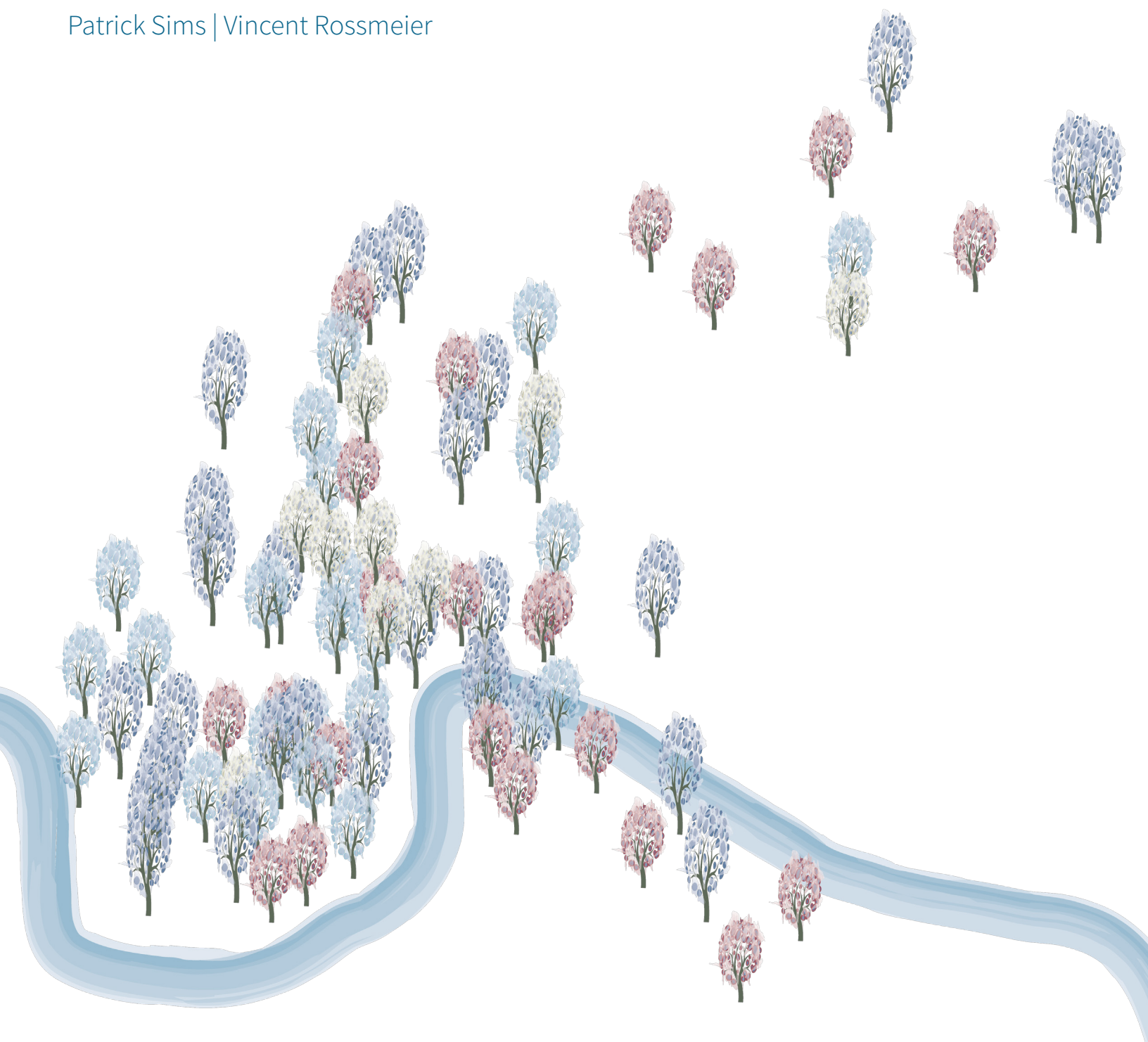


# The State of Public Education in New Orleans 10 Years After Hurricane Katrina

Patrick Sims | Vincent Rossmeier



## The Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University

The mission of the Cowen Institute is to advance public education and youth success in New Orleans and beyond. Launched in 2007, we inform relevant stakeholders, decision makers, and the public at large on issues related to K-12 public education, opportunity youth, and college and career readiness. We promote the practical application of data and analysis to improve education and career pathways for youth. We also proactively develop, incubate, and operate innovative initiatives that support students and young adults. Based at Tulane University, a national research and regional anchor institution, we strive to positively impact our community and strengthen the local and regional economy.

**This report was made possible through the generous support of Avie and Jill Glazer.**

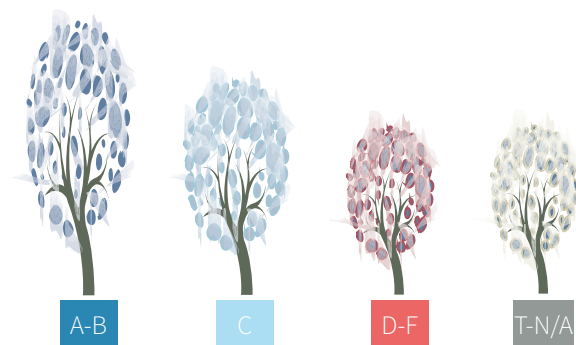
The authors would also like to thank those who reviewed this document and who participated in interviews for sharing their valuable time and insights.

