



KIPP St. Louis 2021 Sponsor Review Report

To: KIPP St. Louis, Board of *Directors*
From: Washington University Charter School Sponsor Team
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Date: March 28, 2022

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), and 2013 – 2020. An extensive review was undertaken in 2018 for KIPP's 5-year charter renewal.

SY2021 was exceptional beyond any measure. The global COVID-19 pandemic compelled KIPP's school buildings to temporarily close, and most students, families and school staff were challenged to function remotely within a new virtual education format. KIPP provided students and staff with vital technical equipment and training to ensure the necessary tools were in place to navigate remote online learning.

KIPP St. Louis continues to experience annual expansion despite the pandemic since opening its first middle school in 2009. In SY2021, KIPP's enrollment reached 2,555 students within six schools: three elementary, two middle, and a high school. Grade levels for KIPP's elementary, middle and high schools have now reached the full range of PK-12. KIPP HS graduated its first senior class in May 2021. The third and newest elementary school, KIPP Wonder, opened with Kindergarten in SY2020, and expanded to serve grades PK-1 in SY2021.

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, the Performance Framework 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 is collected primarily from the following sources:

- ✓ Board Meeting Attendance (all meetings virtual for SY2021)
- ✓ School Site Visits (physical site visits suspended for SY2021, virtual visits only)
- ✓ Financial/Budget Monitoring
- ✓ State/Federal Reporting



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

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

The pandemic had a profound impact in all areas for SY2021. Statewide performance results were complicated by various modes of instruction, chronic absenteeism, learning disruptions and disparate student engagement. This outcome evidence can be further reviewed in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) web application for the Statewide SY2021 Report Card on Preliminary Performance. This Report Card along with the Missouri Comprehensive Data System (MCDS) offer open public access to school data.

Academic Performance

The sponsor's primary measure of school quality remains academic performance. An amended WU/KIPP Performance Contract was approved by the KIPP STL Board in May 2021. 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's Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). In response to the emerging pandemic, DESE announced in March 2020 that MAP assessments would not be administered for SY2020.

The State assessments were reinstated for SY2021, as DESE concluded implementation in the Spring assessment window would be essential to establish a controlled data set, even though results would not be used for accountability. The University specified in their revised KIPP Performance Contract that outcomes in SY2021 would be used for targeted support, diagnostic and research purposes only. The following disaggregated data tables are provided as graphic evidence informing outcomes for further critical analysis. Prior year academic results are not comparable.

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SY2021 Mode of Instruction Performance – Statewide Comparison including KIPP St. Louis

