



KIPP St. Louis 2023 Sponsor Review Report

To: KIPP St. Louis, Board of Directors
From: Washington University Charter School Sponsor Team
Lori Sommer, Associate Director, Charter School Compliance
Date: February 5, 2024

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 2010 (baseline), and school years 2013 – 2022. An extensive review has been undertaken in 2023 in preparation for KIPP's second 5-year charter renewal.

Opening its first middle school in 2009, KIPP's enrollment by SY2023 reached over 2,400 students within six schools: three elementary, two middle, and a high school. KIPP's schools now encompass the entire PK-12 grade range after full expansion of KIPP Wonder, the third and newest elementary school now offering enrollment from PK to 4th grade. KIPP HS graduated its third senior class in May 2023.

Approaching the fourth anniversary of the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, KIPP St. Louis persists in addressing the significant impact imposed on student academic performance and attendance achievement. KIPP students, families, staff and board face the challenge of navigating the complexities of post-pandemic recovery.

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 Framework* presented in Appendix I was developed in SY2016 as a sponsor's tool to gather necessary data providing review guidance to 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 primarily collected from the following sources:

- ✓ Board Meeting Attendance
- ✓ School Site Visits
- ✓ 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**

Evidence of outcomes can be further examined in the web application for the Statewide SY2023 Report Card provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This Report Card, along with the Missouri Comprehensive Data System (MCDS), provides public access to annual 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 April 2023. 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). Although these assessments offer only a snapshot into students' academic achievements, they contribute benchmarking metrics and are integrated into the University's yearly evaluation of KIPP's performance.

SY2023 KIPP St. Louis MAP Scores - Comparison with State and Local District Performance