Additionally, the following provided critical support:

Alyssa Blanchard, Dave Hand, Matthew Segraves, Abby Sprau, Debra Vaughan, and Adrienne Vitullo.

### The Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives

Tulane University  
1555 Poydras Street, Suite 700  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
504.274.3690  
[www.coweninstitute.org](http://www.coweninstitute.org)



Each tree on the cover is placed where a school was located in the 2014-15 school year. The colors represent the school's 2013-14 school year letter grade as assigned by the Louisiana Department of Education. The color key is located just above this text. See the Achievement section for more on school letter grades.



June 2015

Almost ten years ago, New Orleans embarked upon one of the most ambitious transformations of public education in the history of the United States. Today, the New Orleans public school system is more decentralized than any other in the nation; over 90 percent of students attend charter schools and a myriad of boards weigh in on how schools are run. In many ways, constant evolution and innovation have become the new normal in our schools. Yet, in 2005, with the city still in chaos and teachers, students, and parents spread across the nation following Hurricane Katrina and the failure of the city's levee system, normality, much less transformative change, at times felt like an elusive goal.

For all of us who understood that public education would be critical in determining the future of the city, returning to the status quo was not an option. Prior to the storm, some students were able to obtain a quality public education, but most attended schools that were falling short of their mission. The system failed the majority of our children and youth.

Due to the relentless efforts of educators, policymakers, and nonprofit leaders, our schools have shown marked academic improvement over the past decade. We've seen increased accountability, greater autonomy for educators and administrators, and new school facilities replace those that had been in disrepair even before Katrina. This progress should not be mistaken for a mission accomplished. We can't claim victory yet - challenges still abound and perhaps the prime test for all those who work so tirelessly in our schools will be to continue the transformation and ensure our schools become not just good or "better than before," but excellent. Yet, thinking back to those days and months after the storm, I remain encouraged by how far we have come.

We established the Cowen Institute at Tulane University in 2007 to provide unbiased analysis of this remaking of our schools. Since that time, our annual *The State of Public Education in New Orleans* report has chronicled the ever-shifting education landscape and offered readers context for the changes underway. This year, we have also created an interactive website, [www.speno2015.com](http://www.speno2015.com), that includes the new report, as well as video interviews with influential education and political leaders. We hope this publication serves as a valuable tool for those seeking to understand our city's unique education system.

Sincerely,

Scott S. Cowen  
President Emeritus and Distinguished University Professor  
Tulane University

# The State of Public Education in New Orleans

## 10 Years After Hurricane Katrina



# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
	What makes New Orleans unique?	
<b>2</b>	<b>Governance</b> .....	<b>4</b>
	How are schools governed?	
<b>3</b>	<b>Schools</b> .....	<b>8</b>
	What types of schools do students attend?	
<b>4</b>	<b>Students</b> .....	<b>12</b>
	Who are the students?	
<b>5</b>	<b>Choice</b> .....	<b>16</b>
	How do students and families choose schools?	
<b>6</b>	<b>Achievement</b> .....	<b>18</b>
	How have students performed?	
<b>7</b>	<b>Talent</b> .....	<b>24</b>
	Who are the teachers?	
<b>8</b>	<b>Facilities</b> .....	<b>26</b>
	What are the school facilities like?	
<b>9</b>	<b>Finances</b> .....	<b>28</b>
	How is public education paid for?	
<b>10</b>	<b>Looking Ahead</b> .....	<b>30</b>
	Where does New Orleans public education go from here?	
	<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>34</b>



This report includes data and analysis from the past ten years, providing historical context, as well as examination of the issues that will become crucial to address in the years to come. An online website that includes videos with political and education leaders reflecting on the past ten years, interactive graphics, and a historical timeline of public education in New Orleans can be found at [www.speno2015.com](http://www.speno2015.com).

## What Makes New Orleans Unique?

New Orleans' decentralized system of public education is unlike that of any other major city in the United States. Over the past ten years, the only constant with the system has been change. With schools closing and opening, along with frequent governance and policy adjustments, the public education landscape annually evolves. This is the current state of public education in New Orleans:

