



The Johnson Foundation Releases 15th Annual Comparative Analysis of Local Schools

RACINE, Wis. (Nov. 7, 2012) – The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread today announced the release of *The 15th Annual Comparative Analysis of the Racine Unified School District*. Co-sponsored by The Johnson Foundation and Education Racine, Inc., the report was commissioned to analyze the district’s academic performance, finances and student engagement and achievement relative to nine peer school districts with similar enrollment numbers.

“We are pleased to once again co-sponsor this rigorous analysis of the state of the Racine Unified School District,” said Carole Johnson, Director of Community Programs at The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread. “While this year’s report highlights the many challenges we continue to face in meeting the education needs of all our students, it also provides insight into areas where measurable progress is occurring.”

The study and analysis – now in its fifteenth year - is supported each year by leading Racine community organizations, including Education Racine, Inc., the charitable foundation of the Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce (RAMAC).

"This candid analysis provides insights into the budgetary and programmatic decisions that we as a community need to address to ensure that Racine’s students are developing the necessary skills to join the workforce and meet their potential as contributing members of the community,” said Carol Barkow, Director of Community Partnerships at RAMAC.

The study was conducted by Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum, an organization committed to seeking, discovering and disclosing true and accurate information to enhance the effectiveness of government and public policy at the regional, state and federal level.

Some of its findings included a marked improvement around student engagement, early childhood education and high school completion; however, it still presents a school district that is behind the curve on student achievement and dependence on state and federal aid.

When measured against its peers, the report found that on the whole, the Racine Unified School District is a district with a needier student population than its peer districts, a heavier reliance on state and federal aid, far lower student achievement, and expenditures that put it in the middle of the pack.

Yet despite this challenging picture, the report authors also noted that new district initiatives around student engagement and early childhood education appear to be having an impact, and

individual schools in the district appear to be making good progress in catching up to higher achievers.

In addition to the traditional analysis of academic performance, district finances and contextual factors, this year's report recognizes Racine's adoption of the new Common Core State Standards in 2010, a new student assessment, and the introduction of new school report cards that include measures of student growth for the first time, and a new way of evaluating teachers that incorporates student performance.

In July 2012, Wisconsin was granted a waiver from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) portions of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As part of the waiver process, Wisconsin has adopted the Common Core State Standards and new student assessment and is changing state education policy in numerous ways:

- The number of math, science, and elective credits required for graduation will increase;
- A school accountability index has been created and new annual school report cards have been issued;
- A teacher evaluation system has been created; and
- "Focus" and "Priority" schools have been identified to receive greater resources and/or state intervention.

The nine school districts that were compared with RUSD include: Madison, Kenosha, Green Bay, Appleton, Waukesha, Eau Claire, Janesville, Sheboygan and Oshkosh. To download the report, [click here](#).

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The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread is dedicated to serving as a catalyst for change by bringing together leading thinkers and inspiring new solutions on major environmental and regional issues. For additional information or to learn more about The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, please visit www.johnsonfdn.org.