

Frequently Asked Questions about the Ewing Marion Kauffman School

Q: What is the Ewing Marion Kauffman School (the Kauffman School)?

A: The Ewing Marion Kauffman School is a new public charter school that will offer a rigorous college preparatory education to students in grades five through twelve, intended to prepare them for success in college and life beyond the classroom. Students living within the Kansas City, Missouri School District are eligible to attend this school. As a public school, it will be open to all students and be tuition-free.

Q: What is the philosophy of the Kauffman School?

A: The mission of the Kauffman School is to prepare students to excel academically, graduate from college, and apply their unique talents in the world to create economically independent and personally fulfilling lives.

The Kauffman School will prepare students to be intellectually curious, economically independent, and confidently self-directed. Students will learn to live life on purpose. They will learn not to be afraid to take calculated risks in pursuit of their aspirations and understand that a life devoid of failure is a life half-lived.

It is expected that students who attend the Kauffman School will have multiple careers over their lifetimes; some of the jobs they will hold do not yet exist. Since we cannot predict the future, students will be prepared for all potential futures. School staff will accomplish this goal by making sure students are able to think critically, embrace change, and take charge of their own learning in a rapidly changing world.

The Kauffman School will be a demanding school. Its doors will be open to all students and families, though success will require strength and resolve to seize the opportunity this school will offer. Students and families will need to match the staff's intensity and dedication to the students' futures. In return, the Kauffman School staff will be committed to each student's academic and personal growth.

Q: Who is eligible to attend the Kauffman School?

A: As a public charter school, the Kauffman School is free and open to all students residing within the boundaries of the Kansas City, Missouri School District. The Kauffman School will provide enrollment priority to children residing within specified geographic areas of the district, children with siblings already enrolled in the school, and children with a parent/guardian employed at the school and residing within the KCMSD boundaries. Students living within the

following zip codes will have first opportunity in the enrollment lottery: 64123, 64124, 64127, 64128 and 64130.

Q: When will the Kauffman School open?

A: The Kauffman School will open in the fall 2011, and the school plans to enroll seventy-five fifth graders in its first year. The school will add an additional grade level per year through twelfth grade. Enrollment for the first class of fifth graders will likely begin in early 2011.

Q: How do students apply to attend the Kauffman School?

A: The application and enrollment process will be announced in late 2010. This enrollment process will begin in early 2011.

In accordance with Missouri charter school guidelines, the Kauffman School will be tuition-free and serve students residing within the Kansas City, Missouri School District boundaries. If enrollment demand exceeds the number of available seats, students will be selected by lottery. The Kauffman School will provide enrollment priority to children residing within specified geographic areas of the district, children with siblings already enrolled in the school, and children with a parent/guardian employed at the school and residing within the KCMUSD boundaries. Students living within the following zip codes will have first opportunity in the enrollment lottery: 64123, 64124, 64127, 64128 and 64130.

Q: Where will the Kauffman School be located?

A: The school's location is still to be determined. It's possible that the school will use a temporary facility for the first two or three years of operation.

Q: Why will the school begin with only one fifth-grade class?

A: The Kauffman School begins in fifth grade because that is the point when we believe students can enroll and still achieve the outcomes demanded by the rigorous college preparatory philosophy of the school.

The Kauffman School examined rigorous college preparatory models realizing positive outcomes for students throughout the country. Many of these programs begin their enrollments with a small fifth or sixth grade class and grow to accommodate high school students. Some of these models and schools include Academy of the Pacific Rim, Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, the Uncommon Schools' Collegiate Charter Schools, and YES Prep Public Schools.

Q: How will prospective students find out about the enrollment and application process?

A: Enrollment for the first class of fifth graders will begin in early 2011. The Kauffman School anticipates enrollment applications will be available in late 2010 or early 2011. The school will provide further details regarding how to apply prior to the enrollment period.

Q: How is the Kauffman Foundation prepared to start a charter school?

A: The Kauffman Foundation is creating this charter school because it believes the Kauffman School will offer a rich educational experience for children in Kansas City, an experience that will prepare them for success beyond high school and throughout their lives.

While the charter school sector faces challenges, many charter schools across the country are emerging at the forefront of educational achievement for urban students. Studies and practices of rigorous college-preparatory charter schools around the United States indicate that all students, regardless of income level or background, can achieve at high levels when provided an environment reflecting academic rigor, personal engagement, and a shared sense of urgency. Students and families in Kansas City deserve a public education option exhibiting the most effective practices in urban education.

The Kauffman School will benefit other public schools, whether district or charter, by sharing its data, practices, and approaches regarding improvement of student academic outcomes.

Q: What experience does the Foundation have to initiate this type of endeavor?

A: The Kauffman Foundation has supported a number of local education initiatives for more than 20 years. This work began with Project Choice, a dropout prevention program started by Ewing Kauffman that served 1,400 students from 1988 – 2001. Since then, the Foundation has funded, developed and operated a variety of educational programs that were designed to improve academic achievement and student outcomes.

The Kauffman Foundation has been studying the charter school environment for several years, and a development team has been working for more than two years on the plans to design and start this new school. Design team members visited highly regarded public schools (both district and charter) in four different states and consulted with education experts and practitioners from across the country to understand and capture the most recent research and effective practices of highly effective urban education. The team focused on research and

practices that prepare students for post-secondary success, particularly examining emerging trends appropriate for lower-income urban students who may be one or more years behind their peers in grade-level performance. The team met with experts and practitioners on school design, curriculum, teaching practices and other elements that create a strong culture of high expectations.

Q: How will the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation be involved with the Kauffman School?

A: The Foundation will be represented on the Kauffman School's Board of Directors and will provide financial support during the start-up and early operational phases. The Foundation will assist in securing facilities and be involved in developing an evaluation of student outcomes.

Q: What other education programs does the Kauffman Foundation support in the Kansas City area?

A: Other Kauffman Foundation sponsored education projects include preparing 1,500 urban students for college with the Kauffman Scholars program, ongoing work with Teach for America and the CDF Freedom Schools to improve academic achievement among urban students in the Kansas City area. Students across the region also benefit from the Foundation's support of the FIRST Robotics competition and Project Lead the Way to help students develop their math and science skills to prepare for future careers that require those skills.

Q: Will students who attend the Kauffman School have preference to get into the Kauffman Scholars program? Or will those in Kauffman Scholars be eligible to attend the Kauffman School?

A: Kauffman Scholars is an incorporated non-profit and is distinct and separate organization from the Kauffman School. No preference will be given to Kauffman Scholars in enrollment of the Kauffman School. No services will be given to students in one organization based on their participation in the other.

Q: How does the Kauffman School expect to affect student achievement among the students who attend this school?

A: The Kauffman School will prepare students to succeed in college and life by offering a rigorous college preparatory program combined with an ongoing life prep curriculum. Rigorous college-preparatory charter schools around the United States are proving that all students, regardless of income level or background, can achieve at high levels when provided an environment reflecting strong academics, personal engagement and a shared sense of urgency. The Kauffman School will work provide that environment for success.