



KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report
Final with Response

To: KIPP St. Louis, Board of Directors
From: Washington University Charter School Sponsor Team
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Lori Sommer, Associate Director, Charter School Compliance
Date: February 19, 2020

Overview

Missouri charter legislation requires sponsors to annually review charter schools' compliance with statutory standards, and biennially review performance, management and operations jointly with school staff and the governing board. Previous annual KIPP St. Louis reviews from Washington University occurred for school years 2010 (baseline), 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017. An extensive review was undertaken in 2018 for KIPP's 5-year charter renewal.

KIPP St. Louis continues to experience significant growth since opening its first middle school in 2009. In SY2019, KIPP St. Louis' enrollment reached 2,000 students with five schools: two elementary, two middle, and a high school. For SY2019, grade levels for KIPP's elementary and middle schools were complete and KIPP St. Louis High School had expanded to grades 9-10. The remaining high school grades 11-12 will be added by SY2021. In addition, KIPP opened its third elementary school (KIPP Wonder), in SY2020.

As KIPP's sponsor, Washington University remains committed to supporting KIPP St. Louis in its efforts to deliver quality education to all students. The University is responsible for ensuring KIPP St. Louis is in compliance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, and is meeting the performance benchmarks contained in the Charter Contract and the Performance Contract.

The *Charter School Performance Evaluation Program* presented in Appendix I was developed in SY2016 as a sponsor's tool to gather necessary data to provide review guidance with KIPP St. Louis' staff and board. From this comprehensive body of evidence, Washington University annually conducts an ongoing coordinated evaluation of fundamental school performance measures. The supplemental evaluation tool is intended to be used as a resource in conjunction with this report. Data for the program will be collected primarily from the following sources:

- ✓ Board Meeting Attendance
- ✓ School Site Visits
- ✓ Financial/Budget Monitoring
- ✓ State/Federal Reporting

Oversight of KIPP St. Louis includes the evaluation of a core framework of expectations that focuses on three key areas:

- 1. Academic Performance**
- 2. Financial Health and Sustainability**
- 3. Organizational Effectiveness**

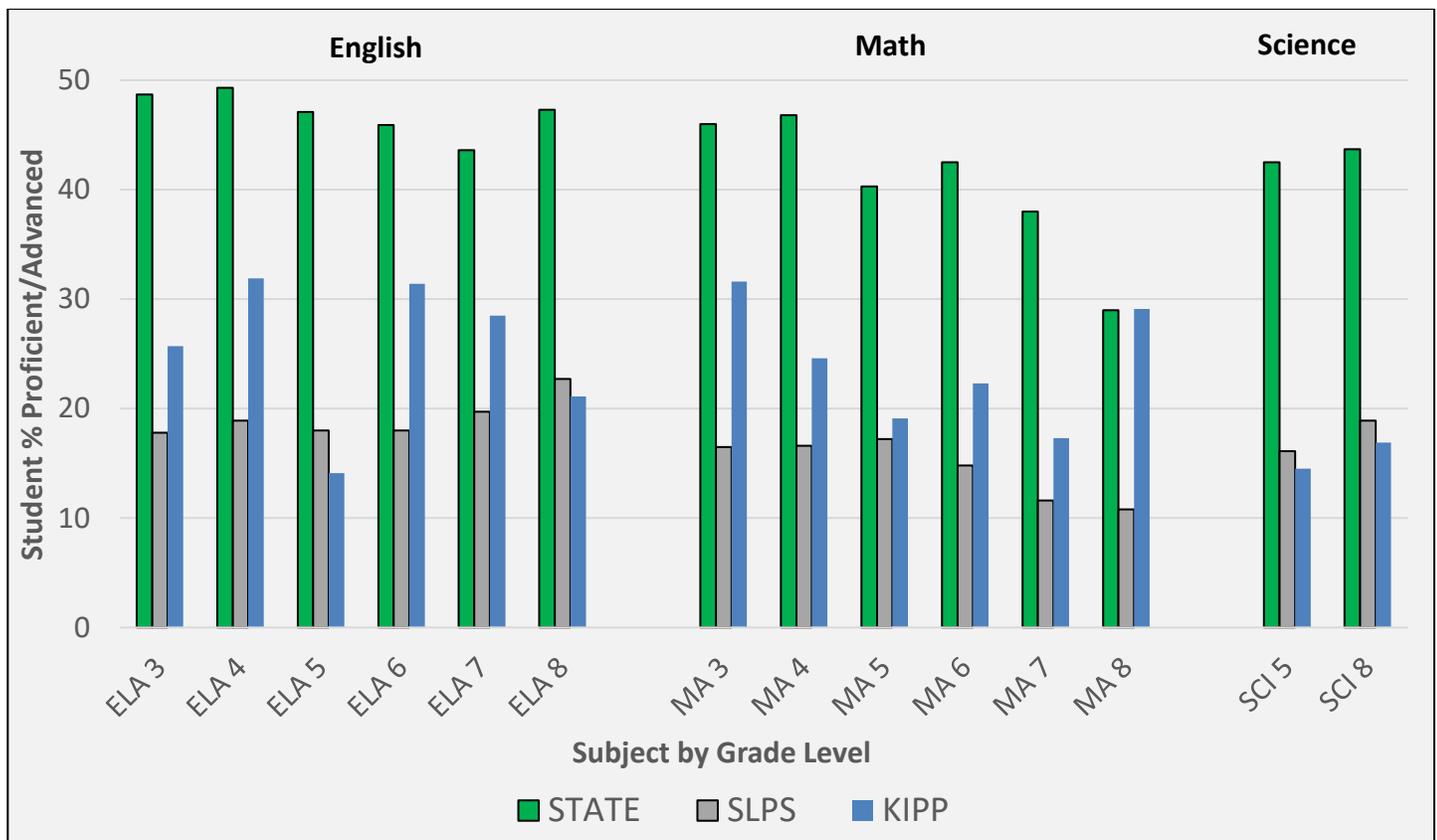
KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report
Final with Response

