



Michael & Susan Dell  
FOUNDATION

September 2012



# Blended Learning in Practice:

Introduction to Case Studies from Leading Schools

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prepared by 



# Blended Learning Today

Blended learning has arrived in K12 education. Over the past few years, technology has grown to influence nearly every aspect of the U.S. education system. With this growth, a variety of school models have emerged – ranging from integrating more technology into traditional classrooms to creating fully online education experiences.



Blended learning is just one piece of this expanding technology landscape, but it has attracted particular attention for its potential to marry existing pedagogy and practice with new innovations in teaching and learning. The following definition of blended learning, developed by researchers at the Innosight Institute, provides a useful starting point for understanding its role in the field (emphasis added):

*“Blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home.”<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*Classifying K-12 Blended Learning* by Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn, Innosight Institute, 2012

Across district and charter schools, blended learning models are proliferating. At the same time, both technology in general and blended learning in particular have become prominent topics in national debates. As befits an emerging field this discussion can be impassioned, yet too often it gets polarized. Technology and blended learning are cast in stark extremes – either a revolution in the classroom or a passing fad, a panacea or a distraction. Missing from this debate are often the voices of teachers, school leaders, and students who work with blended learning every day.

These case studies seek to share the experiences of leading blended learning practitioners, in particular those implementing “lab” or “station” blended rotation models.<sup>2</sup> By telling their stories we hope to convey the emerging strengths and early challenges of this type of blended approach, illustrate the interdependencies between technology and other aspects of a school model, and share lessons to benefit other practitioners and the field at large. The case studies will be complemented by an impact evaluation of these same models to be released by SRI International later in 2012. We hope both pieces of research can bring additional light to the national dialogue on blended learning. Readers should bear in mind, however, that the case studies are meant to provide a detailed view into one piece of the

landscape, not a comprehensive survey. There are many other forms of blended learning that merit deeper study as well.

It is also important to remember that the blended learning field is rapidly evolving. The schools profiled here have shifted and refined their models within a single school year, and will continue to refine them over time. While this evolution is exciting, it should also preclude a rush to judgment on technology’s complex role in education. Indeed, the best way to understand the roles that technology and blended learning can play in the future of education is to understand the practices and innovations that are taking place in classrooms every day. We welcome your engagement with these case studies of blended learning in practice, and we look forward to your feedback.

<sup>2</sup>[Classifying K-12 Blended Learning](#). From Innosight’s classification, in a lab rotation, “students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher’s discretion among locations on the brick and mortar campus. At least one of these spaces is a learning lab for predominantly online learning.” In a station rotation, “students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher’s discretion among classroom-based learning modalities. The rotation includes at least one station for online learning.”

# Project Overview

In the summer of 2011, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation initiated a series of investments intended to build a stronger evidence base within the emerging field of blended learning. This included direct investments in five charter management organizations (CMOs) that utilize blended learning: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, FirstLine Schools, KIPP LA Schools, Rocketship Education, and Summit Public Schools.

The Foundation also supported a series of case studies on these schools developed by FSG, as well as a year-long impact evaluation carried out by SRI International. With these projects, the Foundation sought to enhance its own understanding of blended learning while also contributing to the knowledge base for other practitioners and the broader field.

The two strands of this work – the detailed case studies of blended learning operators and the one-year impact evaluation of the same schools – are intended to provide complementary perspectives on what can be learned from blended learning models today. In particular, the case studies seek to address the following questions about each operator’s experience implementing blended learning:

- Why did each school decide to “go blended” and what were the key steps of this journey?

- What does blended learning look like in a classroom? What is the blended learning experience like for students and teachers?
- What operational and financial supports enable blended learning at each school?
- What are the strengths of each school’s model and where have schools seen common challenges?
- What lessons can be drawn from the early experiences of these blended learning schools?

The five case studies provide detailed qualitative data on each operator’s experience with these rotational models of blended learning. The impact evaluation, scheduled for release during the fourth quarter of 2012, will provide a quantitative counterpart. The evaluation has been designed to answer several questions for each model through



the analysis of learning outcomes collected from each operator and complemented by an analysis of program use data, teacher survey data, and interview data collected during site visits. Key questions for the impact evaluation are as follows:

1. Do students in blended learning models show changes in academic achievement that differ significantly from their peers?
2. Do students in blended learning models show a propensity to close the achievement gap?
3. Do students in blended learning models demonstrate progress on appropriate leading indicators that differ significantly from their peers?
4. Are differences in the way that blended learning models are implemented associated with differences in learning outcomes?
5. Are blended learning models more effective for some types of students or subject areas than for others?
6. To what extent is each of the blended learning models being implemented as intended?
7. What are the reasons for deviations from the expected model of blended learning?



