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**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL REFORMS AND RENAISSANCE 2010 ADD 60,000
PERFORMING SEATS TO NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**
*Need for Performing Elementary Schools Remains High on South and West Sides;
Neighborhood High Schools Show No Improvement*

Chicago, IL – IFF, formerly the Illinois Facilities Fund, today released a new study measuring the academic performance and distribution of Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) attendance area elementary and high schools between 2004 and 2008. Attendance area schools are those which draw students from within designated neighborhood boundaries. In addition, IFF's new report – *Here and Now 2: Change We Can Measure* – documents the contribution made by charter and other new schools under Renaissance 2010, Mayor Richard M. Daley's ambitious plan to create 100 new schools in five years.

Change We Can Measure, which updates a 2004 analysis by IFF, is based on the premise that all Chicago students should have academically performing schools within or near the community area in which they live. Academically performing schools are those in which at least 62.5 percent of students meet or exceed state requirements on standardized tests.

"IFF's fundamental belief is that decisions on how to allocate resources for education should be guided by data and analysis that make clear where the highest need exists," said IFF President and CEO Trinita Logue. "We have to have priorities, and this report confirms where substantial need still exists."

Key findings from the report include:

- Between 2004 and 2008, Chicago public school reform efforts resulted in an additional 46,516 seats of performing capacity in attendance area elementary schools, even as academic performance standards were raised.
- Despite this increase, almost 100,000 elementary school children still need access to a better performing elementary school.
- In 25 high-need community areas, 79,380 performing seats are needed. Seventeen of these 25 communities were considered high-need in 2004 as well.
- None of Chicago's 63 attendance area high schools met the 2008 Illinois state standard for performance. All 56,949 students attending these schools are in need of a better performing high school option.
- Most of Chicago's attendance area elementary schools feed into attendance area high schools in which less than 30 percent of students test at the 2008 Illinois state standard.

- The addition of charter, contract, and performance schools to the system has resulted in performing elementary school options for 13,845 students in and near many of Chicago's high-need community areas.

IFF's methodology draws upon general population trends, school attendance, academic performance and the physical capacity of schools. Using this data, the study ranks community areas from one to 77 in their access to performing schools (one representing neighborhoods with the greatest shortage of performing schools). The rankings are then segmented, with analysis focused specifically on the 25 community areas most in need of performing schools (2008 Top 25).

"IFF's methodology is validated by the story it tells of continued concentrations of need for performing elementary schools," stated Logue. "While several community areas are in the 2008 Top 25 due to overcrowding, a focus on bringing performing options to these 25 community areas will address 84 percent of the need in the entire city"

To address the challenges identified in the report, IFF recommends a place-based strategy that focuses resources and future education reform efforts on the 2008 Top 25. Building on the achievements of Renaissance 2010, the report proposes a Renaissance 2015 initiative, with community-specific goals that include:

- Locating performing elementary schools in the eight communities where there are currently none.
- Establishing performing high schools with or to serve clusters of newly performing elementary schools.
- Raising the cap on charters and refining business and operating models for performance and contract schools.
- Adding a proactive parent and community initiative to involve school stakeholders and build support for continued school reform.

Change We Can Measure will be released at a briefing and discussion this morning at the Union League Club of Chicago. Panelists will include Jesse Ruiz, Chairman, Illinois State Board of Education; Josh Edelman, Executive Officer, Office of New Schools, Chicago Public Schools; Greg Richmond, CEO and President of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers; and Trinita Logue, CEO and President of IFF.

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Founded in 1988, IFF is a nonprofit community development financial institution committed to strengthening nonprofits, their clients and communities through affordable financing, real estate consulting, research and public policy. To learn more about IFF, please call 312-629-0060 or visit www.iff.org.