Academic Performance

The sponsor’s primary measure of school quality is academic performance. A revised Performance Contract was approved by the KIPP Board in December 2018. As part of the charter renewal package, this document stipulates annual minimum academic achievement targets.

All charter students are required by State law to participate in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). While these assessments provide only a snapshot of students’ academic performance, they nonetheless present consistent comparison measures and are included as part of the University’s annual performance review of KIPP.

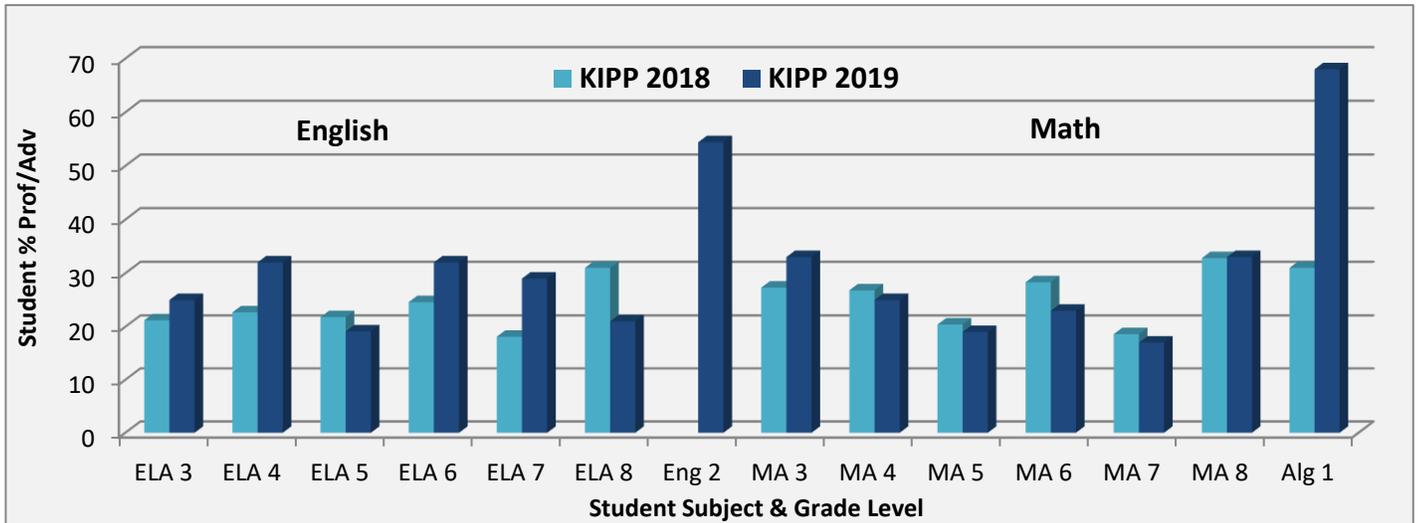
SY2019 KIPP St. Louis MAP Scores by Grade Level in Comparison with State and Local District



This chart indicates KIPP generally outperformed Saint Louis Public Schools in 2019 for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math on the State MAP grade level assessments, though attaining State level averages remained elusive, excepting Grade 8 Math. Science presents a concern as both Grade 5 and Grade 8 performed below SLPS averages. Data continues to suggest students entering KIPP St. Louis are typically achieving below grade level, and likely will require multiple years to attain proficiency.

KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report Final with Response

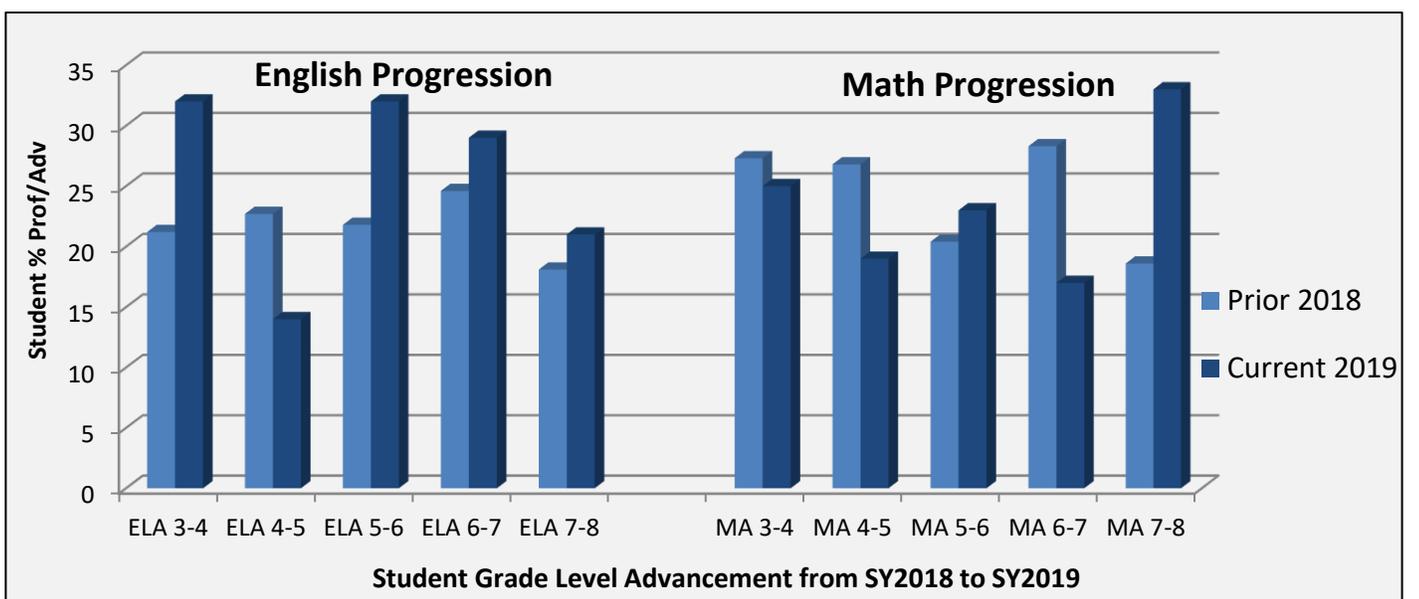
SY2018 vs. SY2019 Comparison KIPP St. Louis Grade Level MAP Scores in ELA and Math



The State MAP test versions in English Language Arts and Math have remained consistent for the past two years, thus allowing for comparison of SY2018 and SY2019 data. The 2019 scores for ELA appear somewhat inconsistent by grade level, though typically present an overall upward trend. Math shows solid results for Grades 3 and 8, though indicates a general performance decline in 2019 by grade level assessment compared to the previous year.

KIPP High School end-of-course (EOC) scores started strong in English 2 and Algebra 1 for the first two years of operation. Developments will be continually verified as the school expands to the full 9-12 grade level capacity. All high school students are required to take these EOC exams prior to graduation.