- » **Decentralized governance with shared policies:** Most public schools are not overseen by the locally elected school board or the city government. However, the governing bodies that hold schools accountable have adopted a number of shared, innovative policies and streamlined processes that apply across the city's schools, some of which curtail charter school autonomy. These include:
  - » **shared accountability and student performance standards;**
  - » **a centralized enrollment** and application system used by most schools;
  - » **standardized expulsion processes;**
  - » **wraparound services** for chronically truant students;
  - » **pooled funding and requirements for serving special education students;**
  - » and **shared funding for school facility maintenance.**
- » **Charter school dominance: 93 percent of public school students attend charter schools**, the highest rate in the nation.<sup>4</sup>
- » **Autonomy:** Without a traditional centralized bureaucracy, **school administrators have more freedom than in other districts to make decisions**, including more control over academic policies, finances, and human resources decisions.
- » **Open enrollment:** In addition to most schools using the same application and enrollment system, New Orleans' enrollment is unique because there are not geographic limitations: while some schools offer a geographic preference in admissions, **students are allowed to apply to any school in the city** and are not assigned to schools based on where they live.
- » **Improved performance:** Collective **performance of both schools and students has improved dramatically** over the past ten years. Schools have gone from failing to average. Graduation and college enrollment rates as well as student performance on standardized tests and the ACT have all increased. The percentage of New Orleans' public school students enrolled in schools with a score higher than the state average has nearly doubled.
- » **Citywide upgrade of school facilities:** Hurricane Katrina destroyed most public school facilities that had already been in dire need of attention before the storm. With federal support, **nearly \$2 billion has been invested** in constructing, renovating, and refurbishing the city's facilities over the last decade.<sup>5</sup>
- » **School enrollment is recovering:** Public school **enrollment has steadily increased over the past ten years** but the total public school population is still less than 70 percent of what it was before 2005. Though enrollment of White and Hispanic students has increased, public schools do not reflect the city's overall demographics, as 88 percent of public school students are African-American compared to 60 percent of the entire citywide population. From Hurricane Katrina to 2011, public school enrollment grew by 63.9 percent, compared to a 7.2 percent increase for nonpublic schools in New Orleans.<sup>6</sup>
- » **Heavy reliance on nonprofits:** Many of the **functions provided by a central administrative office in a conventional school district are instead offered by nonprofit organizations** in New Orleans. Nonprofit organizations supply services such as, but not limited to: arts education, job training, and after school programming; information for families about school choice and enrollment; philanthropic support and grant-making; teacher training, certification, and professional programs; public oversight; assistance with opening or running of schools; and social work and behavioral health services.

# Governance

## How are schools governed?

### Governance Overview

The 2014-15 school year marks the ninth full school year since the dramatic transformation of the public school system in New Orleans. Although structures and policies continue to evolve, the overarching reform mechanisms that were catalyzed in the months following Hurricane Katrina continue to define the New Orleans public education model as unique. School autonomy, parental choice, decentralized governance, and high-stakes accountability remain hallmarks of the system.

The schools in New Orleans comprise a portfolio district, where a governing authority oversees a system of schools that operate under performance-based accountability and parental choice. Charter schools, not directly run by the district, have autonomy to hire staff, allocate their budgets, and negotiate service contracts. The OPSB and RSD act as portfolio managers by closing low-performing schools and allowing the opening of new schools or the replication of successful schools. They also act as regulators, creating shared policies to ensure students citywide are served equitably.

Louisiana law requires that public charter schools be governed by a non-profit local oversight board. The board holds a contract (charter) with the authorizer and is held accountable for the operation of the school. Charter boards must ensure that a school's academic program meets state accountability standards, and that the school remains legally compliant and fiscally stable. In Louisiana, local school boards and the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) can authorize charter schools. BESE also authorizes charter schools that operate independently of the RSD and OPSB.

This decentralized system privileges autonomy – every school or charter management organization (CMO), which are organizations that operate multiple charter schools, may have its own hiring philosophy, pedagogical approach, operations practices, among other policies, as long as schools achieve state-mandated benchmarks for student success and comply with financial, enrollment, health, and safety regulations. Principals can make real-time decisions without having to run such changes through a central office with multiple layers of approval.

However, the decentralization of governance also presents challenges for schools. RSD, OPSB, and charter schools have to creatively tackle system-wide challenges collectively, such as providing services for students with special needs or mental health issues. Decentralized governance also requires very different accountability structures than a traditional district, with local boards and distant state-level actors all responsible for new, still evolving roles within an accountability framework.

### Collective Action

Since the early days after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans has seen numerous changes to governance structures in order to maximize school effectiveness and student success, and to mitigate the inherent challenges of a portfolio system. The RSD and OPSB have worked with schools, state and city government, and non-governmental organizations to build a comprehensive approach to meeting student need, regardless of which school a student attends. Most notably, in 2014 they executed a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA). This CEA defined and clarified the relationship between the RSD and OPSB in three key areas: 1) educational programs and services intended to meet the needs of the city's most vulnerable students; 2) facility improvement; 3) and the efficient and equitable use of funding and shared financial resources.

The CEA created a special fund to help schools serve students with the highest needs, and a unified approach to providing chronically absent students with mental health and other therapeutic services. Additionally, the RSD and OPSB agreed to pursue joint data collection and analysis to plan for future school capacity demands, numerous property sharing and purchasing compromises, and the creation of unified accounting processes.<sup>7</sup>

