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**studY FINDS 4 out of 5 DETROIT CHILDREN LACK ACCESS TO A PERFORMING public SCHOOL**

**Calls for Shared Data, Better Coordination, and Neighborhood-Focused Approach to Schools**

**DETROIT, MI —** A new study by nonprofit researcher IFF — [*Rethink, Reset, Rebuild: A Shared Vision of Performing Schools in Quality Buildings for Every Child in Detroit*](https://www.iff.org/RethinkResetRebuild) *—* found that, during the 2015-2016 school year, only 19 percent of Detroit’s K-12 students attending traditional district or charter schools within the city limits could access a performing school (one rated “Green” or “Lime” by the Michigan Department of Education). The study estimates that 70,000 of Detroit’s 85,000 public school students — or 4 out of 5 — did not have access to a performing school.

*Rethink, Reset, Rebuild* also examined access to performing schools by neighborhood, finding that 38 percent of the need for performing schools was concentrated in 10 of Detroit’s 54 neighborhood areas. More than 30,000 students live in these communities, yet only eight performing district or charter schools were located in them. These 10 highest-need neighborhoods were clustered away from downtown on the city’s East, West, and Southwest sides, and included: (1) Cerveny/Grandmont;

(2) Chadsey; (3) Finney; (4) Vernor/Junction; (5) Evergreen; (6) Harmony Village; (7) MacKenzie;

(8) Greenfield; (9) Brooks; and (10) Mt. Olivet.

Other findings from the report include:

* Beating the odds were 25 schools that provided more than 13,000 seats in performing schools that served mostly high-poverty student populations; and
* After evaluating the conditions of facilities in and around the highest-need neighborhoods, there seemed to be little connection between building conditions and school performance, with the highest-performing schools often not located in the highest-quality buildings.

“This reportis not about criticizing our public schools without offering a path forward. The purpose of *Rethink, Reset, Rebuild* is to give everyone with a stake in improving Detroit’s education system — the district, charter schools and their authorizers, the city, foundations, and, of course, our families — the neighborhood-by-neighborhood data they need to work together to find shared solutions,” said IFF Executive Director for Detroit Chris Uhl. “That’s the promise of this report: the common framework it provides for us to take action on the findings of this and previous reports, like the one just released by the Coalition for the Future of Detroit’s School Children, to work together to improve our schools one community at a time.”

The report’s recommendations, which are centered on increased collaboration, include:

1. **Root school improvement in place-based strategy.** School improvement and rightsizing strategies should be based on the demand for and supply of performing schools and conditions of school buildings in each neighborhood. They should prioritize and include specific strategies for the 10 highest-need neighborhoods, and include ongoing community engagement and transparent decision making to translate unutilized buildings into neighborhood assets.
2. **Coordinate strategic planning for K-12 public education in Detroit within and across school governing bodies.** Identify areas that save costs or provide other mutual benefits, such as by coordinating on school location and sharing best practices and data.
3. **Base school improvement on transparent, meaningful, and consistent performance indicators.** Improve Michigan’s school accountability system, including by developing a rigorous rating that allows for schools to be compared across systems and over time.
4. **Efficiently allocate facilities resources so that real estate portfolios are commensurate with student enrollment.** Secure public and/or philanthropic funding to conduct a detailed review of all district and charter school facilities, and develop estimates for properly restoring and maintaining all facilities. Consider appropriate enrollment, expansion, and co-location strategies that both increase access to performing schools and make better use of underutilized buildings.

To help implement these recommendations and encourage increased collaboration, *Rethink, Reset, Rebuild* is accompanied by an online tool that allows local stakeholders to visualize demographic, academic performance, and facilities condition data along with the results of the needs assessment at the citywide and neighborhood levels. The report and online tool are available at: [www.iff.org/RethinkResetRebuild](http://www.iff.org/RethinkResetRebuild).

*Rethink, Reset, Rebuild* was guided by an advisory committee that included representatives from Detroit Public Schools Community District, the Detroit Board of Education, the office of the Mayor of Detroit, the American Federation of Teachers, the Governor John Engler Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University, EdFuel, Enroll Detroit, the Grand Valley State University Charter Schools Office, the National Charter Schools Institute, and Rock Ventures. It was completed with support from the Skillman Foundation.

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**About IFF:** [IFF](http://www.iff.org/) is a mission-driven lender, real estate consultant, and developer that helps communities thrive by creating opportunities for low-income populations and individuals with disabilities. From child care to senior housing, IFF works closely with clients from every sector, offering affordable, flexible financing; full-scale real estate consulting; and community development services. Since 1988, we have made more than $700 million in loans, leveraged $2.3 billion in community investments, and renovated or constructed more than 3.1 million square feet of nonprofit and affordable housing spaces.