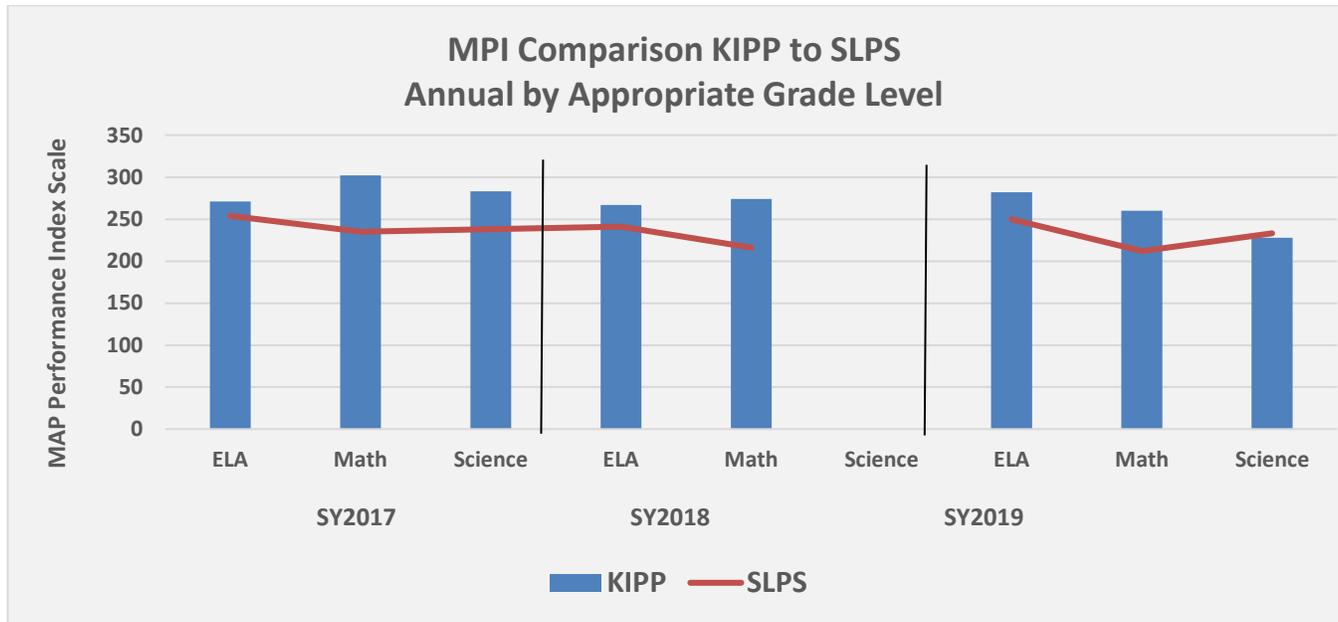
KIPP Student Grade Level Advancement Performance Comparison with MAP



KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report
Final with Response

The evidence presented for grade level advancement indicates KIPP students made substantial progress in SY2019 in English Language Arts over the prior academic year. Math performance provides considerable variation with grade level data and requires monitoring for future progress.

KIPP MAP Performance Index (MPI)



The MAP Performance Index (MPI) is used by DESE to determine whether Missouri schools are meeting academic achievement targets in ELA, Math and Science with the State assessments, along with measuring annual progress. This metric holds schools accountable for continuous improvement by quantifying movement of students through all MAP achievement levels.

A compelling case for schools is presented in that the focus remains on *all* students for the four MAP achievement levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced, and not just those performing in the top tiers. The MPI is a single composite number represented by totaling the points awarded to each student to depict a trend to proficiency.

Results in the graph above indicate that KIPP has annually shown growth above the local district in English Language Arts and Math. Continuous progress for KIPP is demonstrated with ELA for SY2019. A slight decline is observed for Math SY2019 MPI performance. Science MPI presents a concern for SY2019, exhibiting results below those of SLPS. (Note there was no Science assessed in SY2018; the assessment administered by DESE in SY2019 introduced a new test version.)