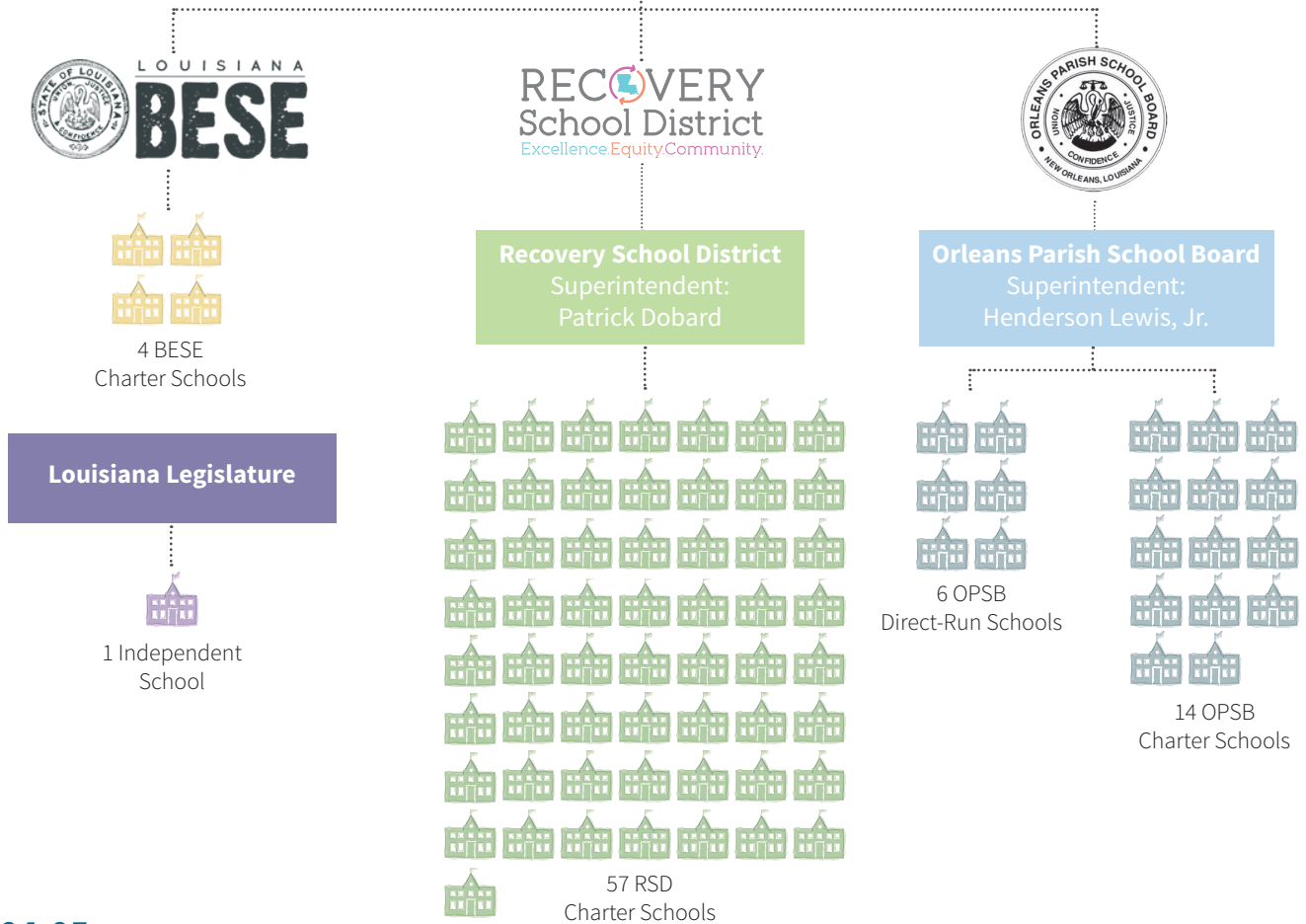
Another way in which policies have been standardized across schools occurred in 2013, when all RSD and OPSB schools—accounting for nearly every public school in New Orleans—agreed to use the same policies and rules for expulsions, as well as to have all expulsion hearings handled by a single Student Hearing Office. After decentralization occurred, disciplinary policies were determined at the school-level. This created widely disparate expulsion policies across schools with minimal oversight. The unified expulsion policy provided more equitable disciplinary treatment throughout the city. Suspension policies and procedures are set at the school-level.





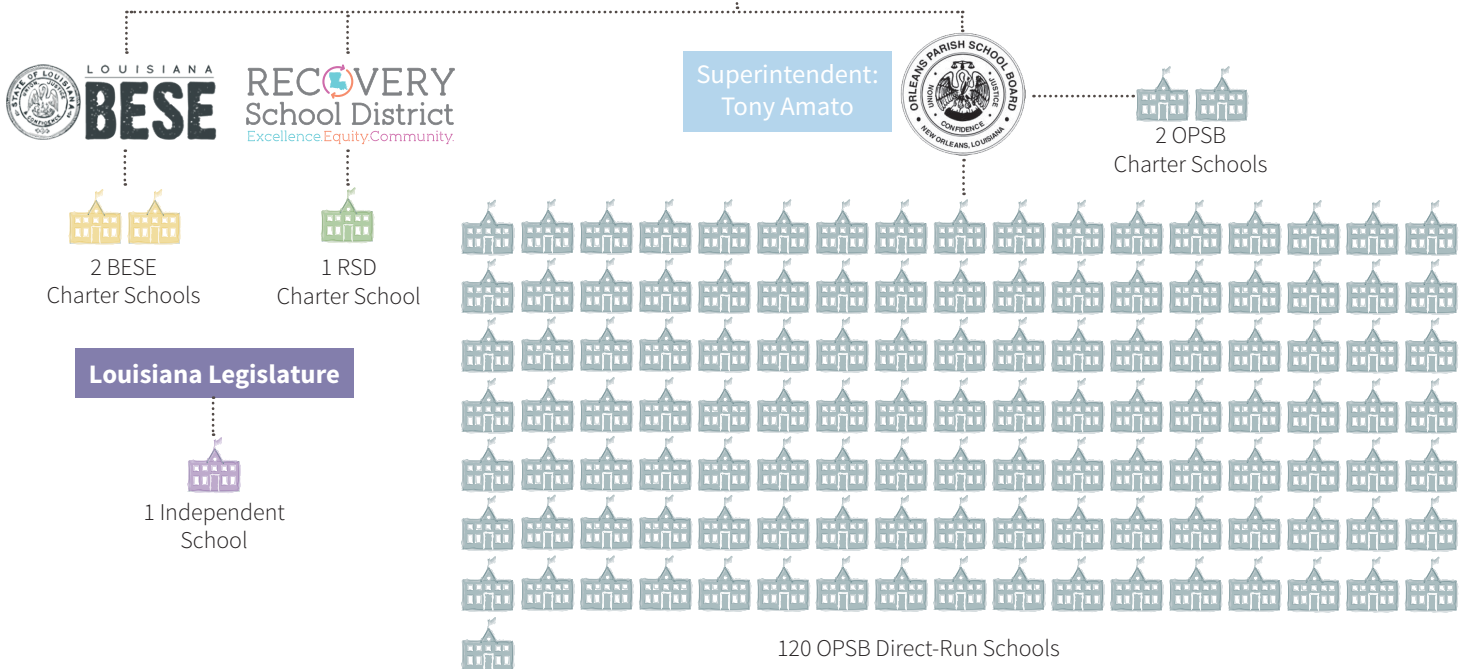
# 2014-15 New Orleans Public School Governance Structure

Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) & Louisiana Department of Education  
State Superintendent: John White



## 2004-05

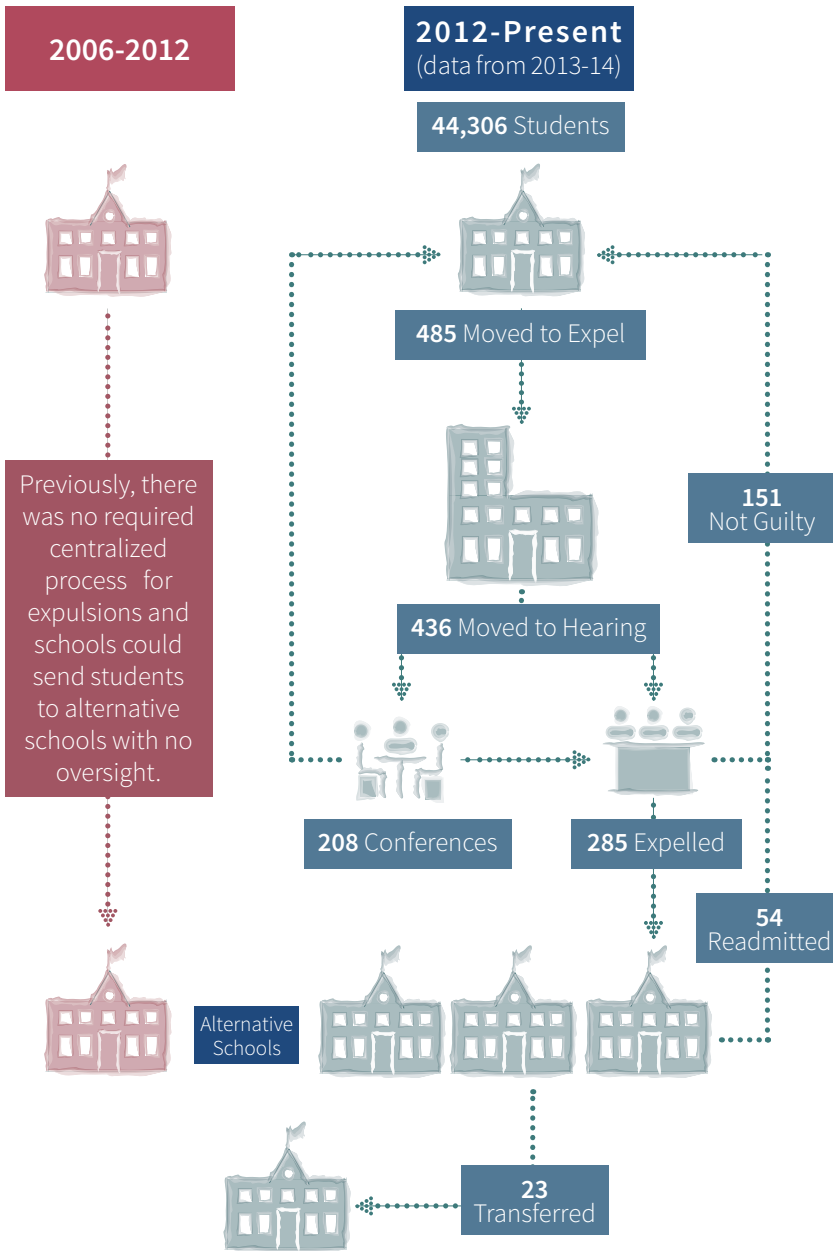
Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) & Louisiana Department of Education  
State Superintendent: Cecil Picard



*“When we heard that there were issues around expulsion policy and kids being expelled at a high rate, we immediately went into action and were able to put in constructs that allowed us to have a common hearing office around expulsions.”*

**Patrick Dobard**, Superintendent, Recovery School District

## Expulsion Procedure Changes | 2006-2015



Source: LDOE, Expulsion Data, Full Year SY 2013-2014 Analysis.