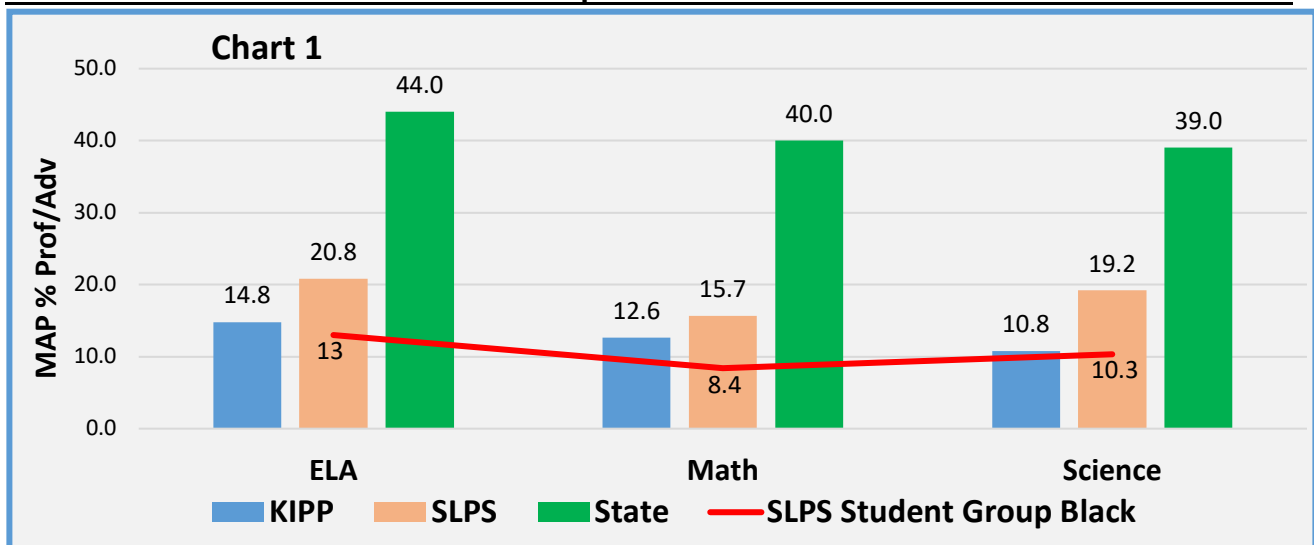
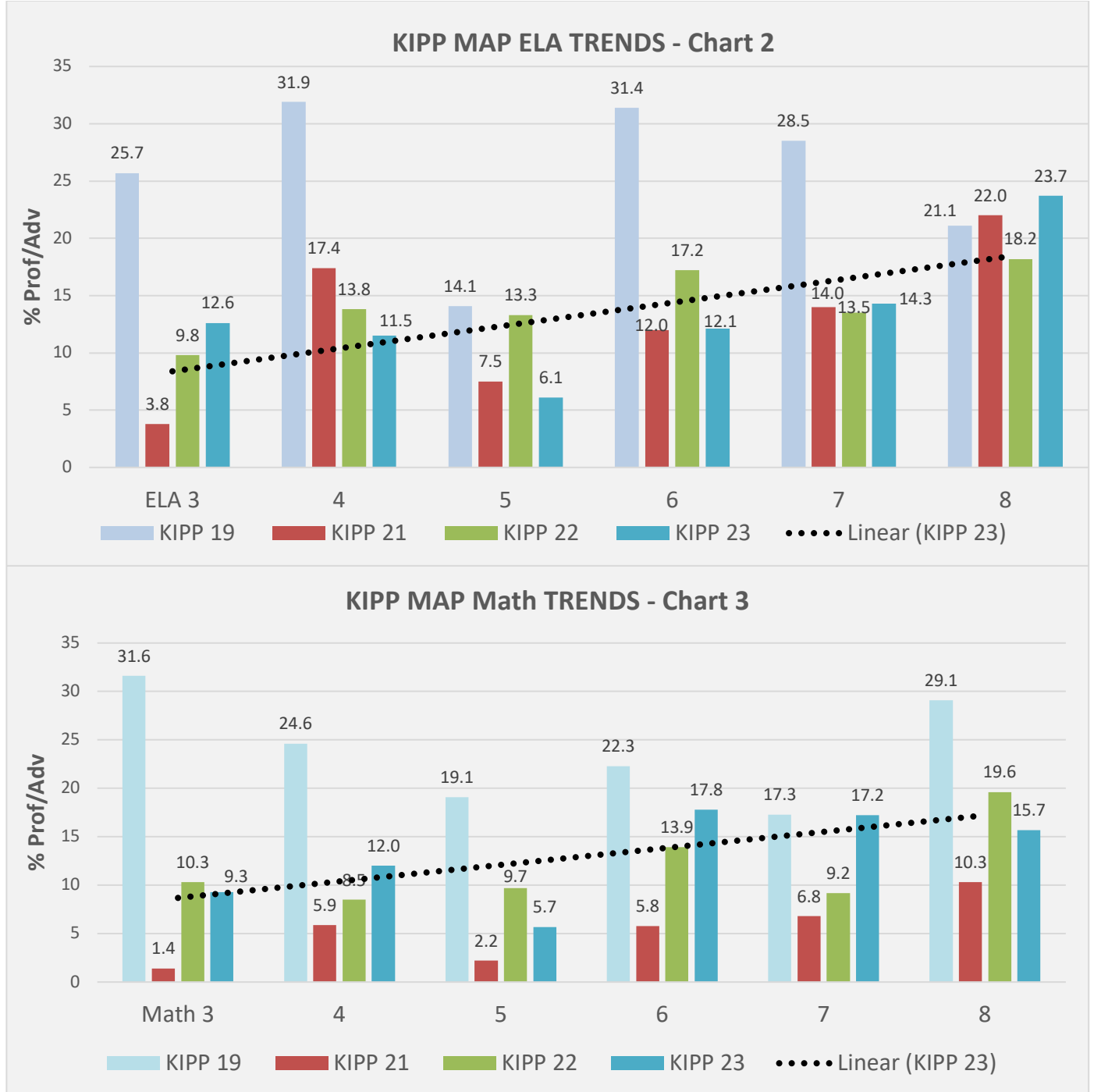


Chart 1 displays SY2023 KIPP STL Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) performance outcomes for the top two tiers of Proficient and Advanced by subject, relative to district Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) and the State. This chart includes total MAP assessed students in grades 3-12 for English Language Arts (ELA), Math and Science. The SLPS category Student Group Black represented here considers students with similar demographics to KIPP. Scores attained by both charter and district underscore the continuing impact of the pandemic.

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SY2019 - SY2023 KIPP St. Louis MAP Score Trends by Grade Level in ELA and Math



Charts 2 & 3 provide historical perspective for KIPP MAP scores in ELA & Math for grades 3-8 from SY19 - SY23. Of particular significance is the substantial decline in scores from 2019 to 2021, again highlighting repercussions of learning loss inflicted by the pandemic. (There was no State MAP testing for SY2020.) Data from SY21 to SY23 provides evidence of positive improvement in learning recovery. The trend lines for SY2023 suggest annual performance gains increasing with advancing grade levels.

