

heart  beat

KIPP: **NJ** | KIPP: **MIAMI**

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## **OUR HEARTBEAT**

**We strive to build the most kid-focused schools on Earth. We know that to get there, we have to adhere to the following principles.**

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# PROMISES TO CHILDREN ARE SACRED



## **1. We fight alongside families who want great schools.**

- a. We build great schools in communities that have historically been denied access to them. We define greatness as a parent does: empowering our students to think and act on behalf of themselves and others for the long term. When short-term gains are in conflict with the long-term interests of our students, we choose the long term every time.
- b. We explicitly seek to dismantle systems of oppression that have held back too many students from reaching their potential. We build great schools both for the students we serve and out of a sense of social responsibility. We believe that our schools, and especially our alumni, will help to create a more just society.
- c. We partner with communities that overflow with power, beauty, and potential in order to help our students unlock their innate assets and fulfill their dreams.
- d. As long as there are kids who seek better schools, we will serve as many of them as we can, while still offering each of them a first-class education. We know that if done right, we can get better as we get bigger.
- e. When we make a commitment to our students, we do what it takes to keep that commitment, every time, with every kid.
- f. We know that every child's #1 supporter is their family, so we actively invite, engage, and partner with families to provide the best possible experience for their child.

## **2. We never give up on our kids.**

- a. We believe in each child's potential and we are not quitters, which is why we never expel kids and do everything we can to keep students from leaving.
- b. We see the kids who face the most challenges not as problems but as the reason we exist.
- c. We stick with our kids until we are confident that they are set up for successful and choice-filled lives.

## **3. We work to ensure that ALL of our kids meet their potential.**

- a. We fix problems urgently when we know the solution, even if doing so will be extremely hard.
- b. We view the term "No Excuses" as a rallying cry for our adults, not an admonition for our kids. We focus on results and hold ourselves accountable to them. We don't let obstacles become excuses for adults to fail our kids. We know that many of our kids face numerous hurdles and barriers to success, and that we have to help them navigate them with courage and compassion.
- c. We do whatever it takes in order to provide our kids with the experience they deserve. We know that often that requires extraordinary effort and time. If it didn't, all kids would already have access to a great education.
- d. All kids matter to us, not just the ones in our schools. We consider the interests of all kids in our communities in all of our decisions and advocacy. We are good neighbors with other schools in our communities.



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# OUTSTANDING TEAMMATES ARE EVERYTHING



#### **4. The #1 role of every TEAMmate is to pursue results for kids.**

- a. We are unfailingly candid, and we encourage productive conflict to identify and fix problems fast. We ensure the best solutions prevail.
- b. We hold our teammates accountable to the results they have committed to achieving and to our collective goals.
- c. Our leaders work with their teams to set ambitious goals, develop their capabilities, and push for better and better performance.
- d. We continuously assess our strengths and weaknesses and interrogate our biases and practices to ensure that we are providing the best possible education for our students.

#### **5. Diverse teams of outstanding people get the best results.**

- a. We know outstanding people want to work with other outstanding people, so we strive to create an environment where outstanding people want to be and can be successful. A+ teammates beget other A+ teammates.
- b. Our kids need and deserve outstanding teachers in every single classroom. We exalt teaching and teachers.
- c. Outstanding people need to be treated like they're outstanding and with respect and trust.
- d. Our leaders hire rigorously, develop their people, and don't tolerate under-performance.
- e. Our leaders recruit actively, seeking and finding outstanding people and doing whatever it takes to bring them aboard and keep them.
- f. Our leaders and teammates work as a team, pushing and supporting each other.
- g. Diverse teams make the best decisions through varied perspectives and productive conflict. We strive for diversity of viewpoint, background, and representation on our teams.
- h. We constantly reflect and refine our work at the individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels. We engage in individual work to develop our own mindsets, beliefs, and actions as well as to improve our practice. We critically examine our practices as individuals, in teams, and organizationally to unearth growth areas.
- i. We mine for conflict and dissent to avoid group-think or tyranny of the majority. The best idea wins.

