remembers, school was indeed different. Classes started in July with three weeks of summer school and students attended school every other Saturday. The school day began at 7:15 a.m. and ended at 5 p.m.

Laughing, she explains, “We had to sit on the floor for summer school. They told us we had to earn our desks and our chairs with good behavior and grades. I remember thinking this was strange, but if those were the rules, then I was going to do what it took to earn my chair.”

For all its historic charm, the Highland Heights building presented a lot of challenges. Broken down boilers during the winter meant students wore coats to continue learning. Parts of the roof sometimes leaked and bats lived inside the building.

“For three years, we couldn’t go to the fourth floor because of the bats,” says Jackson.

“Occasionally, a bat would make its way to the part of the school we were using, so we had to use the other stairwell.”

During summer school, one of the original four teachers quit and by the end of the summer, Dowell realized another teacher wasn’t a good fit. They began their founding year with two teachers.

“Lack of teachers, a dilapidated building, and a lack of resources was not going to stop us,” says Caldwell.

“The desire to defy the odds and prove the possible was a common vision we all had that bonded us together. This really built a sense of trust, required us to depend on each other, and to be honest with each other about ways to grow.”

In order to give his two teachers a planning period, Dowell taught all 59 KIPPsters reading in the cafeteria.

Caldwell adds, “That first year was definitely a challenge for students and teachers. Nonetheless, our kids wanted to be at school. In fact, I remember one student missed the bus one morning and instead of staying at home, she walked two miles to come to KIPP.”

Jackson says, “I stayed at KIPP because no one ever had a common vision we all had that bonded us together. The added motivation to keep pushing themselves and trying new things.”

ANOTHER WAY

Brandy Bridgewater, whose daughter Azariah joined in sixth grade, says, “I remember praying if there’s another way, I’m willing to go another way.”

Azariah was attending a low performing zoned school and Bridgewater says she wasn’t being challenged. “I felt like it was failing us, and I wasn’t willing to sacrifice her future and so, I was considering taking her out of the school system completely to home school. Then I heard about KIPP. I called that day and talked to the front office and set up an appointment. The rest is history.”

At the start, our students were an average of two to three grade levels behind, which Dowell says gave their team the added motivation to keep pushing themselves and trying new things.

Jackson attended Harpeth Hall, Azariah attended Exeter in New Hampshire and several KIPPsters went on to attend the University School of Nashville and 12 other local high schools. In 2017, the founding class of KIPPsters graduated college at more than double the rate of their peers.

“I knew I wanted to teach since freshman year of high school. My first year at Harpeth Hall, I remember being reflective of what I had been through up until that point and thinking to myself, ‘A lot of people have given me a lot of resources and support, and I wouldn’t feel good if I didn’t turn around and give someone else those same resources.’ (Continued, Next Page)
I was blessed to be able to go to KIPP and get the education I got. I have to give that to someone else and make sure others get this same experience.”

Since 2005, KIPP Nashville has grown to seven schools educating 2,300 KIPPsters and a staff of more than 300 talented educators from across the country — three of whom are still here from KIPP Nashville’s founding teaching team.

OPENING DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY

“Originally, I just wanted to open one school,” explains Dowell. “Our board chair at the time, Will Ed Settle, said we have a need to grow. We haven’t solved all our problems, but we have to spread what we know and keep striving to provide families with a better option.”

That encouraged me to think more broadly about KIPP and how we could impact more students in Nashville.

KIPP Nashville schools are some of the top performing public schools in the city without admissions requirements and recognized as Tennessee Reward Schools. KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School graduates go on to some of the country’s most prestigious institutions, including Princeton University, Vanderbilt University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Georgetown University, Howard University, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Duke University, Fisk University and Wellesley College.

After Jackson’s class of 2013 graduated from college, Dowell says he felt a sense of happiness for the KIPPsters who will always hold a special place in his heart. But Dowell says he didn’t feel like he could say job well done, “I never felt the story ended with that class. I felt happy for our kids, but it never struck me as the end. The truth is, we’re never quite satisfied and we’re finding ways to make things better every day.”

And there may be no better reminder of that than Jackson’s five younger siblings, all of whom attend KIPP Nashville schools.

“We want to do more for more students and do more for the kids who are with us,” says Dowell.

“We want to keep getting better. We want to create nationally recognized excellence in our elementary, middle and high school model. And we want to do that at a scale over the next 15 years where we are reaching five-thousand kids. Once we do that, we’ll be poised to figure out how to get to 10-thousand students, more than one out of every ten students in Nashville public schools.”