In addition to centralizing the expulsion process, the RSD and OPSB worked together to revise the Student Code of Conduct, which codified the standards of, and process for, expulsion. The 2014-15 school year marked the first time that all city schools were required to participate.

Decentralization also impeded data collection, making it impossible to accurately compare expulsion statistics over time. However, data from the 2013-14 school year indicate that expulsions have likely been reduced under the new centralized system.<sup>8</sup> In many cases, schools resolved expulsion processes prior to the official hearing. For example, students may go to conferences as an alternative intervention to help solve behavioral issues before they come to expulsion. Additionally, some students found guilty may be readmitted on a probationary basis. This formalized due process did not exist prior to the creation of the Student Hearing Office. In cases where expulsion does eventually occur, expelled students now have three alternative school options: Crescent Leadership Academy, ReNEW Accelerated High School, and The NET Charter High School.

### Returning to the OPSB

RSD charter schools have the option of returning to the OPSB if they have operated under the RSD for five years and met certain performance standards. However, not until 2014 did a charter school opt to do so. That year, for the first time, an eligible RSD school chose to return to OPSB governance in the 2015-16 school year. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School for Science and Technology (MLK Charter) announced its intention to transition to OPSB from RSD in Spring 2015, while still retaining its autonomy and status as its own local education agency (LEA). While unified governance under OPSB remains unlikely in the short-term (the more than 30 remaining eligible schools have all chosen to stay with the RSD), the installation of Superintendent Henderson Lewis, Jr. and the return of MLK Charter to OPSB represent a new chapter in the system of New Orleans schools.<sup>9\*</sup>

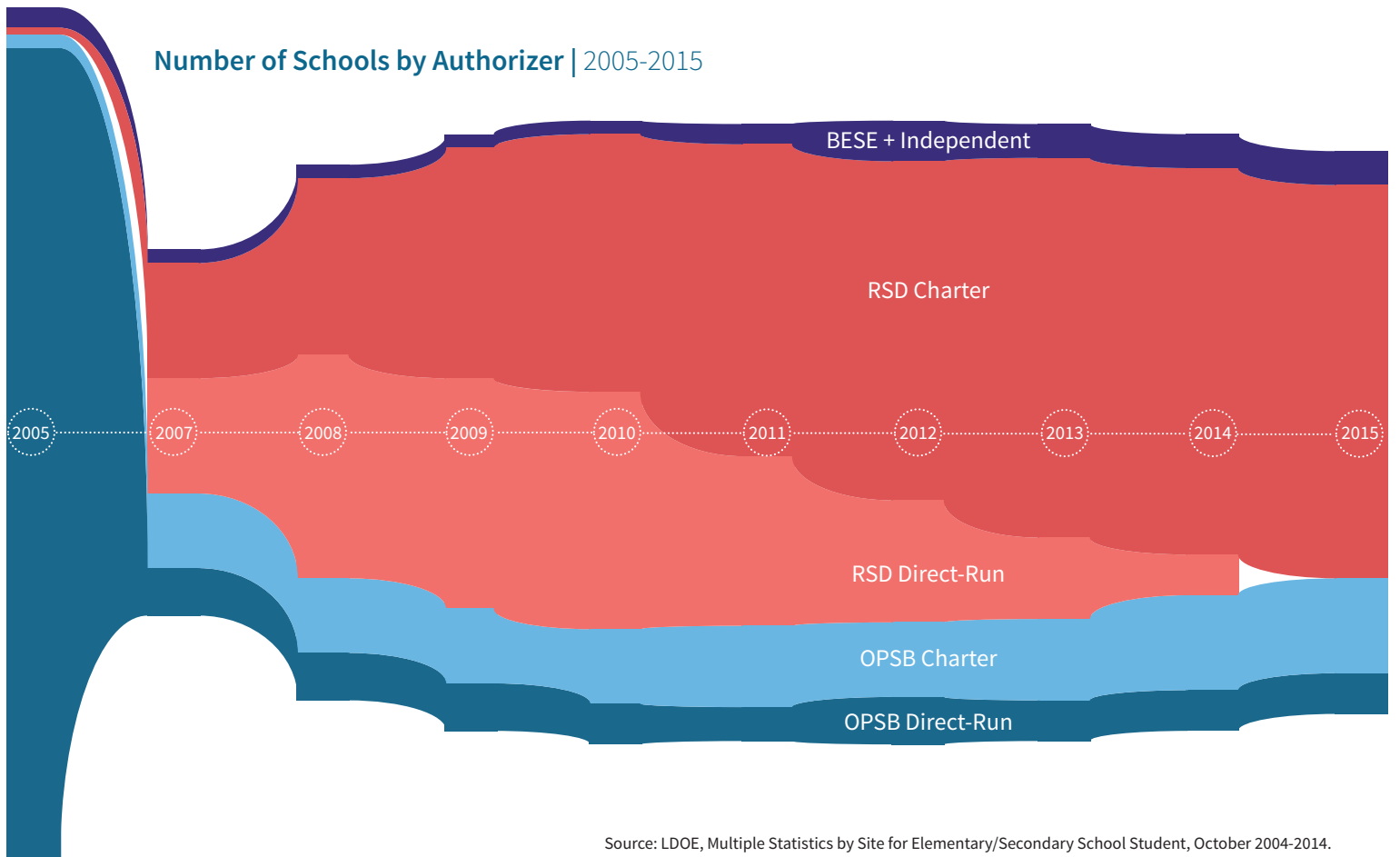
\*Returning schools have the choice to continue operating as their own local education agency (LEA) or to let the OPSB serve as its LEA. However, they must continue to be open enrollment, participate in OneApp and the common expulsion process, and provide students with free transportation. They will also continue to receive differentiated funding for special education.