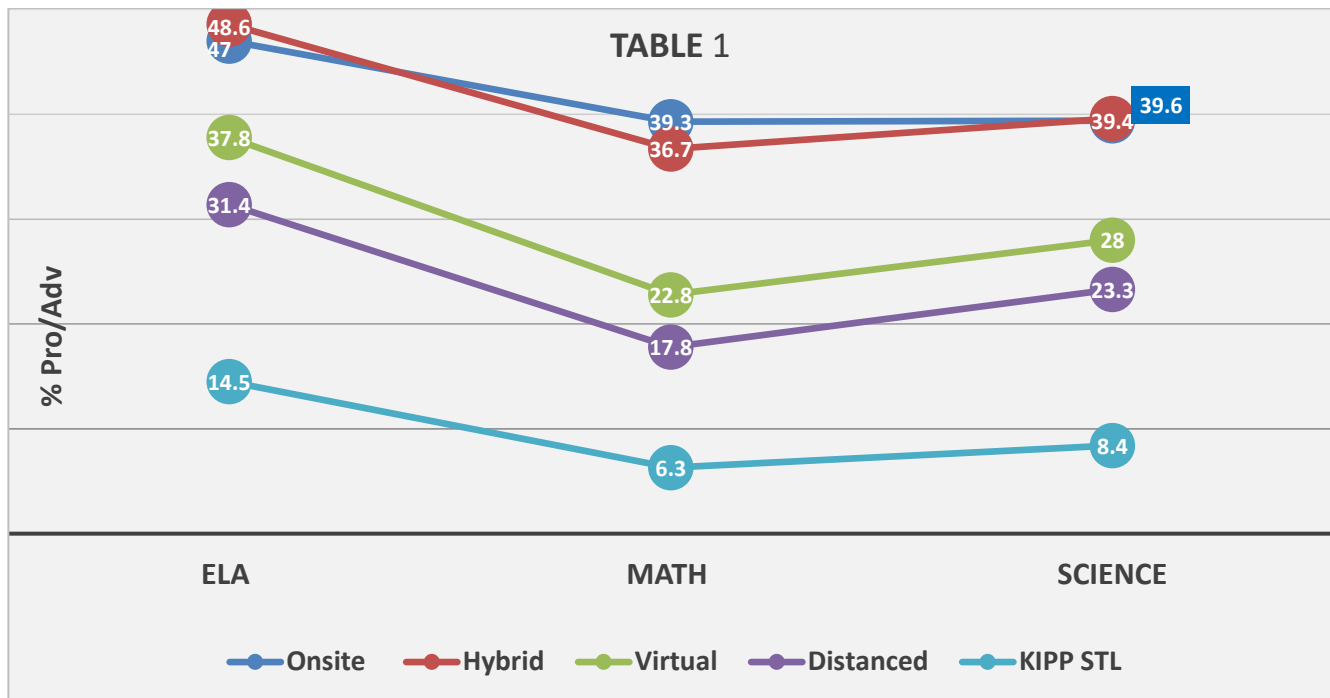


Table 1 indicates statewide MAP performance outcomes by subject within the various modes of learning available to schools in SY2021. For comparison, KIPP STL was engaged predominantly in virtual education for the school year.

SY2021 State MAP Student Group Performance by Content Area

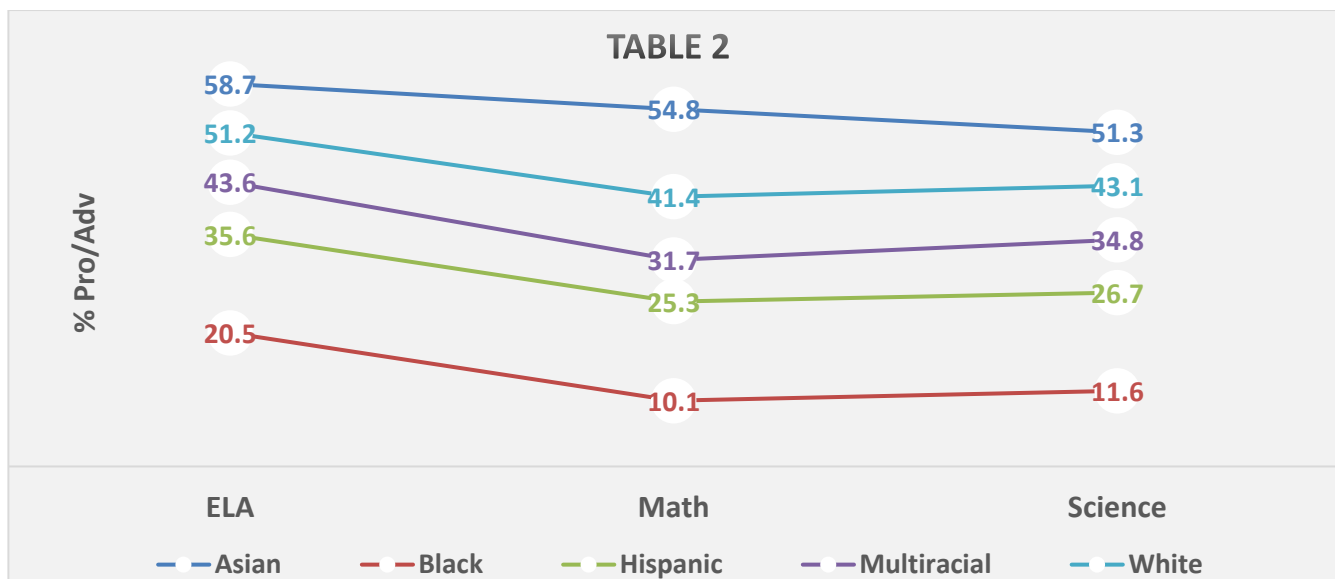


Table 2 exhibits assessed performance outcomes by subject as grouped by the State for similar student demographics. In SY2021, the overall KIPP student body identified as 96% Black.