With its expansion into Antioch, Dowell sees new opportunities to reach more families through another five-school cluster, the same model which is now established in East and North Nashville.

Azariah Bridgewater, KAN alumna, on her graduation day from Florida State University.
It’s a dreary winter day as Ms. Denton packs up her car and heads up I-24 West toward Clarksville.

Ms. Denton is driving to Austin Peay State University to check in on three KIPP Nashville alumni. Once she hits the highway, Ms. Denton touches base with each student to confirm their meeting times and starts to get excited about seeing them in person.

“Today we’re talking about where they are in their classes and what their next few weeks look like before finals,” she says. “We’ll also be talking about class registration and the upcoming FAFSA application.”

These regular face-to-face touchpoints are just one small part of Ms. Denton’s work as a college persistence counselor.

Ms. Denton explains, “My goal is always to get a full picture of our students’ financial, social, emotional and academic progress, plus give them good next steps. They should always be striving to move forward.”

This persistence work is part of the KIPP Through College team at KIPP Nashville – making sure our students are supported in their journey to and through college. It’s relational work that is based around building trust with our alumni, with the ultimate goal grounded in helping our students persist from semester to semester through graduation.

“You can’t force a relationship,” says Ms. Denton. “Every time I interact with one of our current high school students, I’m thinking about creating that bond that will help me better serve them when they’re on my case load after high school graduation.”

Right now, Ms. Denton has 90 KIPP alumni on her case load in college, both in Nashville and around the country. Those within driving distance get personal visits – those too far away get monthly calls.

Chineerah, Ms. Denton’s first student, sits down in a booth and launches right into how she’s doing and what’s been happening in her classes. Chineerah is a freshman at Austin Peay, adjusting to the expectations of college professors and the challenges of time management in a less structured environment.

Chineerah feels like she’s got a leg up on college compared to some of her classmates. “I really feel like KIPP prepared me for college. After all the hard work in high school, I’m able to tackle bigger projects and understand how to outline my coursework. If I didn’t know how to do that, I would be lost. And even though it sounds simple, if we hadn’t been introduced to the idea of keeping an agenda in high school, I wouldn’t know how to structure my day or my time.”

There’s the regular conversation about class work and next steps for preparing for finals and registering for next semester’s classes. But Ms. Denton also asks about how Chineerah is settling in socially, whether she’s signed up for any clubs or activities. It’s these kinds of personal moments.
(Continued) coupled with the technical aspects of being in college, that Chineerah says makes this time so important. “It’s nice to have somebody to talk to about my day other than my mom,” she laughs. “It means a lot to get a call from Ms. Denton and I really look forward to seeing her in person.”

Ms. Denton’s ability to connect with her students comes from a place of personal experience.

“I remember being in their shoes,” she says. “I didn’t have this type of person or opportunity in college. I had to figure it out on my own. Sometimes I imagine how much easier things would’ve been for me if I’d had access to something like this.”

As a freshman at the University of Arkansas, Ms. Denton remembers she had to get used to living in a community triple the size of her small home town. To put it plainly, she describes the experience as culture shock and says at times, she didn’t know where to go or who to turn to with questions. It was overwhelming – a sensation she’s keenly aware of as she thinks of how her students are settling into their new environments.

“A common theme I hear from a lot of our students is figuring out how to advocate for themselves and getting over a fear they might have that asking for that help makes them sound silly. I can absolutely relate to that.”

While it may seem difficult to measure the persistence work, Ms. Denton keeps careful track of every interaction she has, noting everything from academic progress and social emotional wellbeing to financial situations. Each month, she’s building a holistic picture of how each student is doing, which in turn shapes next steps and guides her daily action items.

“It’s long-term work that can change minute to minute,” she explains. “You might leave a meeting feeling great and thinking this student is on the right track, but then something can change in the blink of an eye that could jeopardize their ability to stay in college. You always have to be prepared to have tough conversations.”

KIPP Nashville’s goal is for 79 percent of our alumni to graduate from college – that is the graduation percentage from the highest income quartile in the United States. For students from educationally underserved communities, that number goes down to 12 percent. Ms. Denton’s persistence work is part of what it takes to help our students reach that 79 percent goal.

Ms. Denton’s last appointment of the day is with Sabreonna, a sophomore at Austin Peay who’s studying pre-med biology and sociology.