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Academic Persistence at KIPP St. Louis: Student Retention and MAP Performance for SY 21-23

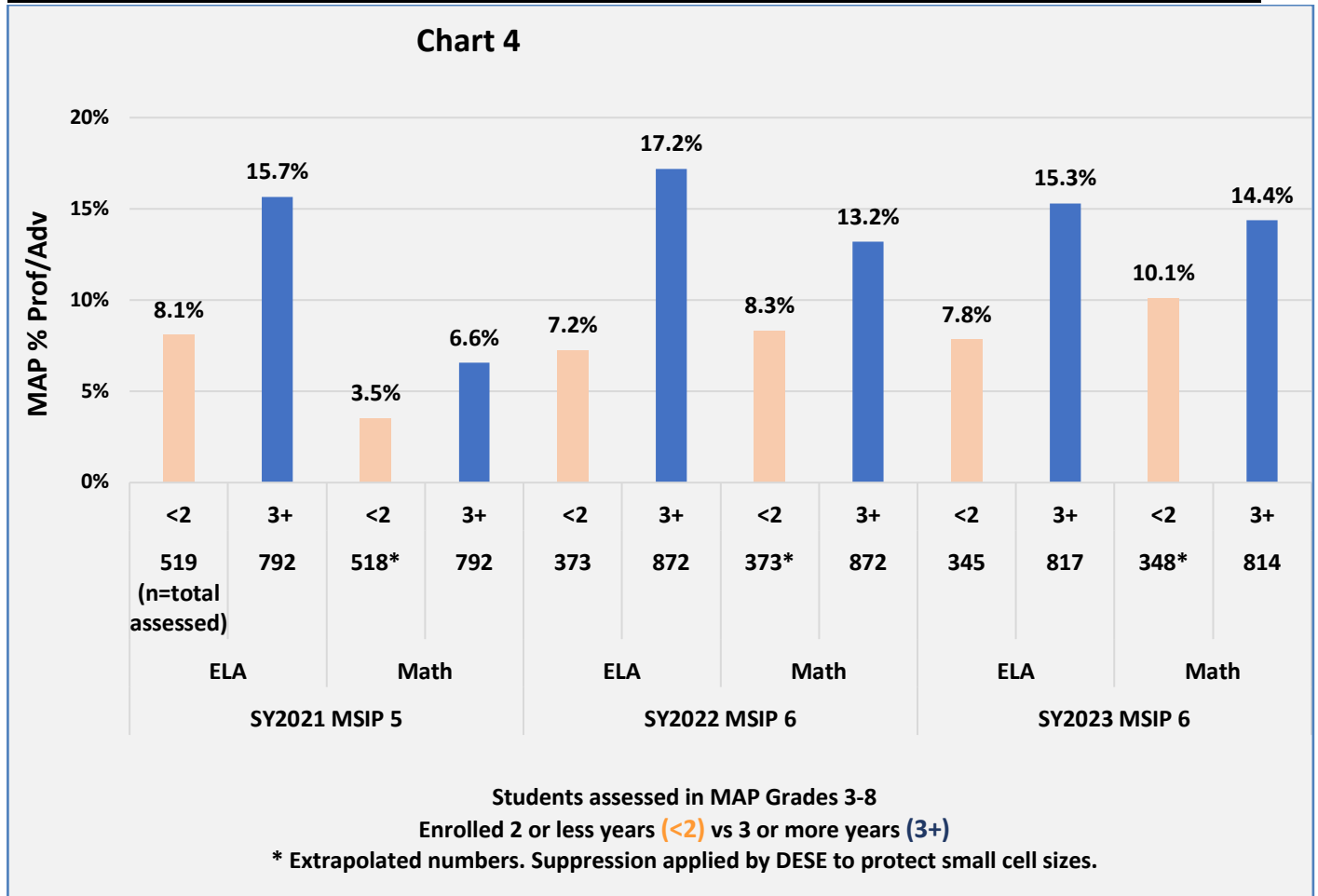


Chart 4 presents an analysis of MAP score performance examining the academic achievements of students enrolled at KIPP for extended durations (3 years or more) in contrast to those attending for shorter periods (2 years or less). Results suggest that students persisting with KIPP for prolonged periods consistently exhibit improved academic performance in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments.