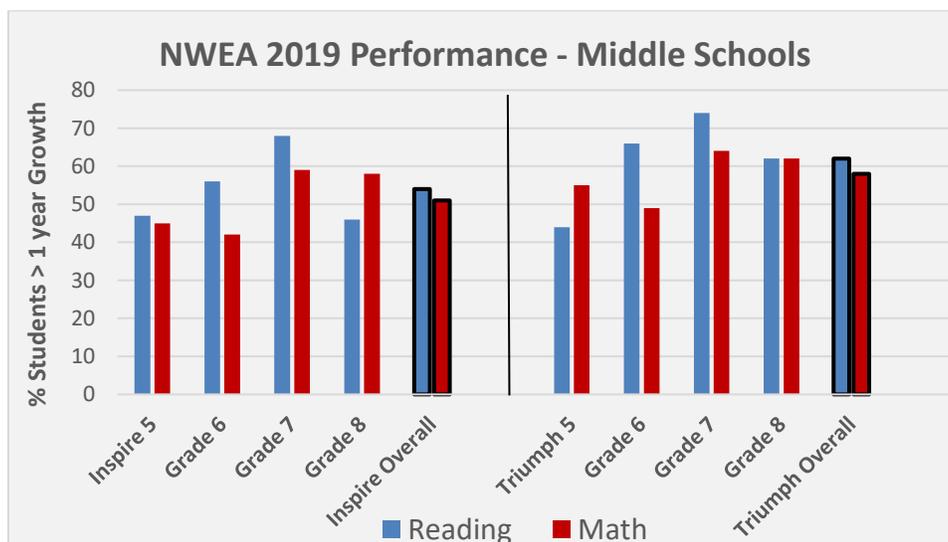
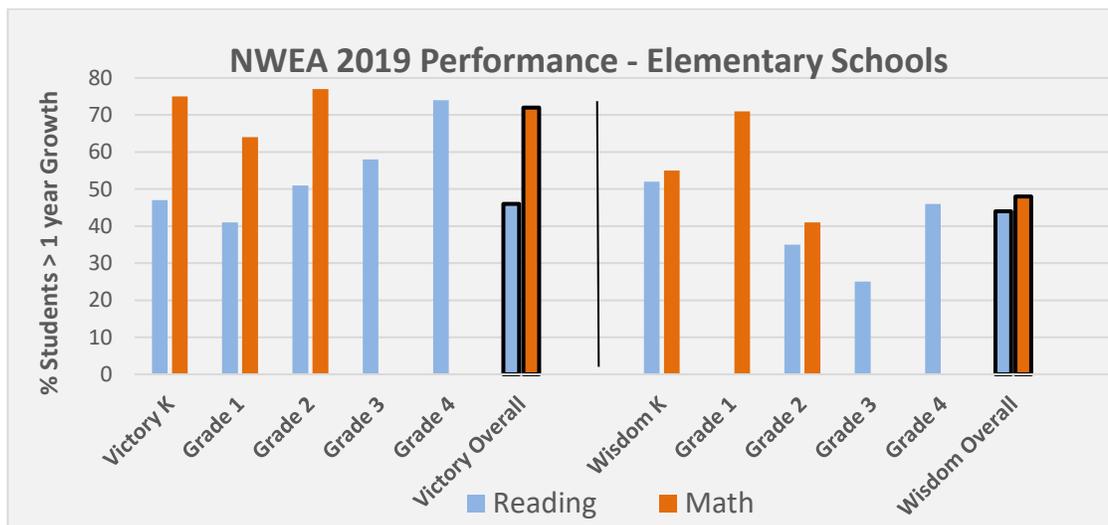
A benchmark goal for MO schools is attainment of an MPI total of 300 points or greater in each subject area. The University will be reviewing these targets for ELA and Math as the State MAP enters its third year of consistent assessments in SY2020 for Progress comparison.

KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report Final with Response

SY2019 KIPP St. Louis NWEA Fall-to-Spring Growth

KIPP St. Louis utilizes the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) nationally normed assessments, measuring academic progress to determine if students are achieving sufficient growth within a reasonable time frame. Administering the interim tests to each student in the Fall and Spring allows comparisons of progress for Reading and Math within the school year. According to the requirements of KIPP’s Performance Contract, a minimum of 50% of total students are expected to meet target growth during this evaluation period.

The following results indicate levels of one-year total growth by school and grade level as compared with national norms. KIPP’s scores for both elementary and middle school students, displaying some variance in performance, suggest progress in closing achievement gaps. Grade-level comparison of results between the NWEA and MAP assessments have remained inconsistent. There has not been reliable correlation aligning academic performance between these two tests for prediction of outcomes.