*“When schools aren’t doing well, they either get closed down or someone else runs the school and so there’s no district monopoly over operating schools.”*

**Jay Altman, Co-Founder & CEO, FirstLine Schools**



**Number of Schools by Authorizer | 2005-2015**



Source: LDOE, Multiple Statistics by Site for Elementary/Secondary School Student, October 2004-2014.

# Schools

## What types of schools do students attend?

In the 2014-15 school year, 82 public schools in New Orleans enrolled more than 46,000 students. Ninety-three percent of public school students in New Orleans attended charter schools. New Orleans remains the nation's leader among urban districts in the percentage of public school students enrolled in charter schools. For the 2014-15 school year, only six traditionally managed, district-run schools operated in New Orleans, all under the guidance of the OPSB. Charter schools authorized through BESE (including RSD charter schools) operate as fully independent LEAs.<sup>10</sup> An LEA is a public authority that provides administrative control over one or more schools.

In some cases, a New Orleans charter school's governing board provides oversight only to that single school. In other cases, CMOs operate small networks of schools. CMOs have a single board overseeing all schools in their network. During the 2014-15 school year, 12 CMOs operated in New Orleans, up from four CMOs in 2006-07. Nearly 60 percent of students attended a charter school within a CMO in 2014-15.<sup>11</sup>

Many schools in New Orleans have shifted their grade configurations over the past ten years. In the 2004-05 school year, it was not uncommon for schools to have middle school grades (6th to 8th grades) combined with high school grades. Today, fewer schools are structured in this way, with more opting for stand-alone high schools and K-8 lower schools.

*"I think that schools are more communities than they've ever been before. New Orleans is an interesting place because it's always been a place where people attach themselves to a school or neighborhood. But now, you're really seeing schools have a clear identity."*

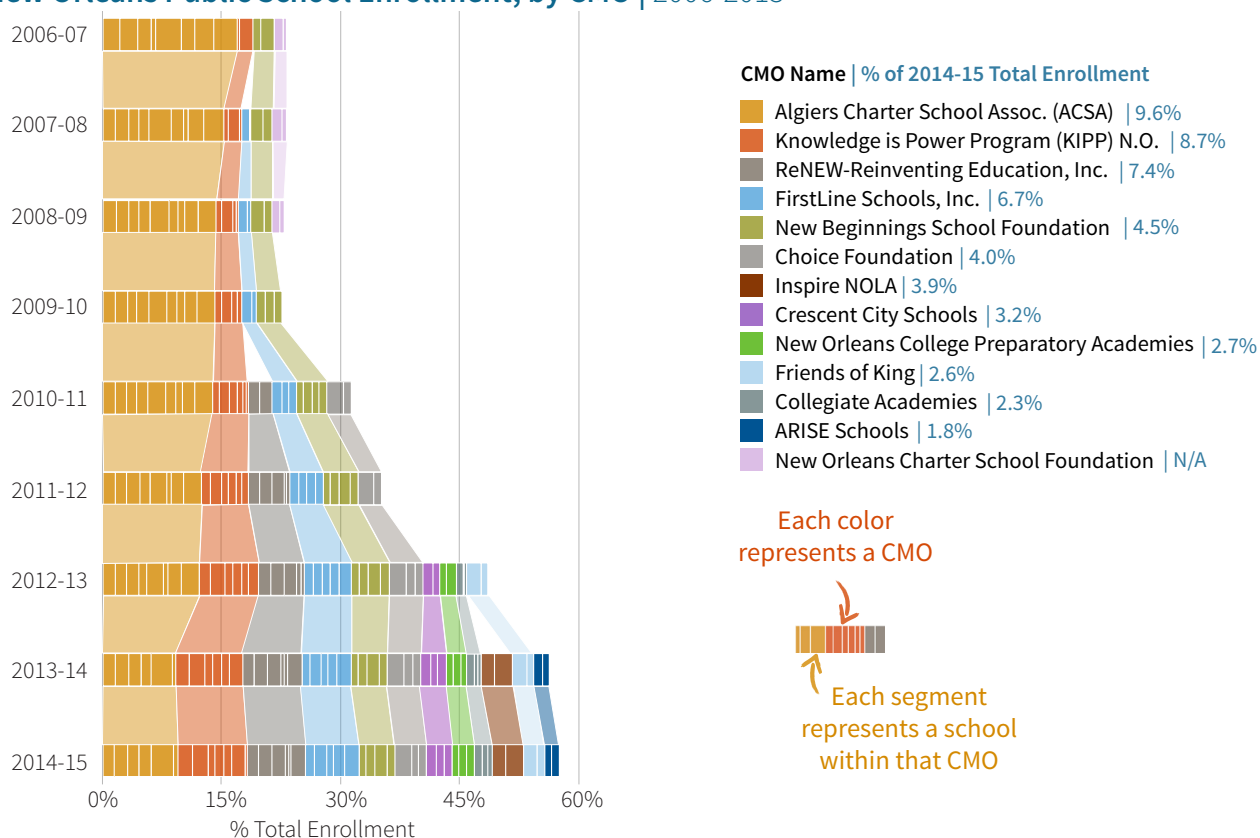
**Andre Perry**, New Orleans Education Scholar