SY2021 KIPP St. Louis MAP Scores - Comparison with State and Local District Performance

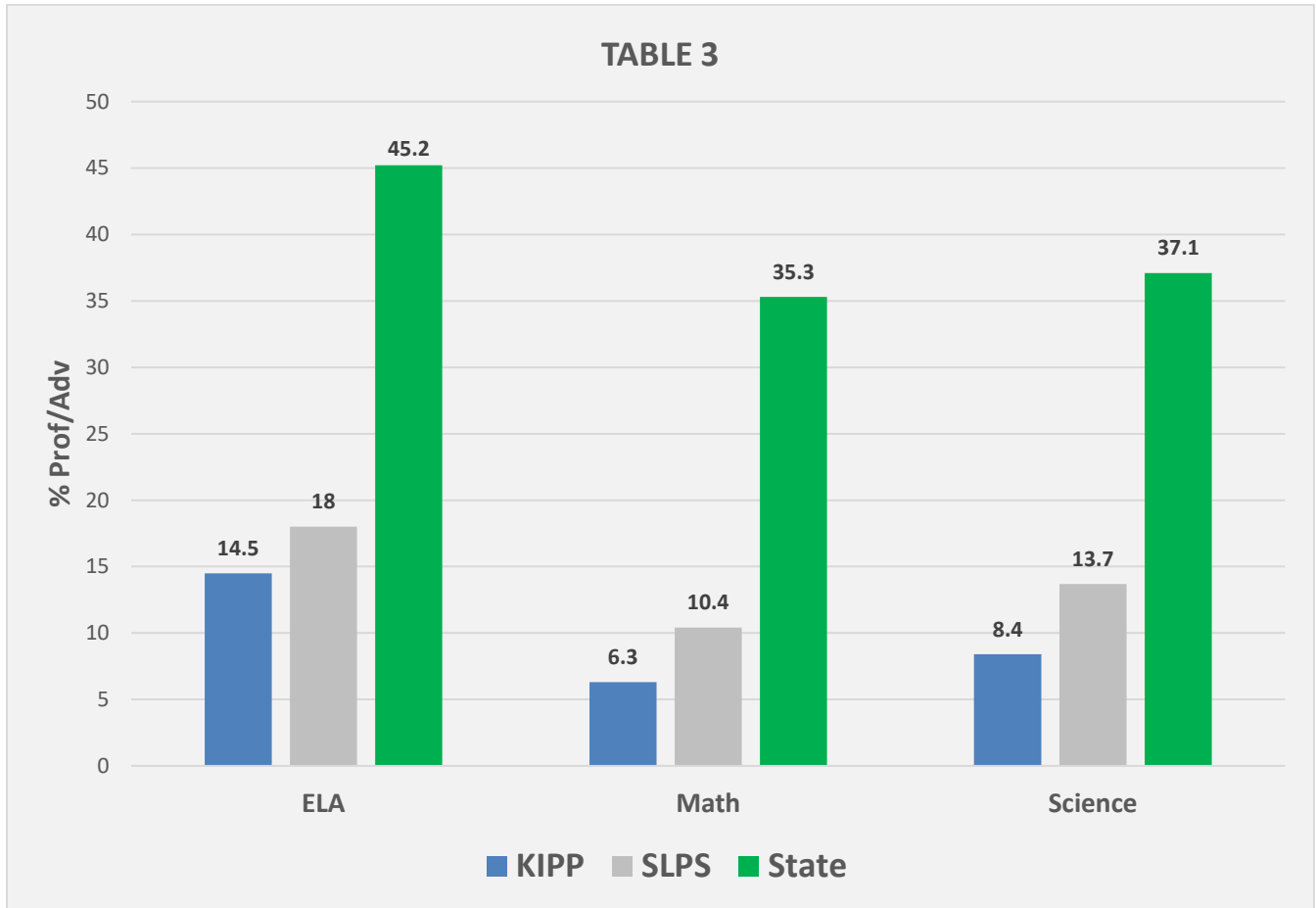


Table 3 displays SY2021 KIPP STL overall LEA State MAP assessment performance outcomes by subject, relative to Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) district and the State overall. This chart includes total Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) assessed students within all modes of learning.

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SY2021 KIPP St. Louis MAP/EOC Scores by Grade Level Comparison to State and Local District