## Case Study Structure

The case studies are designed to describe each operator's blended learning model while also illustrating their journeys toward blended learning and lessons learned along the way. In reading the case studies, it is important to remember that the models profiled comprise both station rotational models where students rotate among in-classroom modalities, and also lab rotational models where students rotate among different classrooms including a computer lab.



### Journey to Blended Learning

*Based on the background and founding story of the school and CMO, why did they decide to pursue blended learning? What was the design process and who was involved? What model did they decide upon?*



### Instructional Model

*What does blended learning look like in the classroom? How is instruction delivered and how does the school mix online and offline learning in support of an overall vision? How does the choice of station or lab rotation affect the instructional model? In what ways do the experiences of teachers and students (or subgroups of students) change in a blended setting?*



### Operational Model

*What operational supports make blended learning possible? At the classroom level, how does the school integrate online and offline data? What human capital structure is needed to support the school's model? Across the school and network, how does each operator manage issues such as technology infrastructure, facilities, central office supports, and vendor relationships to support blended learning?*



### Financial Model

*What are the financial implications of blended learning? What upfront investments are required? On a per-pupil basis what ongoing costs and financial benefits have schools experienced? As a result, how has blended learning changed how schools invest resources and how each operator approaches long-term sustainability?*



### Lessons Learned

*What success factors have been critical to the implementation of each operator's model? What lessons can be drawn from challenges to date? Based on each operator's experience with blended learning, how is its role expected to evolve at the school and network level in the future?*

# Key Learnings from the Case Studies

There is much to learn from the collective experience of the five operators profiled in these case studies. These CMOs comprise a small fraction of the educators exploring and defining the emerging blended learning field, yet the commonalities in their experiences are striking.

While anyone interested in blended learning may benefit from the experience of these operators, the following themes are particularly geared toward practitioners who are implementing or considering implementing blended learning. These lessons include considerations to address before and during implementation, as well as several opportunities for the field at large.

## Key Questions to Answer Before Implementation

Before the first students walk into a blended learning classroom, it is important to consider the following key questions. These factors are by no means the only considerations in launching a blended model, but they emerged from this research as common success factors or obstacles for each of the five models profiled in the case studies.

- **How will blended learning support your larger vision?**

Each organization profiled chose to pursue blended learning as a means to advance its broader mission and organizational goals. For KIPP Empower, blended learning provides the means to maintain small group instruction in the face of budgetary pressure. For Rocketship Education, blended learning enables the CMO to pursue a holistic strategy that encompasses an innovative human capital model and teacher subject specialization. For each school profiled, improving learning outcomes for high-needs students was a foundational goal of implementing a blended learning model.

## Key Questions to Answer Before Implementation

- *How will blended learning support your larger vision?*
- *What adjustments to your human capital model will be needed for implementation?*
- *How will blended learning impact your school's financial model?*
- *What distinct roles will be played by the school versus central-office staff?*





- **What adjustments to your human capital model will be needed for implementation?** By changing the types of learning that students experience or by shifting cost structures, blended learning has helped to create new instructional roles. Each school profiled has implemented or is considering implementing a more differentiated “ladder” of staffing that includes master and apprentice teachers alongside instructional aides and lab monitors. For instance, KIPP Empower has developed a three-tiered staffing model with Lead Teachers, Intervention Specialists, and Instructional Assistants who work together to

deliver different types of instruction to small groups of students in a variety of settings. Alliance has further extended the reach of its master teachers through remote instruction: for instance a Spanish teacher might work with students in one classroom while videoconferencing her lesson to students at another Alliance school who are supervised by an instructional aide. In each instance, a more differentiated staffing model creates openings for career growth, but also underlines the importance of supporting teachers to succeed in a blended setting. While the skills required for success in a blended classroom

include the attributes characteristic of great teaching in general, the operators profiled noted that additional competencies in data analysis and classroom management are important. In addition, perhaps the greatest asset in a blended classroom is a flexible, “early adopter” mentality that pushes teachers to test new approaches and adapt to a changing model.