#### **6. People-first leadership is the key to being a great place for outstanding teammates.**

- a. We view the key to getting results as a leader as building trusting relationships. Trusting relationships enable all the other elements of high performance, from accountability to feedback to high engagement.
- b. We build trust by trusting our teammates to be as good as the best among us, not by erecting rules and bureaucracy to try to address infrequent infractions.
- c. We build trust by treating our team members equitably. Inequitable treatment of teammates is unfair and unethical and also leads to underperformance.
- d. We build trust by giving feedback the moment we think of it.
- e. We build trust by giving people a voice in their work and seeking their input, their feedback, and their ideas.
- f. We build trust by treating people the way we want to be treated.
- g. We build trust by honoring our families and communities.
- h. We make work fun and don't take ourselves too seriously.
- i. We know that everyone wants to be beautiful, so we assume the best and honor the work of our teammates.





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# OUR KIDS RUN TO SCHOOL



## **7. Our kids feel physically and emotionally safe.**

- a. We create a culture where mistakes and failures are learning opportunities.
- b. We treat our students, and they treat each other, with respect and love—regardless of differences.
- c. We create consistency and order so our students can thrive, free of distraction and danger.
- d. We push our students and we make them feel successful, and we help them to understand that success is earned, not given.

## **8. Our kids feel known by teachers, staff, leaders, and each other.**

- a. Our teachers know each of our students as individuals and take time to understand their interests and needs.
- b. Our teachers and leaders obsessively track how our students are doing, so they can best meet their individual needs and get them where they need to go.
- c. Our schools create environments where students can form deep, supportive, and lasting relationships with each other.
- d. Our schools provide a diverse array of opportunities so that each unique student has the opportunity to shine.
- e. We ensure that our students' voices are heard, respected, and powerful.

## **9. Our students feel loved in our schools.**

- a. We show our love for our kids by holding them to standards of excellence that befit their limitless potential.
- b. We show our love for our kids by doing whatever it takes to meet their needs, many of which fall outside the school hours.
- c. We show our love for our kids by treating them as we treat our own children, pushing them with warmth and care to be the best they can be.
- d. We show our love for our kids by making school fun, challenging, and exciting and connecting each lesson to their lives.
- e. We show our love for our kids by helping them fall in love with their lesson content and the learning process.



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# OUR KIDS WILL CHANGE THE WORLD



## **10. We master and love the content we teach.**

- a. We see beauty and connections in each lesson and are obsessed with passing on that excitement to our kids.
- b. We study and understand the standards and content our kids are expected to master.
- c. We create an unquenchable thirst for learning and achievement in our students.

## **11. We set ambitious goals, and we achieve them.**

- a. We believe all of our students have the potential for outstanding achievement and never let their past performance prevent them from attaining greatness.
- b. We create classrooms where kids tackle difficult tasks and do the mental lifting themselves and with each other.
- c. In order to learn, kids need to be in class. We minimize suspensions and other out-of-class consequences.
- d. Our support teams and our leaders all see our jobs as supporting our kids and teachers by removing obstacles as efficiently as possible.

## **12. We prepare our kids to navigate and thrive in an unfair world.**

- a. We listen to our kids, constantly seeking to observe, understand, and support their thinking.
- b. We help our kids develop a love of self and community.
- c. We provide rich experiences outside the classroom to foster understanding of their community and the world beyond.
- d. We help our kids learn how to work hard and persist through challenges.
- e. We have conversations and create experiences that allow us and our kids to grapple with issues of race, identity, and economic and social justice.
- f. We value culturally responsive content and learning experiences alongside canonical ones, so that our kids are fully versed in issues of identity and cultural currency.
- g. We relentlessly reinforce with our students the connection between academic excellence, educational attainment, and empowerment to change the world.
- h. We respect, honor, and value the wealth of knowledge our children bring to the school community. We find opportunities to leverage their perspective, as well as learn from them.

## **13. Our teachers and leaders learn from each other, from our students, and from others.**

- a. We share with and support each other, and we make the space and the time to do that.
- b. We constantly and humbly seek to learn from others, both within our schools and in other schools. We go where the data takes us, learning from what actually works and not just from interesting ideas.
- c. We believe that shared goals, assessments, curriculum, and instructional practices are essential to ensure that we learn from each other and that every one of our kids gets an excellent education.
- d. We share openly with others, whether in our schools or from other schools. All kids matter.

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