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SY2019 - SY2023 KIPP St. Louis End-of-Course (EOC) Performance Trends by Subject

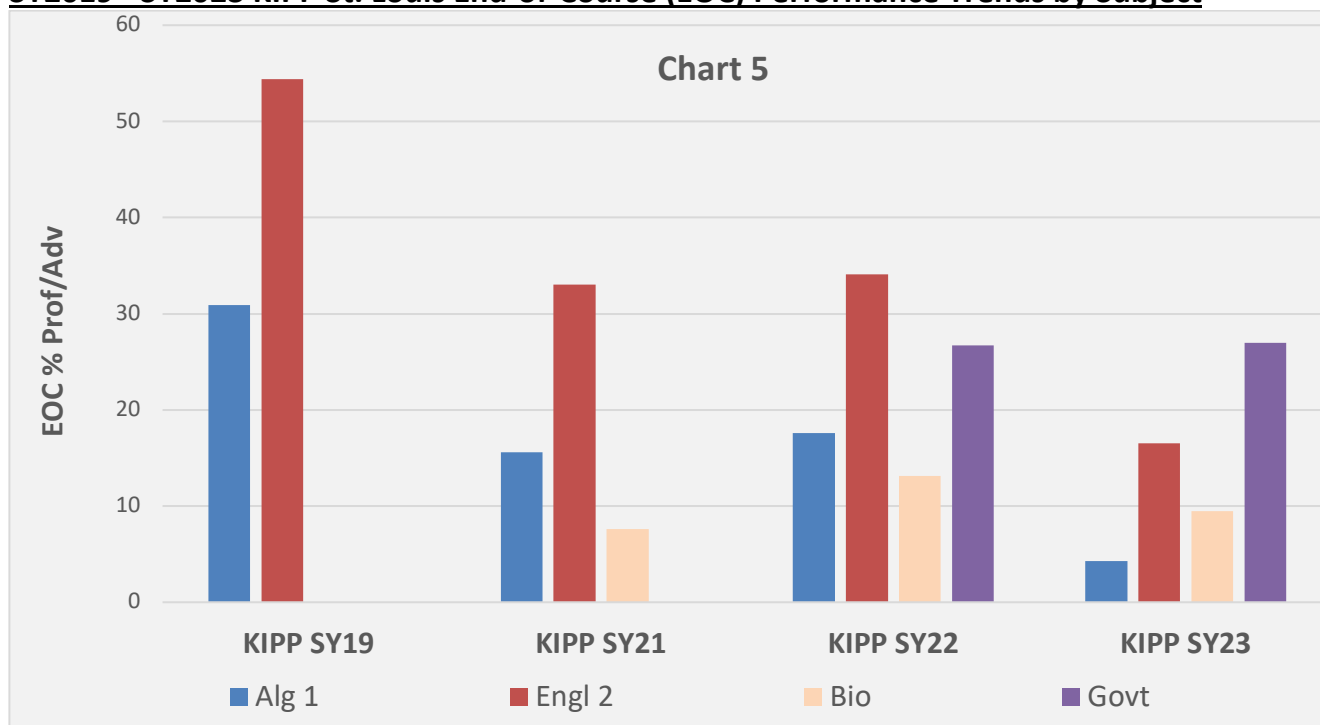


Chart 5 presents an overview for SY19-SY23 KIPP End-of-Course (EOC) scores. The EOC assessments are a set of State standards-based tests that measure specific skills defined for each content area for high school courses. These four assessed subjects required by DESE now include Algebra 1, English 2, Biology, and Government. As KIPP must ensure all students complete their required EOC assessments prior to graduation, this accountability metric is indicative of annual school performance progress.

It is important to highlight a significant decrease in Math and English scores from 2019 to 2021, attributed to learning loss. Although there appears to be some progress from SY21 to SY22, there is another noticeable decline in SY23. The University has concerns about this decline and seeks further explanation from KIPP.

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SY2023 State MAP Performance Index (MPI) by Student Group Performance in Content Area