- **How will blended learning impact your school’s financial model?** Each operator profiled adopted blended learning to better realize their instructional vision. Yet urgent financial pressures, particularly from state budget cuts, have compelled these schools to consider how blended learning can support financial goals as well – often through a reallocation of resources. Across the diverse financial models of these schools, several patterns of financial reallocation emerge. First, by creating larger classes and/or by increasing the time that students learn autonomously online, these models either rely on fewer classroom teachers or use a differentiated staffing model with lower overall human capital expenses. The financial benefits from these changes, however, must be balanced against additional investments to support blended learning. Several operators have increased spending on computer labs, student laptops, network infrastructure, or licensing fees for online programs. In some instances, new staff positions such as FirstLine’s Director of Blended Learning have been essential supports for the blended model.

In addition, these operators have reinvested the financial benefits from blended learning in other areas of the school. Rocketship schools, for instance, provide bonuses to teachers and have added an Academic Dean to support classroom instruction and an Assistant Principal to primarily manage the Learning Lab. The impact of blended learning on a school’s overall finances makes it essential to consider the financial implications of the model beyond the cost of the technology. Together, the costs and benefits of blended learning work to create new models of resource allocation to address unmet student needs, and suggest a novel approach to maintaining financial sustainability in tough fiscal times.

- **What distinct roles will be played by school versus central-office staff?** Blended learning requires new skills and modes of operating. For the operators profiled, defining the ideal roles for school and CMO staff has been an important prerequisite for efficiently managing blended learning. In general, the CMOs profiled have supported schools on the non-instructional elements of blended learning, while reserving teaching and learning decisions for school leaders. Summit Public Schools, for example, has supported the analysis of data from online programs while supplying the business acumen and time to identify and negotiate with potential blended learning providers. KIPP LA has likewise managed vendor relationships by assigning a project manager who serves as a first point of contact

with providers and enables principals to focus more time on instructional leadership. Across the operators profiled, CMO staff noted that supporting blended learning requires new capacities, and that in particular the first year of implementing blended learning can require unexpectedly large amounts of time.

### Lessons Learned From Implementation

These case studies tell the stories of schools in their first year of operation as well as schools with five years of experience working with blended learning. Yet across these models a remarkably similar set of lessons emerges for how to implement and manage blended learning effectively. Some of these lessons convey successful practices these operators have developed, while others address challenges that persist in the field and require careful attention from practitioners.

- **Create a process for innovation and continuous improvement.** Each school profiled invested substantial time in designing its blended learning model, yet each model has changed during implementation. This evolution is not surprising – blended learning remains in its early stages – but the operators

profiled have been able to see shifts in their model as progress and evolution rather than setbacks. At Summit Public Schools, for instance, school and CMO leaders have encouraged the faculty to experiment with new blended learning ideas and suggest improvements to Summit’s approach. Alliance promotes ongoing innovation through an action research process in which staff search for problems in the model, take action against them, and learn from the many refinements made along the way. As a result, these schools emphasize that blended learning is less about implementing a static model than it is about using a model as a starting point for ongoing iteration and improvement.

- **Understand the challenges of integrating online and offline learning.** Integrating what students learn online and during traditional instruction is a common challenge in blended learning schools. Across the models profiled, integration challenges fall into two main categories. First, there is often a disconnect between the standards-based offline curriculum taught by teachers and the content of the online programs. Some programs are not standards-based at all, others link to standards in varying ways, and

### Lessons

#### Learned From Implementation

- *Create a process for innovation and continuous improvement*
- *Understand the challenges of integrating online and offline learning*
- *Prepare for the complex logistics of student movement*
- *Budget additional time and resources for technology and infrastructure*
- *Anticipate the persistence of traditional school challenges*

still others may be standards-based but do not allow teachers to verify whether they instill true mastery of concepts. Second, few platforms exist to compare data among online programs or between online and offline sources in a way that is both standard-specific and easy for teachers to understand

Faced with these challenges, some operators have pushed forward to achieve some degree of online/offline integration, while others have focused on improving each area independently. While operators are hopeful that new technology products will emerge to meet these needs, in the meantime teachers and school leaders have found that understanding the nuances of what online programs can and cannot do has helped define their optimal place within instruction.