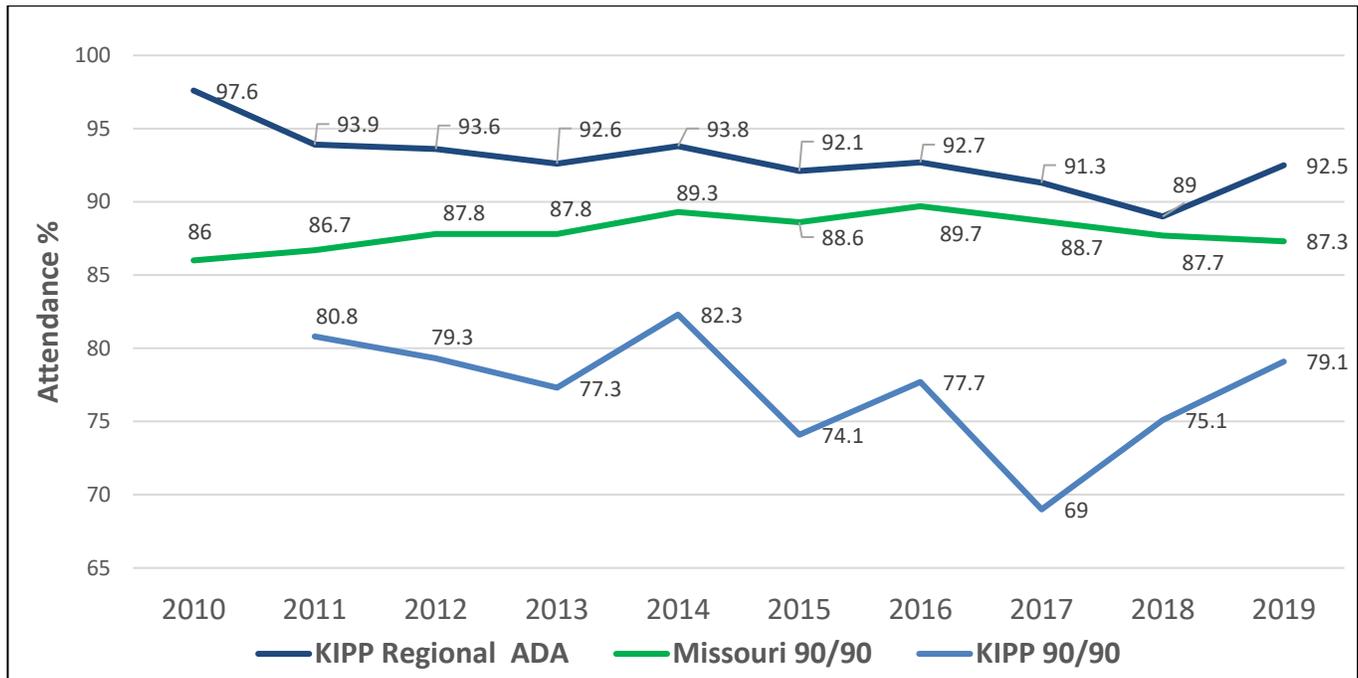


KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report
Final with Response

Attendance

The overall SY2019 attendance rate for KIPP St. Louis was 92.5%. This number exceeds the Performance Contract minimum of 90%, displaying an upward trend even as student attendance goals continue to challenge KIPP. The State’s Annual Performance Report (APR) contains a 90/90 attendance standard, setting the expectation that 90% of the students are in school 90% of the time. The 2019 90/90 score of 79.1% shows improvement from previous years as KIPP continues to employ strategies to increase student attendance.

Historical Attendance Rates



Annual Performance Report (APR)

As of SY2019, DESE will no longer calculate a single percent APR score for Missouri Districts and LEAs. Instead they now offer standards along with performance measures that allow districts and charters to tell their own “data story.” These metrics include academic achievement performance categories for:

- Status = achievement level students are currently performing
- Growth = achievement gains of individual students over time
- Progress = improvements the school system is making over prior years

Based on data provided by DESE, KIPP is approaching Status in ELA and Math. Notably, KIPP is exceeding State averages in individual academic Growth for both ELA and Math. Overall school Progress for ELA achievement is high, while Math Progress remains stagnant. First year data for the new Science assessment exhibits low achievement with both Status and Progress.

KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report
Final with Response

Performance Considerations Requiring Response

1. Math scores were generally trending lower for SY2019 over the previous year. The University would like to see additional progress in the upcoming year. What steps will KIPP be taking in SY2020 to increase student performance in math?

KIPP Response:

Based on scholar performance on the new state test, we decided to prioritize making significant adjustments to our math program for the 19-20 school year. We started by identifying a new curriculum for grades K-8 (Achievement First mathematics) and recruited consultants to help ensure we could execute that program effectively. At the elementary level, we partnered with the Achievement First Navigator team, which provides comprehensive training and support on how to effectively execute the AF math program. At the middle school level, we partnered with a former Achievement First math leader as an independent consultant to provide the same training. We plan to continue to implement this curriculum for at least three years and to continually refine our approach to the program. Schools that have implemented the program with fidelity have shown large achievement gains and, over time, we hope to see the same growth for our students.