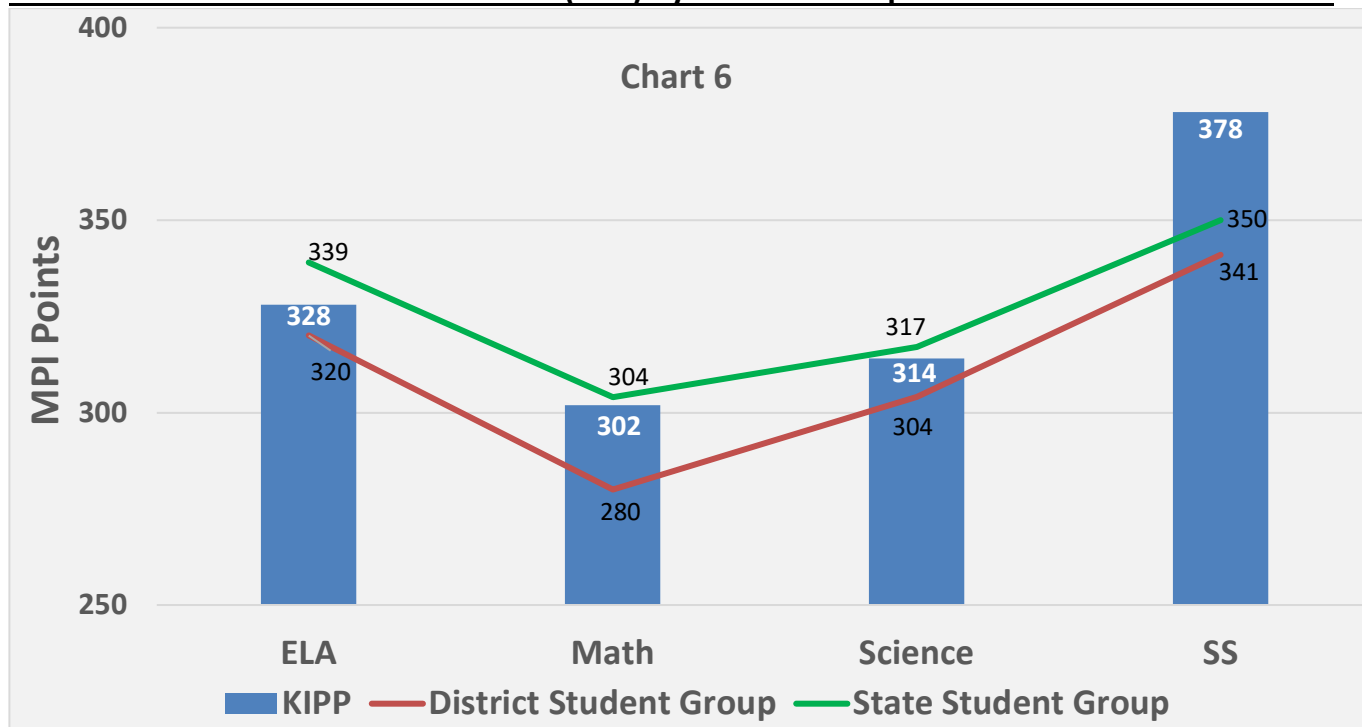


Chart 6 exhibits SY2023 evaluated performance outcomes by subject MAP Performance Index (MPI) in comparison with district St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) and the State, grouped according to similar student demographics. In SY2023, the overall KIPP student body identified as 96% Black. These figures suggest KIPP is performing at a notably higher level than the similar home district group, and is approaching State-level cohort performance in ELA, Math and Science, while surpassing in Social Studies.

The MPI is utilized by DESE as a Status calculation to determine whether Missouri schools are meeting academic achievement targets in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science and Social Studies (SS) through State assessments, along with measuring annual progress. This metric holds schools accountable for continuous improvement by quantifying advancement of students through all MAP achievement levels.

A convincing argument for school performance is made by emphasizing attention on all students across the four MAP achievement levels: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced, rather than solely focusing on those excelling 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. The University continues to review KIPP's progress to attain these subject targets in upcoming years as part of the revised Performance Contract.

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MSIP 6 Annual Performance Report (APR)

KIPP LEA Overall Scores for Academic Achievement Growth

DESE employs the Missouri Growth Model in MSIP 6 to predict growth outcomes for student achievement. MAP scores are compared from a student's prior (predictor) year to the current actual (outcome) year. The combined scores for the LEA are then statistically compared to the State mean, categorizing them for growth as Below Average, Average, or Above Average. The LEA is classified in a continuous proportional statewide percentage ranking in each subject area, and APR growth points are assigned accordingly.

Table 7	SY2022		SY2023	
English Language Arts (ELA)	91.7%	Above Average	80.0%	Above Average
Math	86.7%	Above Average	95.0%	Above Average
Science	*	No 2022 scores	67.5%	Average
Social Studies	*	No 2022 scores	92.5%	Above Average

Table 7 illustrates significant academic student growth for KIPP in the initial two years of MSIP 6 (SY22 and SY23) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Science and Social Studies growth measurements were introduced in SY23, further indicating noteworthy progress. The University continues to monitor Science and provides ongoing support through the Institute for School Partnership (ISP).