- **Prepare for the complex logistics of student movement.** In a blended model, students can experience a number of different learning modalities. Moving among these modalities – both within classes and between periods – can be time-consuming. Consequently, the operators profiled have planned student movement carefully to maximize instructional minutes. For instance, Rocketship rehearses and carefully monitors the transition from classroom to computer lab to make sure that students move quietly and efficiently. At KIPP Empower, the in-classroom station rotation model likewise requires significant practice. The school rehearses internal class rotations at the beginning of each year, and within each

classroom students are appointed as “tappers” to lightly tap fellow students on the shoulder when it’s time to rotate. KIPP, Rocketship, and other operators emphasize that while rehearsing rotations can seem like a minor issue, consistent execution over the course of the school year saves the school significant time that can be dedicated to student learning.

- **Budget additional time and resources for technology and infrastructure.** Despite careful planning, the operators profiled have generally found the technology infrastructure needed to support blended learning to require more time and resources than originally expected. For instance, FirstLine needed to hire two IT interns to address issues such as computer freeze-outs and student log-in problems. Alliance found a need to have as many IP addresses as students in order to avoid access bottlenecks. In general, the operators profiled have responded to technology issues by hiring additional support staff or by devoting extra CMO capacity to technology during startup. While these technology challenges often abated after the first six months, each of the operators has continued to remain vigilant and now budgets conservatively for the time and resources needed to ensure a robust technology infrastructure.
- **Anticipate the persistence of traditional school challenges.** While blended learning is an exciting and promising development, the operators profiled emphasize that it does not eliminate the need to focus on other areas critical to student



achievement. FirstLine, for example, cites the school's positive culture as the most important driver of its success. For Rocketship, blended learning is one among several key strategies which also include teacher development and parent empowerment. For each operator, recognizing which challenges blended learning can and cannot address helps them to rely on blended learning when appropriate while also managing the range of other variables needed to create an excellent school.

important, but are best explored in other venues. In considering the following, it is also useful to recall that blended learning remains in its early stages of development. Many of these opportunities for the field stem from the immaturity of the sector, and can potentially be addressed through new innovations, tools, and knowledge. At the same time, we hope that highlighting the opportunities from a practitioner perspective can speed innovation and development in the sector to better address the challenges schools and teachers face every day.

### Key Opportunities for the Field

- *Better online programs*
- *Better integration of data*
- *R&D-based vendor partnerships*
- *Communities of practice in key areas*
- *Continued innovation*



### Key Opportunities for the Field

Based on the experiences of these five operators, the following opportunities represent areas of need that will be critical for the blended learning field to address. These needs are purposefully grounded at the school level – others around policy or systemic enabling conditions are unmistakably

- **Better online programs**

Each operator profiled expressed a strong desire for improved online programs. Even the strongest programs today are relatively new, and have not yet realized their potential for delivering an effective, engaging learning experience. Key characteristics include programs that instill both basic skills and higher order thinking in a rigorous and standards-based way; programs that are adaptive to student needs but also assignable for teachers; programs that are cloud-based and low cost; and programs that engage students to take ownership of their own learning. In addition to these attributes, there is a need for more robust measurement

of program effectiveness so that schools can better judge which ones are worth the significant investment.

- **Better integration of data**

Related to the need for better online programs, blended learning schools need better mechanisms for integrating data across the organization. For the operators profiled, this need starts with online programs that include content better correlated to standards or micro-standards, and that allow teachers to verify mastery of concepts learned both online and offline. Furthermore, there is a need for platforms that can integrate data from multiple online providers with data from traditional assessments in a way that is both analytically powerful and easily accessible. At the institutional level, more effective data analytics will also require new platforms that can integrate student performance data with information from learning management systems, student information systems, and other school data sources that, currently, often operate in isolation.

- **R&D-based vendor partnerships**

Creating better online programs and data integration will require a great deal of experimentation, field-testing, and iteration. As new vendors enter the blended learning space and schools continue to seek support for their blended models, a more customized school-vendor partnership will be needed. For example, Summit Public Schools and Khan Academy have

formed an innovative partnership in which Khan works to improve the school's blended model while Summit provides Khan continuous feedback that facilitates Khan's own growth and development. Evolving away from the currently predominant business model of delivering off-the-shelf products, the most effective blended learning vendors will be able to customize and adapt to school needs as new innovations and improvements in the field arise.

