



# How KIPP Jacksonville is Unlearning Their Old Purchasing Process to Maximize Learning Opportunities for Students



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Dean of School  
Operations

**Industry**  
Education

**Location**  
Jacksonville, Florida

**Size**  
51-200 employees



## Overview

KIPP is a brand of public charter schools in Jacksonville, Florida. Founded on the college preparatory principles, which includes enrollment for all, this brand of schools has a high reputation in the American education system. KIPP's national network includes 224 schools across the country, and over 20 years of helping students in underserved communities “develop the knowledge, skills and character strengths” needed for post-secondary success.

In the heart of Duval County, Florida, you can find Maddie Riley working away in her own educational oasis in KIPP's Jacksonville campus. Maddie is the Dean of School Operations, and has a wealth of experience as an educator. She is now serving as the operational tour de force that's driving KIPP's strategy and legacy forward for young minds in Jacksonville.

## Finding a Better Way

Maddie's days are spent trying to minimize the challenges of her team members and give her student body an extraordinarily eclectic college preparatory experience. She's also responsible for making operational processes as efficient as possible. This includes aligning budgets, forecasting the organization's spend, and trying to make rigid and antiquated systems work together. And it can be quite the balancing act.

“Being a school, or a network of schools, I think the major challenge is just transparency with our budget,” Maddie said. “We were looking for that access level for faculty who are actually on the ground purchasing for their schools.”

As Maddie continued to recount the challenges surrounding visibility into her budgets, purchase orders (for all orders, not just big ticket items) and approval process, she made sure to emphasize that these weren't exclusive to her situation. Instead, they are issues inherent in the education system.

“Our President and CFO Zach was the one pushing for more things to be streamlined, and that led us to Procurify,” Maddie acknowledged. “We are very paper based, like a lot of school systems are. And, oftentimes, it results in a longer, dragged out process because it's entering information and not you not getting smarter with the vendors that we're using and how we are tracked.”



*“What’s nice about that now is that with Procurify, it has to go through only two levels of approval, and it’s done much faster. Now, we’re able to split our budget by account codes and then by different departments within the different schools. We can see fifth grader spending is this much in this area of supplies and sixth grade are spending this much as it relates to student incentives so we really have a precise idea of where the money is going against our budget.”*

- MADDIE RILEY, DEAN OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS KIPP JACKSONVILLE

## Proving a New Process

Procurify's platform provided a way for Maddie to see all of her budgets on a departmental level and clearly organize every account code. It also allowed her to create a more streamlined approval process. Prior to using Procurify, approvers had no transparency into departmental budgets and reacted to teachers' spending. Now, approvers can proactively forecast spending against allocated budgets and use this information to approve or deny purchasing decisions.

"In the past, our approval structure was such that if it's under a thousand dollars, if you're buying it you can buy it - essentially no one has to give you another check. But if it's over a thousand, you'd have to get Zach's approval, our president. And then over five thousand, you'd need the executive directors approval," Maddie explained.

## A Proactive Purchasing Paradigm

Maddie describes KIPP's spending habits as "very intentional", and it's difficult to disagree. She took the time to detail an experience she recently had in

an eighth grade classroom, where the reading levels of the children (and engagement in reading) were below target. The teacher, attempting to provide a creative solution for engagement, approached Maddie with the idea of taking the kids to New York City to experience To Kill a Mockingbird on Broadway.

As the canonical novel was the centerpiece of the eighth grade curriculum, it was a brilliant, ambitious moonshot to provide the kids with an unforgettable moment in their education. Maddie took it upon herself to see that request through and get it approved, and sure enough, those eighth graders got to have the experience of a lifetime.

"Procurify is going to allow for even more creativity into purchasing, and as idealistic as it sounds, hopefully it results in more really cool opportunities and access options for our kids," Maddie explained. "Our vision for this is our grade-level chairs having greater access into their budgets, and from having the visibility into their budgets they're able to access more resources and more funding through Procurify."

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