

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jane Martinez Dowling | Chief External Affairs Officer, KIPP NYC |
Jdowling@kippnyc.org

Jeff Li, 6th Grade Social Studies and Physical Fitness Teacher at KIPP Beyond Middle School, has been selected as a 2023 Harriett Ball Excellence In Teaching Award winner! Mr. Li is among 10 educators nationwide to win this year's award and will receive \$10,000 in recognition of his exemplary work in the classroom.

A 15-year veteran of KIPP NYC Schools, Mr. Li is renowned for giving his graduating middle school students pencils engraved with one simple phrase: "Prove the Doubters Wrong." Before becoming a founding teacher at KIPP Beyond, he taught math at KIPP Infinity and KIPP AMP, where his students consistently outperformed their peers in wealthier districts. Last year, 88 percent of his students at KIPP Beyond were able to pass the US government's 100-question civics test—more than double the average for all American adults!

Mr. Li is a KIPP "Featured Teacher" and recently led KIPP NYC's efforts to create a rigorous, identity-affirming social studies curriculum from scratch. He encourages his students to connect with their communities through projects like interviewing family members. He also implemented a wildly successful peer tutoring program at KIPP Infinity and KIPP Beyond—a model that is now being emulated at other KIPP schools.

"Jeff puts 110% effort into everything he does because he is always thinking about the student experience and is eager to make structures, curriculum and courses that last and that help kids get as far along in their academic careers as possible." – Joe Negron, Principal, KIPP Beyond Middle School

The Harriett Ball Excellence in Teaching Award is given annually to a select group of K-12 teachers from KIPP schools around the country. Teachers are selected for the award based on their track record of improving student achievement, their leadership in the classroom and throughout their school, and their commitment to equipping educationally underserved students with the skills needed to be successful in getting to and through college.

The Harriett Ball Excellence in Teaching Award honors the legacy of Harriett Ball, a visionary educator and mentor teacher. A 35-year teaching veteran of Houston and Austin public schools, Ball incorporated chants, songs and movement to get her students engaged and learning in the classroom. In late 1992, Ball began mentoring Teach for America corps member Dave Levin in Houston. Inspired by her methods, Levin co-founded the KIPP in 1994.