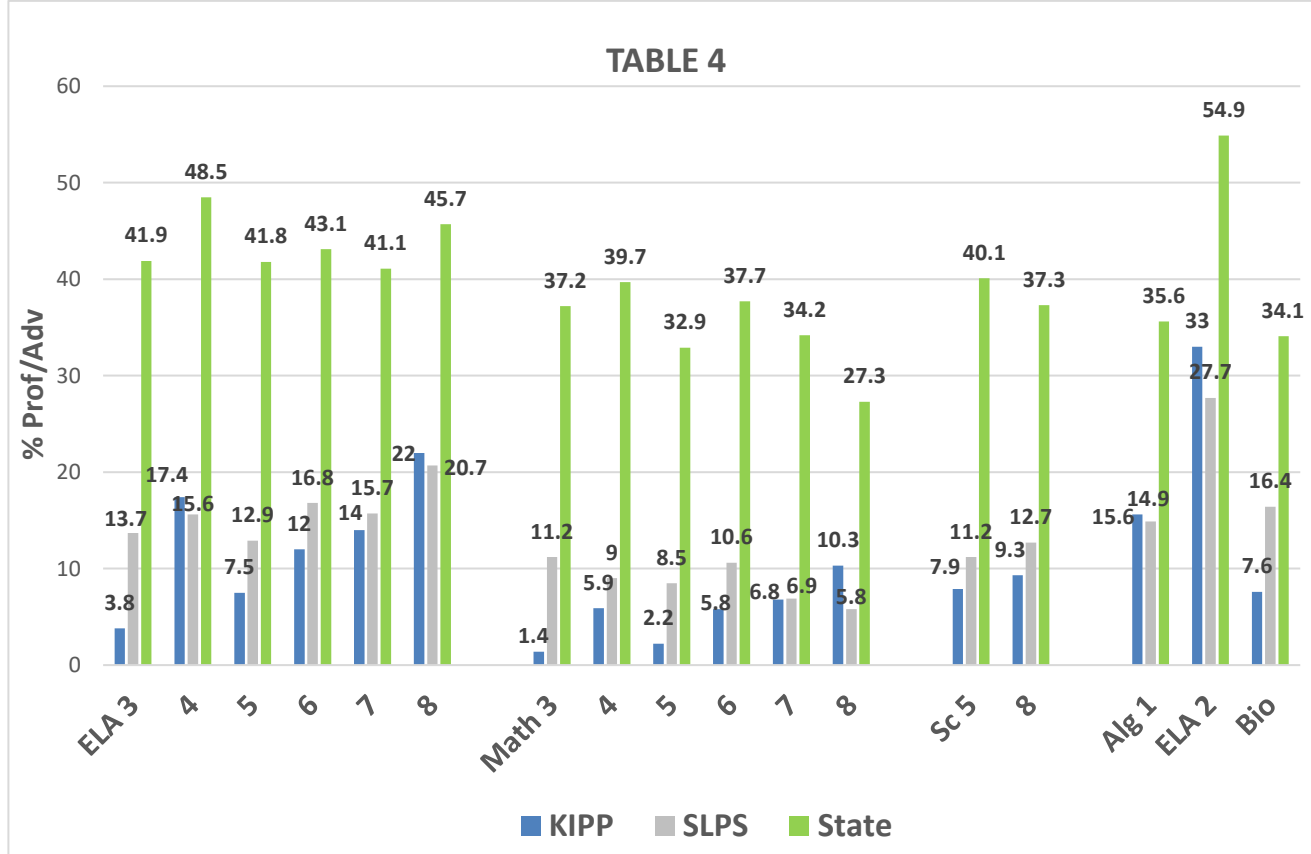


Table 4 displays KIPP STL’s SY2021 grade level MAP and end-of-course (EOC) performance relative to Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) and the State overall. Scores attained by both charter and district underscore the profound impact of the pandemic.