2. KIPP outcomes on the new DESE Science MAP for grades 5 and 8 were at the Floor level for APR Status and Progress, and lower than equivalent scores of the local district. How will KIPP address this subject going forward to improve outcomes?

KIPP Response:

As a district, we focused our improvement efforts in math this year. At the same time, we have made some significant adjustments to improve our science scores. These adjustments included changing the staff members that taught science in 5th and 8th grade at our campuses where those results were most off track. In addition, we have worked closely with the mySci team to provide content specific training to all of our science teachers each month and to participate in ongoing walkthroughs of their classrooms. We also plan to work to strengthen the quality of curriculum resources we use to make sure that they are more aligned to the new version of the state test to help better prepare our scholars. Last year, we saw that scholars, and teachers, struggled with the transition to the format of the new test, and we plan to make specific adjustments to ensure scholars are more successful on the state test (for example, by including more writing opportunities during science class and more frequent use of performance tasks).

3. Overall attendance above 90% remains satisfactory, currently trending upward from the previous two years. The APR's 90/90 attendance still necessitates improvement. What processes are in place to continue to increase results?

KIPP Response:

As a district, we increased attendance collaboration quality and frequency across school teams and improved communication with students and families. Our school operations teams and social workers meet quarterly to review trends and adjust strategies; school administrators meet bi-weekly to discuss attendance and attrition; and on a weekly basis, attendance is tracked and shared across the region. Attendance information is included on report cards and with parents at parent teacher conferences. Students are also given attendance incentives (dances, dress down days, and raffles). We are piloting attendance mentorships where one staff member is assigned to a student below 90/90 and they check in weekly; in one-on-one sessions, the administrator works with that student to improve attendance.

KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report
Final with Response

Financial Health and Sustainability

The financial stability of charter schools is essential; national statistics indicate over half of charter school closures are the result of poor financial performance. In addition to monitoring for compliance with state and federal law, the sponsor ensures that their schools are currently financially strong and positioned for future fiscal health.

A review of financial records substantiates that KIPP St. Louis financial controls are in place, with additional evidence recorded in the *Charter School Performance Evaluation Program*. Sound financial practices utilize policies and procedures from the *Missouri Financial Accounting Manual*. Submission of mandatory reports to DESE has been timely, including their SY2019 FER (Final Expenditure Report) and ASBR (Annual Secretary of the Board Report). An independent audit for SY2019, as required annually, was completed by Kerber, Eck & Braeckel (KEB). The returned unqualified audit opinion was free of any significant findings or areas of concern, and approved by KIPP’s Board of Directors at the December 2019 board meeting.

KIPP FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

	Target	FY17	FY18	FY19	Standard
NEAR-TERM MEASURES					
Unrestricted Days Cash	60+	83	115	111	Meets
Enrollment Variance Actual/Budgeted	>95%	90%	100%	100%+	Exceeds
SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES					
Cash Flow = Prior Year – Current Year	Positive	+	+	+	Meets
Fund Balance (per 160.417.2, RsMO)	>3%	29.84%	30.73%	32.12%	Meets

KIPP’s actual SY2019 enrollment exceeded the number projected for that year’s budget. The KIPP St. Louis Finance Committee meets monthly, and the Board of Directors meets every other month to review the recommended financial reports for approval. Fiscal responsibility with consistent monitoring throughout the year ensures the financial autonomy of the Local Education Agency (LEA) to carry out its mission for a quality program.

Financial Considerations Requiring Response

None

KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report *Final with Response*