“She keeps me on track,” says Sabreonna. “Sometimes I’m in my own world, but Ms. Denton makes sure I’m getting everything done for my financial aid and checks on my grades. Ms. Denton never judges me and gives great advice.”

Even though there is rarely any instant gratification in persistence work, Ms. Denton seizes the joy in the little “aha” moments when she sees her students figure something out they didn’t know before or take responsibility for the next step and plan for it without her help.

“I feel like I can start to breathe a little easier once I know my students have actually made their new campuses their home. For me, that looks like them getting involved outside of the academics, because college isn’t just about the classroom. Recently, one of my theatrical kids participated in a play on campus and won an award. When I visited another student, we kept getting stopped by all these people saying ‘hi’ to her as she toured me around. She was clearly so proud of the community she was building. These are the stories that keep me going.”
KIPP THROUGH COLLEGE

ARE OUR ALUMNI CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN TO AND THROUGH COLLEGE?

Our KIPP Through College team currently supports 91 KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School graduates in college. Our KIPPsters attend 33 unique colleges, universities and technical schools around the country.

CLASS OF 2018/2019 ARE ON TRACK TO TRIPLE THE GRADUATION RATE OF THEIR PEERS.

CLASS OF 2019 AT A GLANCE

50 STUDENTS
401 COLLEGE APPLICATIONS
268 COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES
100% GRADUATION RATE

ACT

20.7 AVG SCORE

Average ACT scores:
54% scored above a 21
28% scored above a 24

COLLEGES ATTENDED INCLUDE

COLLEGE MATRICULATION AND PERSISTENCE

2018 (56 SENIORS) 86% matriculated to college

2019 (50 SENIORS) 64% persisted to sophomore year

Estimated College Completion:
12% Low-income
42% Class of 2018
40% Class of 2019
POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

OUR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY
BY TASNEEM TEWOBOLA KIPP NASHVILLE PARENT

Our family has done it all: home-schooling, zoned school, magnet schools and now, charter schools. I have five daughters, four of whom are still in school. They all attend KIPP Nashville public charter schools.

We fell in love with KIPP for what it stands for (literally) and because it is truly a personal approach to education that our family had never experienced before. KIPP stands for “Knowledge Is Power Program” and when my husband and I heard that for the first time, we could not have agreed more. The personal touch started with our very first interaction. I will never forget getting a visit from Nikki Olszewski, KIPP Nashville College Prep’s school leader. She knocked on our door and told us about the middle school she was opening. She listened to us, took the time to get to know Yemurai, who is our oldest daughter and a current junior at KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School, and made us feel special.

That feeling is even stronger today than it was six years ago.

My youngest, Azizah, is in third grade at KIPP Nashville College Prep Elementary (KNCPE). She loves socializing and combining learning with her social skills. Azizah can be herself and feels genuinely seen and appreciated for who she is, right down to her hair. My daughter has black teachers who look like her and know how to pronounce her name. It may seem like a small thing, but in a world where many children feel like they have to disappear to fit into the mainstream culture, my seven-year-old has a life inside and outside our home where she feels significant – as significant as any child should feel growing up.

My middle daughter, Zenani attends KIPP Nashville College Prep. She’s in the same building as Azizah, which in of itself is special. Zenani is in sixth grade and has friends and teachers who nurture her love of reading and math. She won the award for KIPPster of the Month recently and came home beaming.

Asali is in ninth grade, enjoys playing basketball and since her time at KIPP, has developed a strong sense of self-advocacy. Instead of letting me help with her homework, she insists she can just ask her teacher. She does and she’s comfortable doing so.

That brings me back to Yemurai. She spent her freshman year at a magnet school in Nashville, after deciding she wanted a different experience. Sophomore year, she came back at KIPP. It was a powerful moment for me to bring her to Collegiate High School’s front office and see her get questions answered, and for her to get to make that choice. Because I didn’t have a choice about schools when I grew up.

For Yemurai, Collegiate has been a homecoming, of sorts. She’s a junior now and back with comfortable friends and teachers who give her just enough support that she feels okay stretching herself, while knowing there are loving people behind her ready to help. Right now, she’s excited about working toward applying to Spelman College.

At KIPP, there is intentionality in everything teachers and school leaders are doing, from elementary all the way through high school. I know this because I’m experiencing it across four different students and grade levels every day.

Over the years, I’ve watched each of my daughter’s teachers meet my children where they are.