- **Communities of practice in key areas** – Blended learning schools and networks, including those profiled here, are currently at the leading edge of many challenges in the field and would benefit from greater collaboration and knowledge sharing with their peers. Organizing formal and informal communities of practice will better allow practitioners to identify common themes, successes, and obstacles as well as to codify new approaches to running blended schools. While communities of practice could arise in many areas, three possible topics could include:

- *Which blended learning human capital models are most effective?* As blended learning facilitates new and potentially more efficient staffing structures, schools face strategic choices ranging from the number and type of teachers hired to whether blended learning should extend the reach of fewer great teachers or expand the capacity of all teachers in a building. Schools will need to



explore these types of questions with their peers as they gain deeper experience with different blended staffing models.

- *How should schools consider cost savings from blended learning?* Given blended learning's potential to reduce costs as well as help weather ongoing funding cuts, schools would benefit from peer guidance on how to approach cost savings and potential financial reinvestments.
- *How can schools best understand and channel student engagement?* Teachers in every school profiled have noticed an increase in student excitement and ownership over their own learning in a blended model. This trend holds potentially significant implications for the role of technology in education, but much work remains to understand this phenomenon and share what's working within the field.

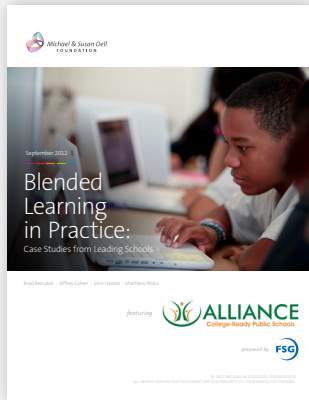
- **Continued innovation**

Blended learning is changing how schools are designed and how students learn across the country. Yet despite an influx of interest, capital, and new learning models, the movement has just scratched the surface of how technology can help students succeed in school and beyond. These case studies profile early adopters of blended learning, but they are by no means the only notable schools or models that deserve further study. The field needs continued innovation

to deepen and build on the blended learning approaches that exist today, and to create new models that today might seem impossible. But most important will be the daily advances of schools like those profiled in these case studies. Each of these operators has evolved its blended learning model through a process of constant iteration. Understanding what works – and what doesn't – in blended learning will come in large part from the insights of schools themselves, and the experiences of these schools can shine a light on what's possible for blended learning in the future.

# Overview of Participating Operators

(see case studies for details)



## School Overview – Alliance Technology and Math Science High School

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2011

**LOCATION** Los Angeles, CA

**SCHOOL LEADER** Dr. Mickie Tubbs

**DEMOGRAPHICS** 89% FRL; 63% EL; 11% Special Ed

**STRUCTURE** 247 students across grades 9-11

**BLENDED MODEL** Station Rotation

## CMO Overview – Alliance College-Ready Public Schools

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2003

**LOCATION** Los Angeles, CA

**CEO** Judy Ivie Burton

**NETWORK** 6 elementary schools and 4 high schools serving 8,540 students

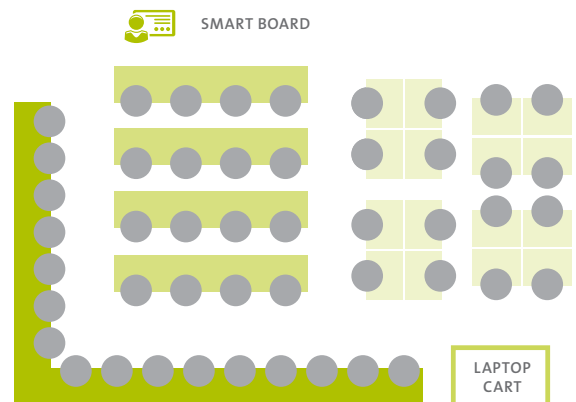
**MISSION** To open and operate a network of small high-performing 9-12 and 6-8 public schools in historically underachieving, low income, communities in California that will annually demonstrate student academic achievement growth and graduate students ready for success in college

## Instructional Model

- Blended learning enables more individualized instruction through multiple learning modalities and customized learning plans
- 48 students rotate through 3 stations within core subject classes: teacher-led, online, and collaborative instruction
- Online lessons target skills aligned to standards-based curriculum and knowledge gaps where appropriate
- Learning Lab class allows students to simultaneously take credit recovery, AP, and other supplemental courses

## Blended Learning Rotation at Alliance Technology & Math Science High School (ATAMS)

- Online Learning
- Teacher-Led Instruction
- Collaborative Instruction



## Operational/Financial Supports

- Teachers manage larger class load of 5 classes of 48 students but online programs save time spent on grading
- Multiple technology components, including 1:1 laptop model, SMART Boards, and videoconferencing-enabled distance learning add to innovation-rich design
- Action research allows continuous refinement of the model
- A more efficient human capital structure allows for financial reinvestments in other areas
- ATAMS plans to be sustainable on public funds by Year 5