Organizational Effectiveness

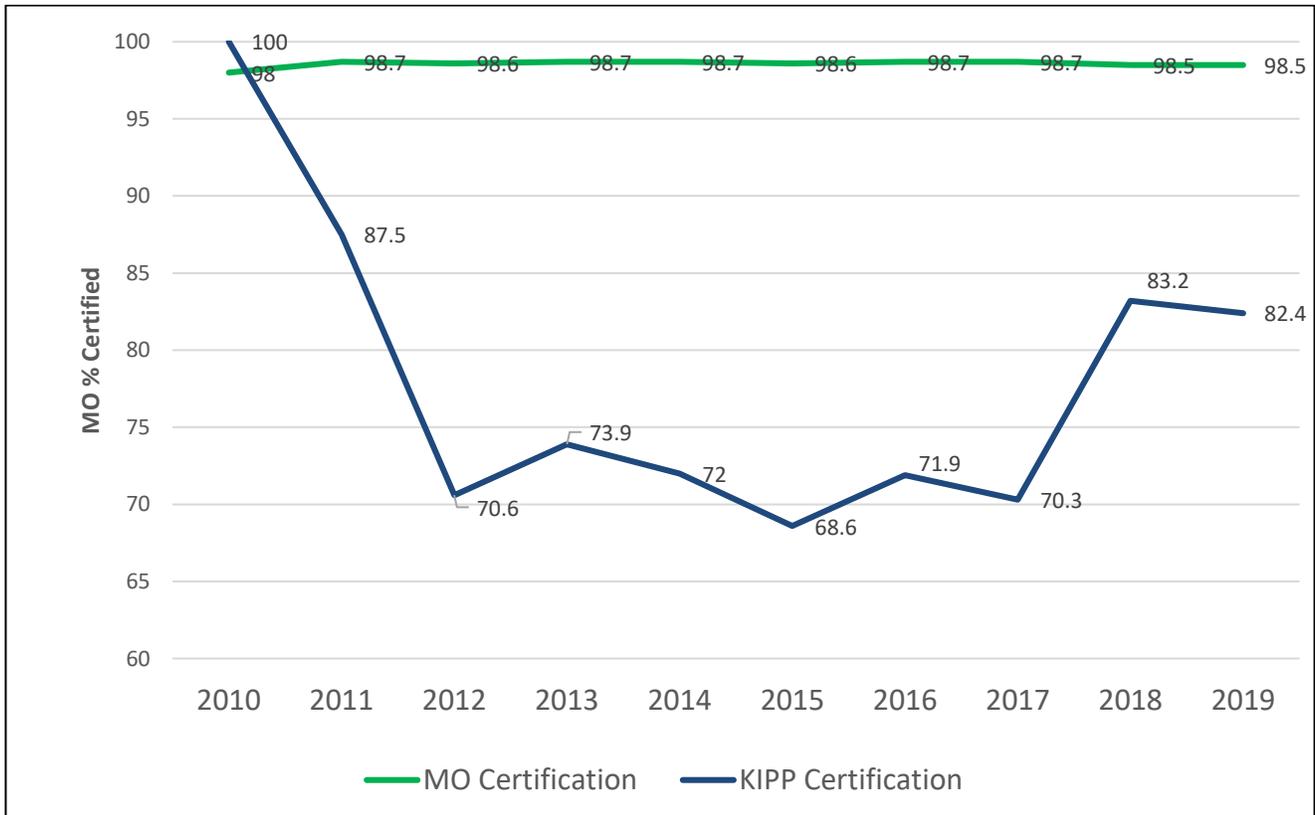
Whereas academic and financial frameworks are mandated by outcomes, organizational effectiveness is measured by process, ensuring the rights of students, families, staff and the public. The University holds KIPP St. Louis accountable for *how* it operates within minimum standards of conduct, while the autonomy for process decisions remains the responsibility of KIPP St. Louis’ leadership and their board.

The framework structure for accountability is itemized in the *Charter School Performance Evaluation Program*. These requirements define a multitude of operational indicators for compliance that include:

1. Educational program compliance
2. Financial management
3. Board governance adherence with laws and policy
4. Reporting requirements to responsible entities
5. Student and employee rights and requirements
6. School environment for health, safety and services

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandates all teachers meet “applicable State certification and licensure requirements”. Provision in MO charter school law requires that no more than twenty percent of instructional staff positions are filled with noncertificated personnel. KIPP has demonstrated measurable improvement to fill teaching positions with regular certified staff in recent years.

KIPP vs. State Teacher Certification Rate





KIPP St. Louis 2019 Sponsor Review Report
Final with Response

Operational Considerations Requiring Response

None

Required Actions

Washington University requests KIPP's reply to the "Considerations Requiring Response" noted in this report for inclusion in the final record. This document will be presented to the KIPP St. Louis Board of Directors for the February 21, 2020 board retreat.

Conclusion

The University determines KIPP St. Louis to be in substantial compliance with legal, statutory, regulatory and contractual charter requirements. KIPP's academic, financial and organizational performance for SY2019 meets overall expectations. The leadership team at KIPP continues to strengthen. KIPP St. Louis has responded promptly with requests for data and information, which greatly facilitates the oversight process. Washington University remains confident that KIPP St. Louis has the capacity to meet the challenge of providing quality education to its students, and we look forward to our continued partnership.

Appendix I: KIPP St. Louis 2019 Charter School Performance Evaluation Program