American College Test (ACT) Comparison

2023 AVERAGE ACT COMPOSITE		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 50 th percentile nationwide.
TABLE 8		
KIPP STL	15.9	
SLPS	15.9	
State	20.1	

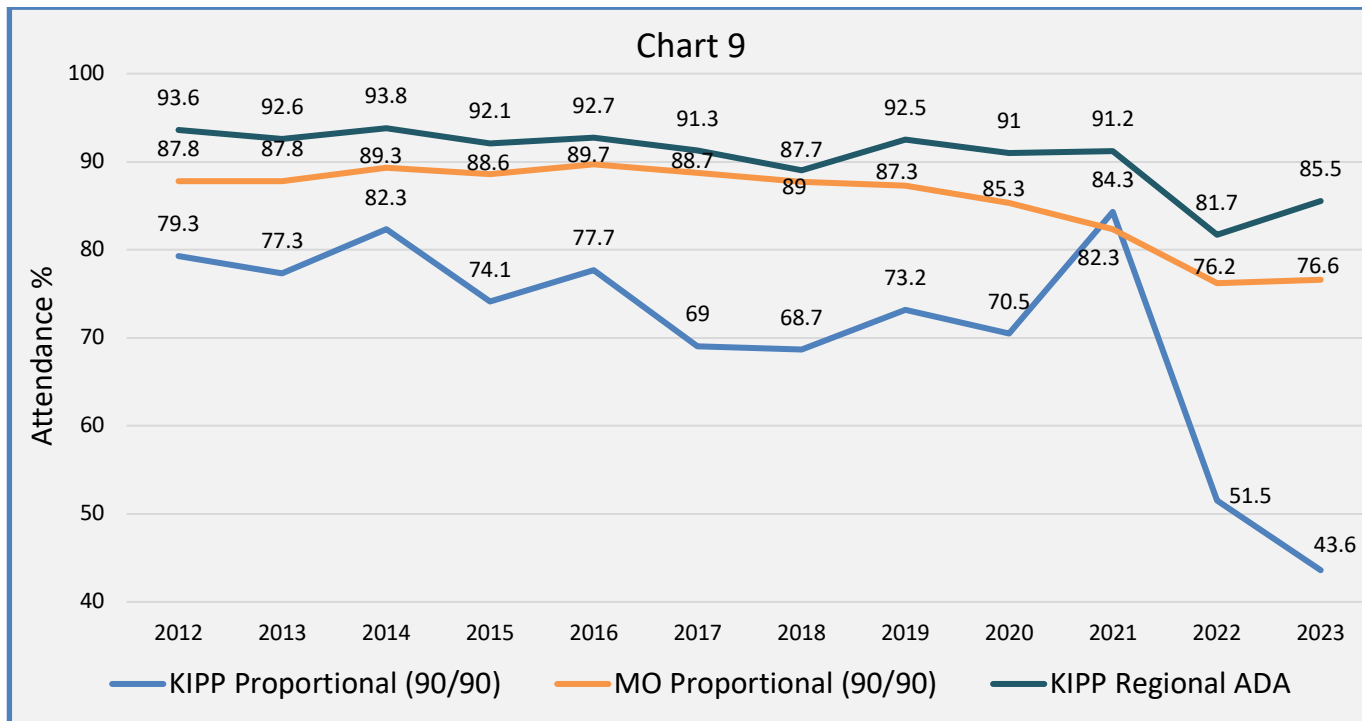
The ACT is typically taken by students in their junior year of high school. Of note is that 87.5% of KIPP graduates had taken the ACT in SY23, compared to the State graduate testing rate at 65.7% participation.

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Attendance

Chart 9 displays historical attendance trends for KIPP over the past twelve years. The overall SY2023 average daily attendance (ADA) rate for KIPP St. Louis is at 85.5%. This number falls below the Performance Contract minimum of 90% ADA, displaying a challenging post-pandemic attendance trend that continues to confront KIPP along with schools nationwide. The State's Annual Performance Report (APR) contains a proportional attendance standard, setting the expectation that 90% of the students are in school 90% of the time (90/90). The University underscores the critical necessity for KIPP to implement strategies to boost student attendance.

Historical KIPP Attendance Rates



Annual Performance Report (APR) Table 10

APR RESULTS	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
KIPP	85.7	88.6	77.5	76.3	81.3	82.8	No APR	No MAP	No APR	71.3	72.1

The Annual Performance Report (APR) provides data from DESE serving as the primary basis for district accreditation classification. By statute, charter schools are not held to accreditation, though achieving this level of performance is deemed favorable.

Table 10 displays the historical timeline for KIPP APR scores. Since receiving an initial score in 2013, KIPP's APR has consistently maintained above the 70% threshold, placing within the accredited range for MO public schools in all calculated years.

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Performance Considerations Requiring KIPP Response

1. State MAP assessment scores for grade levels 3-8 show a general upward trend from SY2021 to SY2023 as learning recovery efforts continue. Declining EOC scores for SY2023 present a concern. The University seeks additional progress in the coming year for improved outcomes. What further measures will KIPP be taking in SY2024 to increase student academic performance across all subjects?