### School Overview – Arthur Ashe Charter School

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2007

**LOCATION** New Orleans, LA

**SCHOOL LEADER** Sabrina Pence

**DEMOGRAPHICS** 98% FRL; 1% EL; 26% Special Ed

**STRUCTURE** 422 students in grades K-8 on an extended 8 hour day

**BLENDED MODEL** Lab Rotation

### CMO Overview – FirstLine Schools

**YEAR FOUNDED** 1998

**LOCATION** New Orleans, LA

**CEO** Jay Altman

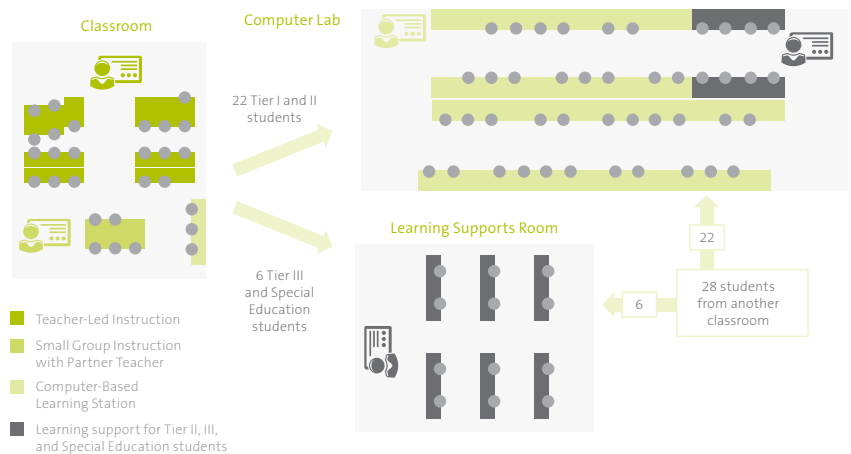
**NETWORK** 5 schools serving 2,418 students

**MISSION** To create and inspire great open-admission public schools in New Orleans

### Instructional Model

- Students spend 50-100 minutes each day in a computer lab setting receiving online instruction
- Tier II students receive RTI support during lab time from core teachers who double as RTI instructors
- Tier III and Special Education students receive small group support during online learning time in Learning Supports room
- Lab coaches track students' online learning progress through goals set by students and teachers
- Partner Teachers and small groups add to individualized instruction

### Ashe Charter School's Blended Learning Model



### Operational/Financial Supports

- CMO provides critical financial, vendor management, supervisory, and professional development support
- Weekly staff meetings continue to shape and improve the model; weekly subject-specific meetings early in the year helped overcome initial obstacles
- IT support from local interns has provided troubleshooting help
- New RTI roles for teachers enables cost saving and more direct involvement with students
- Arthur Ashe plans to be sustainable on public funds by Year 3 of the blended learning model



### School Overview – KIPP Empower

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2010

**LOCATION** Los Angeles, CA

**SCHOOL LEADER** Mike Kerr

**DEMOGRAPHICS** 91% FRL; 8% EL; 10% Special Ed

**STRUCTURE** 231 kindergarten and 1st grade students

**BLENDED MODEL** Station Rotation

### CMO Overview – KIPP LA Schools

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2007

**LOCATION** Los Angeles, CA

**CEO** Marcia Aaron

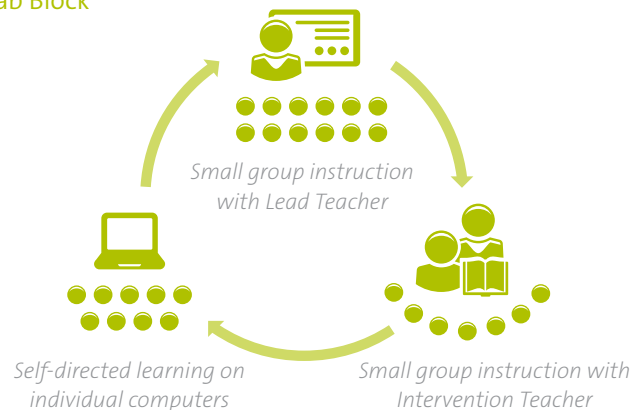
**NETWORK** 3 elementary schools and 2 middle schools serving 1,650 students

