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Study Finds 88% of all District and Charter Public School Students in the Kansas City, MO School District Do Not Attend a Performing School; Options Still Few after District's Restructuring Plan

Eighty-eight percent of students in District and charter public schools within the Kansas City, Missouri School District (KCMSD) boundaries do not attend a school that meets Missouri state standards for academic performance. This is one of the key findings of a new IFF report, *Putting Performance on the Map: Locating Quality Schools in the Kansas City, Missouri School District*. The study presents data on enrollment, capacity, location, and performance in KCMSD and charter schools, and addresses the effect of the District's restructuring plan on students who live within the KCMSD boundaries.

Key findings from the report, which is based on state standards and data from the 2008-2009 school year, include:

- District schools performing at state standard can serve only 15.4 percent of KCMSD students (2,704 of 17,517).
- District schools performing at half the state standard or better can serve 52.7 percent of KCMSD students (9,238 of 17,517).
- Eighty one percent of the need for performing schools in KCMSD is in five zip codes – 64128, 64127, 64130, 64110, and 64124 – where the majority of KCMSD students reside but where there are no non-selective schools that meet state standards.
- There are no non-selective high schools that meet state standards in the KCMSD.
- Charter schools performing at half the state standard or better serve an additional 2,997 school-age children in the KCMSD. However, the majority of charter school students attend schools that do not meet even half the state standard.
- Combined, the 12,235 seats in District and charter schools that meet half the state standard or better can serve 47.1 percent of the 26,004 students in public schools – and 34.6 percent of the 35,337 school-age children residing within the KCMSD boundaries.

- Overwhelmingly, the schools closed and consolidated under the District's school restructuring plan did not meet even half the state standard. However, the plan also creates a loss of 1,383 seats in schools that performed at half the state standard or better.

The report highlights the importance of focusing reform and school improvement efforts on neighborhoods with the highest need, and provides communities, policymakers, educators, parents, and business leaders with the neighborhood-level data they need to help ensure that all children living within the KCMSD boundaries have a seat in a performing school.

"Ten thousand KCMSD students do not have the option to attend a school in their neighborhood that meets even half the state standard for academic performance," said IFF President and CEO Trinita Logue. "More than 80 percent of these students live in just five areas in the central part of the KCMSD. Target these high-need areas for improvement, and you begin to solve the education problem for the entire district."

Other action steps recommended in the report include: (1) filling the nearly 3,500 empty seats in the District's better performing schools; (2) developing accountability measures to close the lowest-achieving charter schools; and (3) using excess public school buildings to attract local and national charter school operators with proven performance records.

The premise of *Putting Performance on the Map* and IFF's similar studies is that all children should have the option to attend an academically performing school near where they live. This study was funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to better understand the number of quality seats available in District and charter public schools within the Kansas City, Missouri, School District boundaries.

"We now have a clear benchmark for education reform in our community--quality seats," said Munro Richardson, Vice President of Education at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. "Any effort to improve public education in Kansas City's District and charter public schools must be focused on increasing the number of quality seats for children and families."

The methodology used in *Putting Performance on the Map* was developed by IFF in 2003 and has been used to inform education reform efforts in other major urban school districts including Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. IFF's methodology is a supply and demand analysis that measures the number of seats available in public schools that meet state standards (or a percentage thereof) and compares that information with a district's total enrollment and the overall population of school-age children.

For the complete report, detailed zip code maps and other presentation materials, visit www.iff.org/putting_performance and www.Kauffman.org/qualityschools.

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Founded in 1988, IFF is the largest nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) lending solely to nonprofits in the Midwest. It has total assets of more than \$175 million and offers below-market loans, real estate consulting and research services to nonprofits serving low-income areas and special-needs populations in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin. To learn more about IFF, visit www.iff.org.

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is a private nonpartisan foundation that works to harness the power of entrepreneurship and innovation to grow economies and improve human welfare. Through its research and other initiatives, the Kauffman Foundation aims to promote entrepreneurship education, raise awareness of entrepreneurship-friendly policies, and find alternative pathways for the commercialization of new knowledge and technologies. The Foundation also focuses on initiatives in the Kansas City region to advance students' math and science skills, and improve the educational achievement of urban students, including the Ewing Marion Kauffman School, a college preparatory charter school for middle and high school students set to open in 2011. Founded by late entrepreneur and philanthropist Ewing Marion Kauffman, the Foundation is based in Kansas City, Mo. and has approximately \$2 billion in assets. For more information, visit www.kauffman.org.