The level of cultural competency in the classroom is unlike anything I’ve seen and gives me peace of mind when I send my kids off to school each day. We love KIPP and feel like we’ve found a community that serves as an extension of the values we cherish at home.

As Yemurai marches toward high school graduation, with three younger sisters watching her every move, and regularly reminding us that it’s “to and through” college, I know our family made the best decision we could have by choosing KIPP.

“As any parent knows, every child is unique. It’s a joy watching my daughters learn and grow every day and seeing how KIPP is developing, nurturing and supporting them in different ways.”

Tasneem Twogbola | KIPP Nashville parent
A DAY IN THE LIFE

FEATURED KRISTINA CLAYTON

What does it take to keep a school running smoothly? Someone who wears a lot of hats and can gracefully go from fixing a broken printer to managing an operating budget.

For a glimpse behind the scenes, we followed Kristina Clayton, Director of Operations at KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School, around during her day.

7:00 AM
MORNING MEETING
Teammates gather before doors open to students. Ms. Clayton runs through a few reminders before teachers head off to their classrooms to complete final preparations for the day.

7:15 AM
GREETING STUDENTS
Ms. Clayton welcomes KIPPsters to school and hands out a flyer pumping up an attendance competition.

8:30 AM
OPERATIONS MEETING
Team meetings from across departments allow Ms. Clayton to keep tabs on what is happening and facilitate any necessary conversations.

(Continued, Next Page)
A DAY IN THE LIFE: KRISTINA CLAYTON

9:00 AM
WORKTIME
While it’s rare to be at her desk, Ms. Clayton takes time to knock out quick to-dos before heading back into the hallway.

9:32 AM
HALLWAY TRANSITION
As students fill the hallways between classes, Ms. Clayton makes sure KIPPsters are heading to their next block quickly and in an orderly fashion.

10:05 AM
ONBOARDING
Ms. Clayton works with the new office manager, helping onboard her during her first few weeks at Collegiate.

11:15 AM /1:25 PM
LUNCH DUTY
Ms. Clayton helps the cafeteria staff with cleanup. Once lunch ends, she walks with students as they go back to class.

(Continued, Next Page)
1:30 PM
SUPPLY CHECK
At least once a week, Ms. Clayton checks in on the supplies in the two teacher workrooms, and replenishes wherever is necessary. She often finds herself doing minor copier repairs because a broken printer can throw a wrench in even the most prepared teacher's day!

2:28 PM
STUDENT ASSISTANCE
A student may need help with a locker combination, which is where Ms. Clayton comes in and why she's often in the hallways during transition. Students know Ms. Clayton is their go-to.

3:30 PM
DISMISSAL
Ms. Clayton helps manage the flow of students and calls out names as parents drive up to pick up their student.

4:00 PM
CHEERLEADING PRACTICE
As coach, Ms. Clayton practices with the team several days a week after school and choreographs their routines.
ALUMNI PROFILES

THE NEXT GENERATION
HOW OUR ALUMNI ARE BLAZING THE TRAIL, LOOKING AHEAD AND LOOKING BACK ON THEIR TIME AS KIPPSTERS.

“KIPP helped prepare me academically. I arrived freshman year and could write a paper with my eyes closed, and I was grateful for that experience.

At first, it was hard to adjust to a more spread out class schedule, because I was used to taking all my classes back to back and then working on my assignments after school. Once I got used to it, it was nice to have that flexible time during the day to study or get other things done. KIPP also taught me how to manage my time and organize assignments, so I wasn’t stressed out. I’m excited for sophomore year because I’m going to be living in a dorm that’s more of an apartment style, and we’ll have a kitchen. I’m excited about that because I love to cook and it saves me money!”

DeJeané
Sophomore at University of Tennessee

“It’s important to have something you’re involved in that you love to do. It doesn’t matter if you’re staying in the same city or going to a new city. Be a great student, but don’t forget to experience the new places and people that surround you.”

Jamil
Sophomore at Middle Tennessee State University

“The minute I stepped into classes, I realized I could do this. My advice to KIPPsters entering college this fall is don’t get discouraged. It will get hard before it gets easy. But you will thrive, because you’re a KIPPster and you are more prepared than you know.”

Kat
Sophomore at Rhodes College

“You didn’t have to be a straight A student throughout your whole life to do well in college. It’s all about the hard work, time and dedication you put into it once you begin freshman year, because college is like a blank slate. All the work I put in this last year has paid off.”