**MISSION** To teach the academic skills, foster the intellectual habits, and cultivate the character traits needed for our students to thrive in high school, college, and life

### Instructional Model

- Blended learning enables small group instruction to target each student’s zone of proximal development
- Students rotate through 2-3 stations within core subject areas (reading rotation shown below)
- Online programs focus on basic skills but do not integrate with teacher-led instruction
- Response to Intervention program provides targeted support for struggling students

### Learning Lab Block



3x 30 Min. Rotations  
(90 Minutes Total)

In KIPP Empower’s 90 minute kindergarten reading block, small groups of students rotate through three learning modalities.

### Operational/Financial Supports

- A differentiated staffing model supports different types of small group learning experiences
- Multiple technology components support blended learning, but have proven resource and time intensive
- The CMO manages vendor relationships and other key tasks
- A more efficient human capital structure allows for financial reinvestment in other areas
- Empower plans to be sustainable on public funds by full enrollment in Year 5



### School Overview – Rocketship Discovery Prep

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2011

**LOCATION** San Jose, CA

**SCHOOL LEADER** Joya Deutsch

**DEMOGRAPHICS** 80% FRL; 70% ELL; 4% Special Ed

**STRUCTURE** 630 K-5 students at full enrollment

**BLENDED MODEL** Lab rotation

### CMO Overview – Rocketship Education

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2006

**LOCATION** San Jose, CA

**CEO** John Danner

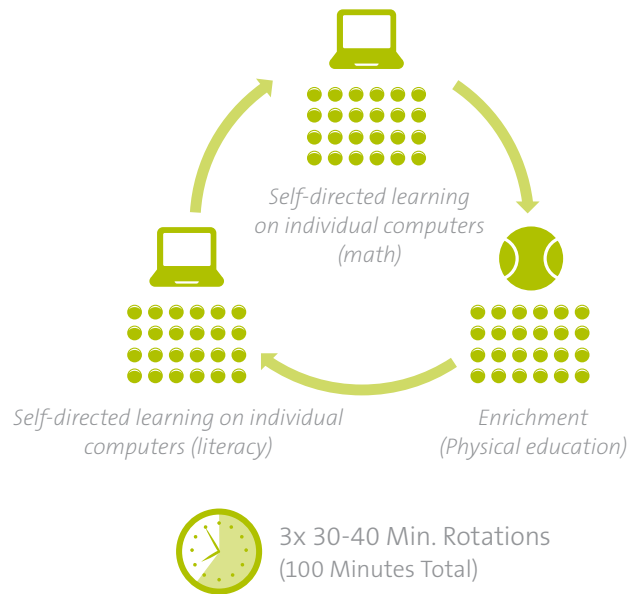
**NETWORK** 5 K-5 schools serving 2,400 students in San Jose, CA

**MISSION** To close the achievement gap in our lifetimes by operating clusters of Rocketship schools in the 50 largest US regions by 2025

### Instructional Model

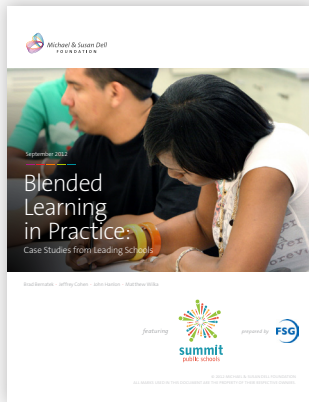
- Technology and tutors enable multiple forms of individualization
- Students move between classrooms with teachers specialized in their subject and a Learning Lab (Learning Lab shown below)
- Online programs focus on basic skills and align with classroom units, but do not integrate with day-to-day teacher-led instruction
- Response to Intervention program provides targeted support for struggling students

### Learning Lab Block



### Operational/Financial Supports

- A differentiated staffing model enables role specialization
- Intensive coaching and collaboration quickly train new teaching staff
- The CMO manages most business operations and develops systems that are implemented at the school level
- A more efficient human capital structure allows for financial reinvestment in other areas
- Rocketship schools are sustainable on public funds in their first year of operation