KIPP Response:

For the 2023-24 school year we have set an aggressive goal that at least 85% of our students will reach their typical goal in reading and math (as measured on iReady), and together as one region, at least 10% more of our students will be proficient or advanced in reading and math by the end of the school year. In order to achieve this goal, we did a deep analysis to identify the root causes of why students were not increasing levels of overall achievement and developed a comprehensive academic annual plan to address and monitor.

Through analysis, it was identified that classrooms across the region are generally safe and stable learning environments where students receive feedback about whether or not they are meeting behavioral expectations or completing tasks. However, students across the region are not regularly receiving meaningful feedback about the quality of their work or their ideas, nor are they regularly evaluating the ideas of their peers. This is leading to low levels of student engagement as the staff's focus is primarily on students doing the right thing or completing a task rather than on the quality of work or student thinking. The root cause of this is that we need to increase the level of intellectual prep that teachers are completing prior to teaching a lesson to ensure strong internalization and monitoring of student work. This is true for myriad reasons: inconsistent quality of content meetings, inconsistent expectations for intellectual preparation by teachers, inconsistent quality and frequency of observation/feedback meetings/practices, and a lack of clear instructional priority areas with sustained focus. To address these areas we have been implementing the following strategies to increase the effectiveness and quality of teaching in our K-12 classrooms:

- Implement targeted, practice-based observation and feedback coaching weekly or bi-weekly with each teacher.
- Implement weekly content and student work meetings in ELA and math that emphasize studying and responding to student work and rehearsing lessons, and
- Create clarity and specificity about the vision of excellent instruction in ELA and math.

We have also focused heavily on teacher training on the Science of Reading by providing LETRS training with all of our elementary teachers and our ELA middle school years. Additionally, we are piloting a new high-quality early reading program for K-2 called CKLA, which is showing promising results.

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2. *Improving overall attendance post-pandemic is a pressing concern, requiring significant improvement. A considerable number of students are attending school less than 90% of the time. What strategies does KIPP currently employ to boost attendance results?*

KIPP Response:

KIPP St. Louis has identified attendance as a **Wildly Important Goal** for our district since the 2022-2023 school year. As attendance plummeted during the 2021-2022 school year, we have been working on a multi-year plan to increase attendance across the district. In year one, we worked on rebuilding attendance data systems, started the work of shifting family and student mindsets regarding the importance of student attendance, built data systems to better track and monitor attendance, and took both a school and district-wide approach. This resulted in a 1.5 increase of attendance across the district. Building on that momentum, we set an ambitious goal of increasing our cumulative average daily attendance (ADA) across all K-8 schools **by 2%** and at KIPP St. Louis High School by **4%**, resulting in a districtwide increase from **85.5% to 88% by May 2024**.

In order to achieve this, there are multiple strategies that we have implemented:

- Training and development for teachers and schools on the importance of taking attendance on time and accurately;
- Daily review of attendance take rate;
- Daily automated text messages for absent students with a survey to figure out attendance barriers;
- Monthly attendance report cards sent home to families;
- Daily phone calls or reminders to parents;
- School-based attendance incentives, including; awards and celebrations, class and grade level competitions, student goal setting and tracking, attendance field trips and incentives (dances, games, etc.);
- Tiered intervention that focuses on students in the 80-90% attendance range, and truancy and additional supports provided by the MHP teams for students that fall below 80%. These interventions include home visits, student attendance contracts, providing additional resources, and truancy referrals;
- Positive signage and messaging about the importance of attendance and the link from attendance to positive academic outcomes to families via marketing, posters, social media and messages sent home.

Data Tracking, and Progress Monitoring Initiatives include:

- Weekly school-based attendance meetings;
- Weekly region-wide attendance meeting;
- District-wide attendance dashboard; and
- Quarterly attendance data review and step-back.

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Financial Health and Sustainability

Ensuring the financial stability of charter schools is crucial, given that national data shows half of charter school closures stem from inadequate financial performance. Alongside overseeing adherence to state and federal regulations, sponsors also verify that their schools maintain robust and up-to-date finances and are well-prepared for future fiscal health.

A review of financial records substantiates that KIPP St. Louis financial controls are in place, supported by additional evidence documented in the *Charter School Performance Framework*. Sound financial practices utilize policies and procedures from the *Missouri Financial Accounting Manual*. KIPP consistently submits mandatory reports to DESE in a timely manner, including the SY2023 FER (Final Expenditure Report) and ASBR (Annual Secretary of the Board Report). The independent audit for SY2023, conducted by Kerber, Eck & Braeckel (KEB) as required annually, resulted in an unqualified audit opinion without significant findings or areas of concern. The audit was approved by KIPP's Board of Directors during the December 2023 board meeting.