William
Sophomore at Fisk University

“KIPP set me up with the fundamentals that have helped me progress through college. I know I can persevere. I’m excited to see where it’s all going to take me, because there are a lot of new opportunities that I plan on grasping.”

Pam
Sophomore at University Of Memphis

“KIPP helped prepare me academically. I arrived freshman year and could write a paper with my eyes closed, and I was grateful for that experience.”

DeJeané
Sophomore at University of Tennessee

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Pam
Sophomore at University Of Memphis
SPORTS AND ARTS

- Learning eagle pose? Check.
- Breaking your own personal record in the 3.1 mile race? Check.
- Presenting a piece of art to a Tennessee Governor? Check.

Our KIPPsters are proving the possible in and out of the classroom. From choir to art, cross country, basketball and soccer, our students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of enrichment opportunities.
HAPPINESS ON A SIDEWALK

There’s an hour time frame every morning and afternoon, in front of our Highland Heights campus on Douglas Avenue, where you can recharge your spirit. The battery power comes in the form of unwavering smiles, big waves and genuine laughter.

“There’s an hour time frame every morning and afternoon, in front of our Highland Heights campus on Douglas Avenue, where you can recharge your spirit. The battery power comes in the form of unwavering smiles, big waves and genuine laughter.

“Rain or shine, snow, whatever, I’m here.”
Meet Mr. George, one of our crossing guards. It’s a position he’s proudly held with the Metro Nashville Police Department for the past two years right here at KIPP Nashville. Mr. George signed on after retiring from a job that he had held for 45 years. He’s from South Pittsburg, Tennessee and attended college at Tennessee State University before continuing on at Trevecca Nazarene University.

“I took this job after retiring just to give me something to do, never realizing how rewarding it would be for me to interact with such wonderful teachers, administrators and students!”

Cars creep by in the school zone and Mr. George is a constant whirl of arms, his face crinkled into what seems like a permanent smile.

“Hey, hey, hey!” he shouts at a van with the windows rolled down. (Continued, Next Page)

(Continued) This level of enthusiasm is by design, something Mr. George says he set out to do from the very first minute he takes his position on the sidewalk each day.

“I try to engage everyone, and most of the time if I don’t see someone, they’ll see me and honk their horns and wave and get my attention.”

Stand on the sidewalk next to Mr. George even for one minute and you’ll see parents lowering their car windows so that their kids—even the ones in car seats—can wave at Mr. George.

Mr. George acknowledges that his first priority is the safety of the students, but beyond that, he’s taken on another more informal role.

Each morning, he greets students with “Good morning” or “Happy Monday.” If students are taking a test, he encourages them by offering, “Do your best today.” At the end of the school day, Mr. George follows up on whether it was a good day and how did that test go?

“I try with whatever means at my disposal to keep them motivated, to be happy and safe as they go to and from school.”

It’s the students’ personalities, and the interactions he gets both outside and inside our school where he volunteers twice a week, that Mr. George says keep him coming back every day.

When he’s not helping out in front of KIPP Academy Nashville and KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School, you can find him as an Elder serving as an associate minister to his local congregation.

“They think I’m doing something for them, but they’re doing more for me than I am for them.”

To that we say, right back at you, Mr. George! We salute you.
KIPP Nashville
P.O. Box 78126
Nashville, TN 37207

STAY IN TOUCH!
Sign up for our mailing list | info@kippnashville.org

We are growing some budding artists! Our @kncpe_royalty KIPPsters are working on self-portraits and decorating the portfolios they’ll keep all their amazing creations in.

Group hugs are the best, right? We ♥ our @kipp_kirkpatrick Cougars, and we’ll see all our KIPPsters back next Tuesday!

“We celebrate Hispanic Heritage as a month to celebrate our roots and be proud of where we come from.” - Vanessa, @kippcollegiate junior #HispanicHeritageMonth #TeamandFamily

Thanks to Yasmeen, a KAN alumna, for giving our KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle School KIPPsters a special tour of where she’s currently going to college at @mtsu.

College Persistence Counselor, Ms. Denton, is making visits to our KIPPsters as they get settled on their new campuses. Once a KIPPster, always a KIPPster! #ToAndThrough #TeamandFamily

Congrats to the KAN Cross Country team for a historic performance! Shout-out to all the athletes, parents, and coaches who supported the team! #TeamandFamily 🏃‍♀️

@kipp_nashville    @KIPP_Nashville   /KIPP.Nashville.TN