### School Overview – Summit San Jose

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2011

**LOCATION** San Jose, CA

**SCHOOL LEADER** Diego Arambula, David Richards

**DEMOGRAPHICS** 47% FRL; 19% EL; 5% Special Ed

**STRUCTURE** 204 9th grade students across two co-located high schools

**BLENDED MODEL** Station Rotation

### CMO Overview – Summit Public Schools

**YEAR FOUNDED** 2003

**LOCATION** Redwood City and San Jose, CA

**CEO** Diane Tavenner

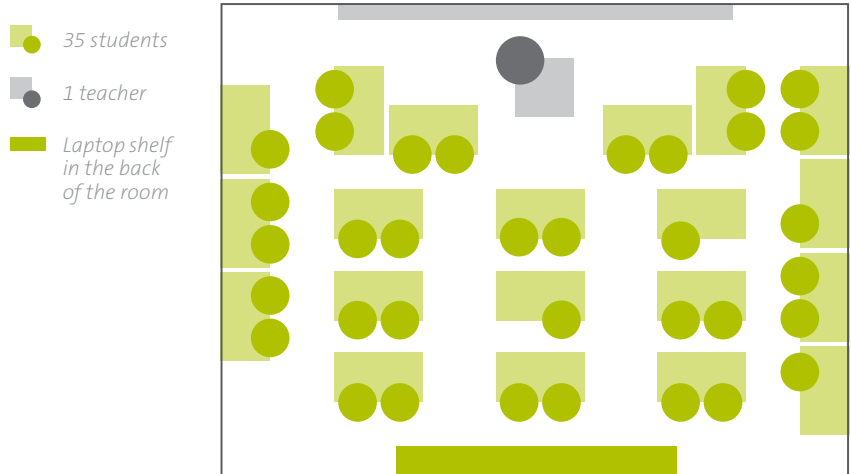
**NETWORK** 4 high schools serving 932 students

**MISSION** To ensure that every student has the opportunity to attend, and succeed in, a four-year college or university, and to be thoughtful, contributing members of society

### Instructional Model

- 9th grade students learn math through teacher-led instruction and Khan Academy
- Khan is used to target basic skills, creating additional time for complex learning and higher order skills development offline
- Teachers and students use real-time data to set goals, track progress, and adjust the use of learning modalities
- Students report greater engagement and ownership with regards to their own learning

### Blended Classroom Setup, Summit San Jose



### Operational/Financial Supports

- Khan Academy offers free, ongoing, and customized vendor services
- Additional hardware such as laptops and bandwidth support the model but have proved resource intensive
- The CMO offers support in finances, data and other non-instructional areas
- A more efficient human capital structure allows Summit to reallocate resources to other school priorities
- Summit San Jose plans to be sustainable on public funds by full enrollment in Year 5



# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the CMO and school-based staff from the five operators for their time and insights, and their willingness to share the experiences of their schools to benefit the field.

- *Alliance College-Ready Public Schools*
- *FirstLine Schools*
- *KIPP LA Schools*
- *Rocketship Education*
- *Summit Public Schools*

In addition, we are grateful to the following individuals for offering their expertise and guidance as part of this project:

- *Cat Alexander, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation*
- *Scott Benson, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*
- *Andy Calkins, Next Generation Learning Challenges*
- *Bryan Hassel, Public Impact*
- *Alex Hernandez, Charter School Growth Fund*
- *Michael Horn, Innosight Institute*
- *Jordan Meranus, New Schools Venture Fund*
- *Susan Patrick, iNACOL*
- *Joel Rose, New Classrooms*
- *Chris Rush, New Classrooms*
- *Bror Saxberg, Kaplan, Inc.*
- *Heather Staker, Innosight Institute*
- *Justin Su, Goalbook*
- *Tom Vander Ark, Getting Smart*
- *Caitrin Wright, Stupski Foundation*

All statements and conclusions, unless specifically attributed to another source, are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the other organizations or references noted in this report. For questions or comments on this research, please contact Matt Wilka of FSG at [matthew.wilka@fsg.org](mailto:matthew.wilka@fsg.org).

# Acknowledgements



Inspired by their passion for children and by a shared desire to improve the lives of children living in urban poverty, Michael and Susan Dell established their Austin, Texas-based foundation in 1999. In its early years, the foundation's work focused on improving education and children's health in Central Texas. But within a few short years, our reach expanded, first nationally and then globally. To date, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation has committed more than \$700 million to assist nonprofit organizations working in major urban communities in the United States, South Africa and India. We focus on opportunities with the greatest potential to directly and measurably transform the lifelong outcomes of impoverished urban children around the globe.

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