KIPP FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

TABLE 11	Target	FY21	FY22	FY23	Standard
NEAR-TERM MEASURES					
Unrestricted Days Cash	60+	111	120	90	Meets
Enrollment Variance Actual/Budgeted	>95%	100%+	98.8%	95.6%	Meets
SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES					
Cash Flow = Prior Year – Current Year	Positive	+	+	+	Meets
Fund Balance (per 160.417.2, RsMO)	>3%	79%	39%	45.7%	Meets

The KIPP St. Louis Finance Committee convenes on a monthly basis, while the Board of Directors gathers every other month to assess and approve the recommended financial reports. Maintaining fiscal responsibility through ongoing monitoring throughout the year ensures the financial autonomy of the Local Education Agency (LEA) to effectively pursue its mission of delivering a high-quality program.

Federal coronavirus awards from the *American Rescue Plan (ARP)*, specifically through the *Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)*, have played a crucial role in enhancing the financial stability of schools. Further allocations of ESSER III funds were granted to KIPP in the school year 2022.

Financial Summary

The University finds KIPP St. Louis meets the standards for fiscal health in SY2023.

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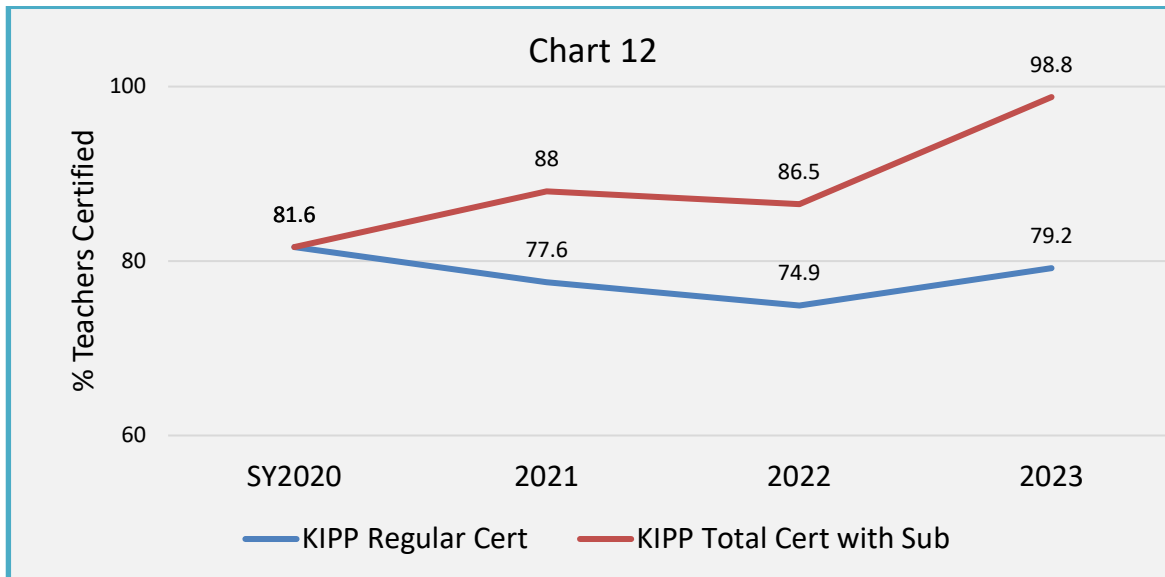
Organizational Effectiveness

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

1. Adherence to educational program requirements
2. Effective financial management
3. Board governance in compliance with laws and policies
4. Fulfillment of reporting requirements to responsible entities
5. Protection of student and employee rights and requirements
6. Maintenance of a school environment ensuring health, safety, and services

KIPP St. Louis 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. Incorporating substitute certificates into the certification total in **Chart 12**, KIPP meets this State threshold for SY2023.

Organizational Summary

The University finds KIPP St. Louis meets the standards for organizational effectiveness in SY2023.



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Conclusion

The University has determined KIPP to be in substantial compliance with legal, statutory, regulatory and contractual charter requirements. KIPP's academic, financial and organizational performance for SY2023 align with overall expectations. KIPP consistently responds promptly and transparently to requests for data and information, greatly facilitating the oversight process. Washington University remains optimistic that KIPP St. Louis has the capacity to address the extraordinary challenges ahead by providing quality education to its students, and we look forward to our continued partnership.

Appendix I: KIPP St. Louis 2023 Charter School Performance Framework

KIPP St. Louis Charter Performance Contract SY2025-2029