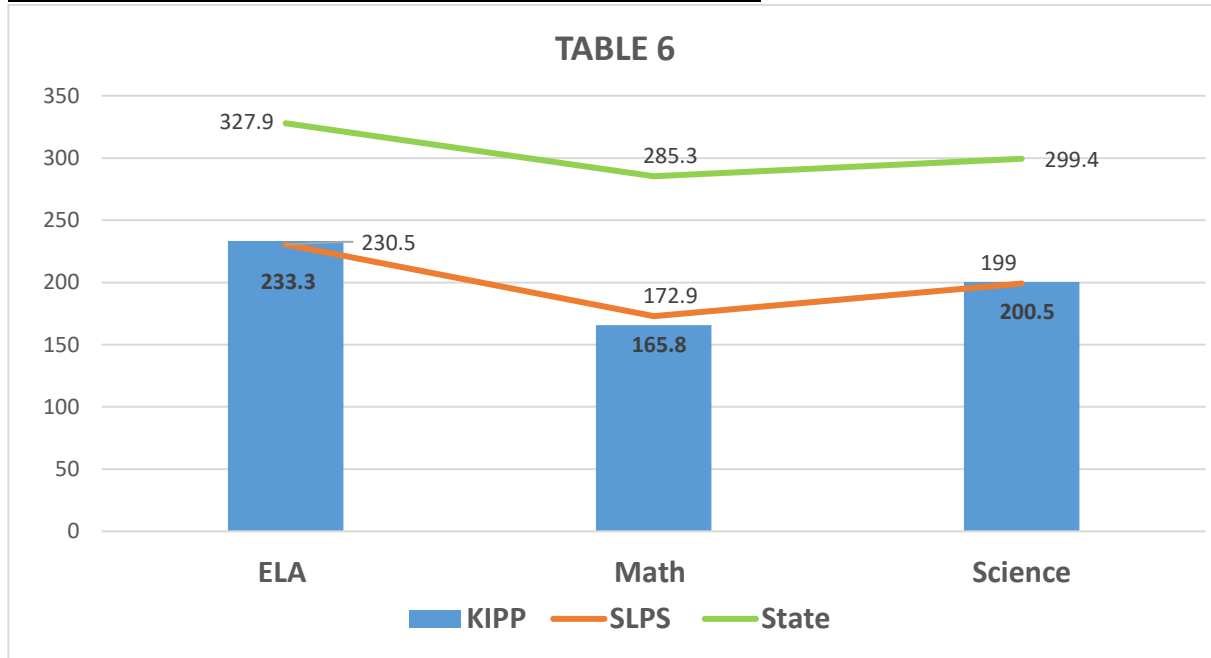
2021 Normed Curve Equivalency (NCE) Growth

TABLE 5	ELA	Math
KIPP STL	50.7/S	48.7/S
SLPS	49.8/S	48.9/S
State	50.0/S	50.0/S
Exceeding	On Track	Below

The Missouri Growth Model uses the Normed Curve Equivalency (NCE) scale in **Table 5** to compare an Individual student’s score in grades 3-8 to their predicted grade level score for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. These student-level growth metrics are then averaged for the overall charter (or district) to report school growth measures. This formula sets the State average at 50, indicating an *On Track* predicted score to determine if buildings overall met, exceeded or fell behind in growth with statistical significance.

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SY2021 KIPP St. Louis MAP Performance Index (MPI)



The MAP Performance Index (MPI) displayed in **Table 6** is used by DESE to determine whether Missouri schools are meeting academic achievement targets in ELA, Math and Science with the State assessments by measuring annual progress. This metric holds schools accountable for continuous improvement by quantifying movement of students through all MAP achievement levels.

A comprehensive 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 individual student to depict a trend to proficiency.

A benchmark goal for Missouri schools is attainment of an MPI total of 300 points or greater in each subject area. The University will be reviewing progress to attain these targets for ELA, Math and Science in upcoming years.

American College Test (ACT) Comparison

2021 AVERAGE ACT COMPOSITE	
TABLE 7	
KIPP STL	16.9
SLPS	16.1
State	20.9

The American College Test (ACT) entrance exam is one measure used by colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. Missouri overall average composite scores have trended around 20 for the past several years, which is generally considered to be in the 50th percentile nationwide.

The ACT is typically taken by students in their junior year of high school. Of note is that 90.4% of KIPP graduates had taken the ACT by SY21, with an SLPS graduate testing rate at 79.3%, while the State average dropped to 59.4% participation.



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SY2021 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 K-8 students in the Fall and Spring allows comparisons of growth for Reading and Math within the school year. According to requirements of KIPP's Performance Contract, a minimum of 50% of total assessed students are expected to meet target/typical growth during this evaluation period. Outcomes for SY2021 are not accountable.

General results obtained for review with KIPP's SY2021 scores for both elementary and middle school students presented a small amount of growth, though these did not align with national performance trends. In essence, overall achievement appeared to decline for KIPP's school year.

Academic Summary

Low academic performance results in SY2021 had been anticipated as a consequence of circumstances dictated by the pandemic. The University will be closely monitoring the upcoming school year as students and staff are able to return onsite for learning recovery. Significant gains in student academic growth are projected by KIPP St. Louis going forward.

Financial Health and Sustainability

The financial stability of charter schools is essential, as 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*. Submissions of mandatory reports to DESE have been timely, including their SY2021 FER (Final Expenditure Report) and ASBR (Annual Secretary of the Board Report). An independent audit for SY2021, 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 was approved by KIPP's Board of Directors at the December 2021 board meeting.

