

## Opportunity knocks, Chromebook answers

“Work hard. Be nice.” Emblazoned on signs across campuses, this mantra of KIPP LA Schools distills the academic philosophy and ethos of KIPP charter schools quite simply. Behind the mantra, however, resides a deep well of proven educational theories, outstanding educators, eager students, and hands-on administrators. The Google Chromebook—piloted at two KIPP middle schools—complements this environment perfectly.

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## KIPP:

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### KIPP LA At A Glance

- Founded in 2003 (2 schools: KIPP LA Prep and KIPP Academy of Opportunity)
- Located in South and East Los Angeles
- 1,650 elementary/middle students in grades K-8
- 400 Chromebooks

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### Management Console

School districts will benefit from Google's web-based Management Console, a tool that lets IT administrators manage their Chromebooks from the cloud—from pre-installing or blocking apps and extensions to managing user and network access. As Chromebooks continue to evolve, the Management Console's functionality will continue to develop.



Chromebooks offer an innovative approach to computing, and, although simply packaged, also tap into a deep well of online resources. Built around the Chrome browser, the easy-to-use Chromebook energizes the already forward-thinking educators at KIPP LA's middle schools—KIPP Academy of Opportunity and KIPP LA Prep—located in South and East Los Angeles, respectively.

KIPP LA Schools (KIPP LA) is a non-profit charter school operator formed in 2007 to support the existing KIPP schools and to open more schools in the communities of South and East Los Angeles. KIPP LA's schools are part of the national KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) network of 109 public charter schools, which are dedicated to preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. In 2010, KIPP LA Prep, was prominently featured in the Oscar-nominated documentary WAITING FOR “SUPERMAN,” which examined the nation's faltering educational system and the last-chance lottery system for entry into high-achieving charter schools.

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—Matthew Peskay, Director of Technology, KIPP LA

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### Successful California Charter Schools

KIPP LA's schools feature a “no shortcuts, no excuses” philosophy and a strong culture of achievement. KIPP's curricula are designed to provide students a well-rounded education, with sufficient time dedicated to academics, the arts, extracurricular activities, and character development. To its well-deserved credit, KIPP's distinctive academic culture already boasts a national college-entry rate of 89 percent. The statistic is impressive on its own merits, but doubly so considering that the majority of students matriculating into KIPP schools perform two to three years below grade level.

“We've seen how access to technology can ignite enthusiasm and achievement among students. As a beacon of possibility in underserved communities, we knew KIPP LA would be a perfect testing ground for the educational usefulness of Chromebooks,” says Jelena Dobic, PR and Marketing Director for KIPP LA. “We've had enthusiastic response from teachers and administrators, but the transformation among students by having broad access to technology has been the most rewarding aspect.”

### Plug-and-Play With Workhorse Reliability

As part of Google's pilot program beginning in the spring of 2011, 400 Chromebooks were divided between KIPP Academy of Opportunity and KIPP LA Prep, each serving grades 5-8 and approximately 350 students. The initial plan targeted 7th and 8th graders with seven teachers each receiving 25 Chromebooks. Cautiously hopeful about the reliability of the devices, KIPP expanded the program to eight full classrooms. The optimism was validated—not a single Chromebook failed.

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## Chromebooks for Education

Chromebooks include the hardware and OS, updates, cloud-based management, and complete support. There's no need for software licenses, servers, security solutions, and maintenance plans. Owning a Chromebook can be 70% lower than the cost of a traditional PC.



Chromebooks

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*—Matthew Peskay, Director of Technology, KIPP LA*

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The merits of an always-on, always-connected device made them a winner for KIPP's IT managers, who were able to then make modern technology available to more students. Compared to other machines, there's no software to be installed or imaging required. "Once the Chromebooks are set up and deployed, the updates happen on their own, and the Chromebooks improve with no effort on our part," says Matthew Peskay, Director of IT for KIPP LA. "That's less administrative overhead and burden needed to manage the computers, so we can put more devices into classrooms and more easily manage them over time."



For social science teacher James Sanders, teaching has shifted by using Chromebooks from direct instruction to interactive engagement, and students are required to think independently. "Students create and collaborate, rather than memorize and regurgitate. It's a better, more authentic model for learning," he says. One of his eager students explains how it works: "We walk into a social studies class, grab a computer, and check out Mr. Sanders's blog, then we follow the tasks he sets."

## IT Weighs In

Peskay adds that KIPP LA's limited finances translated into an overall student-to-computer ratio of 5:1 before the introduction of Chromebooks. Maintaining traditional PCs and keeping them up to date involved precious workforce hours the schools really couldn't afford. The software costs and ongoing updates for software added up as well—from Microsoft Office to Symantec utilities. Using Chromebooks eliminate all of those additional costs.

"Chromebooks are it," says Peskay. "The Holy Grail of IT in any organization is the ability to minimize admin. With the Google devices, set-up and maintenance are a breeze. There's no need for anti-virus software; updates are done automatically; they don't freeze-up; and should anything happen, you simply reboot and you're off and running."

Peskay notes that while it's difficult to quantify overall costs or return on investment, "the fact that we won't need to constantly update software is itself huge, let alone the lower support and maintenance costs with Chromebooks."

KIPP LA students, teachers, and families understand that there are no shortcuts to achieving success in school or in life. KIPP LA students are taught to set challenging goals for themselves, and to meet and exceed expectations—whether in class, on homework, in building strong character, or on the soccer field. KIPP LA students spend at least 40 percent more time in school, and in just a few months, Google Chromebooks proved their worth in this rigorous academic environment. Everyone relishes the prospect of further use. Concludes one student with a grin, "With Chromebooks, I think our grades are going to go up."