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KIPP FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

TABLE 8	Target	FY19	FY20	FY21	Standard
NEAR-TERM MEASURES					
Unrestricted Days Cash	60+	111	155	140	Exceeds
Enrollment Variance Actual/Budgeted	>95%	100%+	96.6%	98.8%	Meets
SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES					
Cash Flow = Prior Year – Current Year	Positive	+	+	+	Meets
Fund Balance (per 160.417.2, RsMO)	>3%	32.12%	40.1%	79%	Exceeds

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.

An infusion of federal coronavirus awards through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) – Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) has contributed significantly to the financial well-being of schools. Additional ESSER III preliminary allocations will likely begin appropriation in SY2022.

Financial Summary

The University finds KIPP St. Louis meets the standards for fiscal health in SY2021.

Organizational Effectiveness

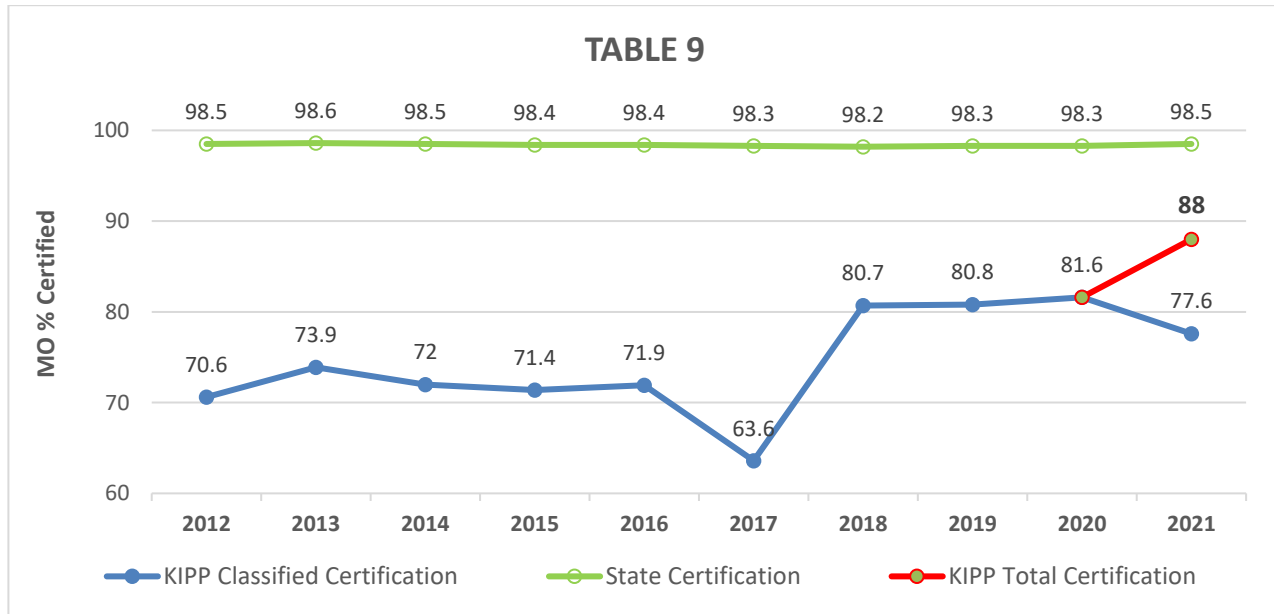
Whereas academic and financial frameworks are mandated by outcomes, organizational effectiveness is measured by process, ensuring the rights of students, families, staff and the public. The University holds KIPP St. Louis accountable for *how* it operates within minimum standards of conduct, while the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

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KIPP St. Louis vs. State Teacher Certification Rate – Historical Trend



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 non-certificated personnel. Per DESE, a substitute certificate meets the requirement of certification when the employee is functioning as a substitute teacher in the absence of the teacher-of-record, or is employed as the teacher-of-record. Including substitute certificates as part of the certification total in **Table 9**, KIPP meets this State threshold for SY2021.

Organizational Summary

The University finds KIPP St. Louis meets the standards for organizational effectiveness in SY2021.

Conclusion

The University has determined KIPP St. Louis to be in substantial compliance with legal, statutory, regulatory and contractual charter requirements. KIPP’s academic, financial and organizational performance for SY2021 meets overall expectations. KIPP St. Louis continues to respond promptly with transparency to requests for data and information, which greatly facilitates the oversight process. Washington University remains optimistic that KIPP St. Louis has the capacity to meet the extraordinary challenges ahead by providing quality education to its students, and we look forward to our continued partnership.

Appendix I: KIPP St. Louis 2021 Charter School Performance Framework

Amended KIPP St. Louis Charter Performance Contract SY2020-2024