### There are seven types of charter schools in New Orleans:

- » **Type 1:** New schools authorized by the OPSB.
  - › **Type 1B:** Authorized by a local charter authorizer.
- » **Type 2:** Either new or conversion schools authorized by BESE.
- » **Type 3:** Conversion schools authorized by the OPSB.
  - › **Type 3B:** Former Type 5 charter school that has transferred from the RSD to the OPSB.
- » **Type 4:** Either new or conversion schools authorized by both OPSB and BESE.
- » **Type 5:** Schools overseen by the RSD and authorized by BESE.<sup>12</sup>

There are currently no Type 1B schools in the state and MLK will become the first Type 3B in the 2015-2016 school year.

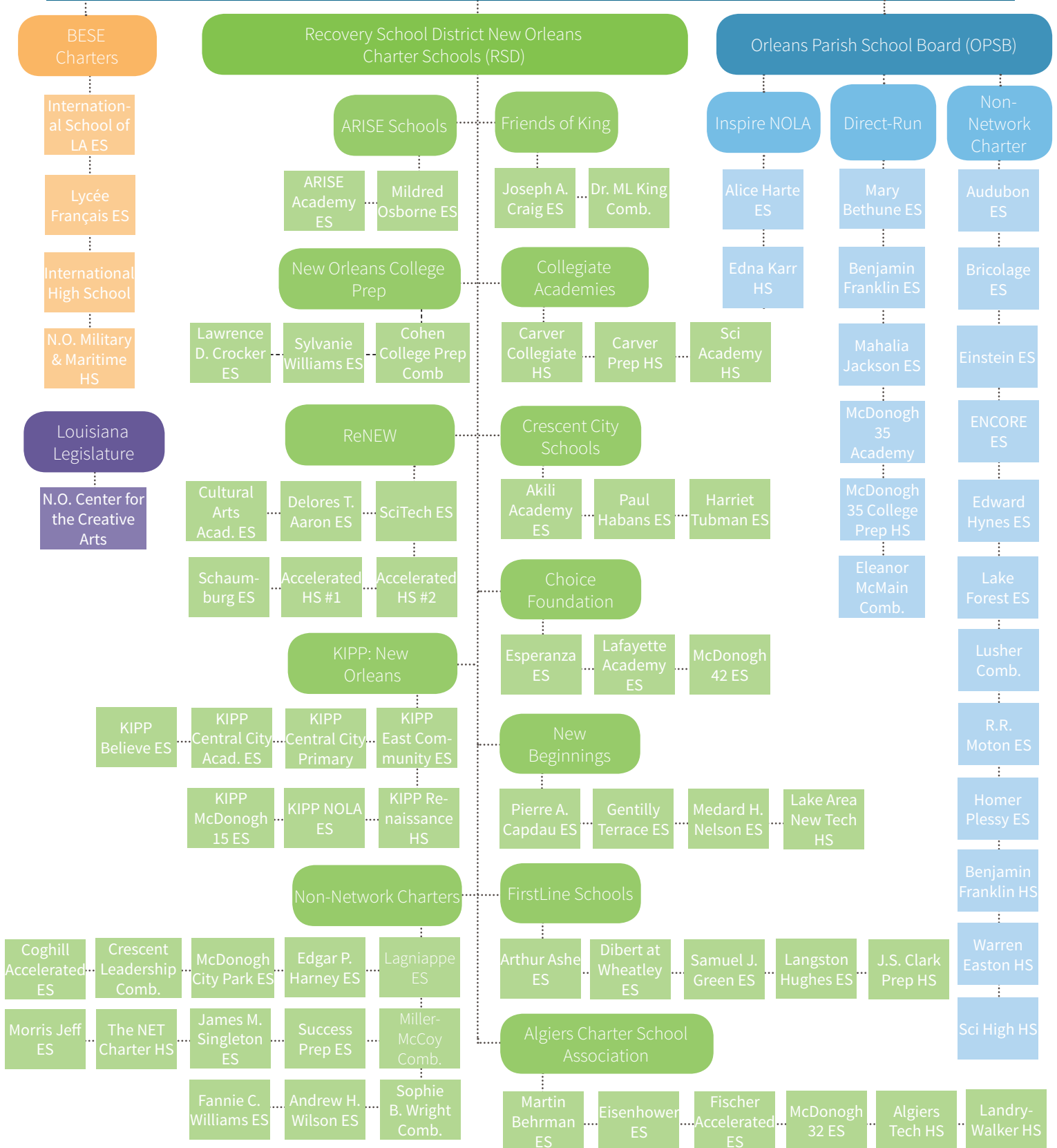
**New Orleans Public School Enrollment, by CMO | 2006-2015**



Source: LDOE, Multiple Statistics by Site for Elementary/Secondary School Student, October 2006-2014.

# New Orleans Public School Chart | 2014-2015

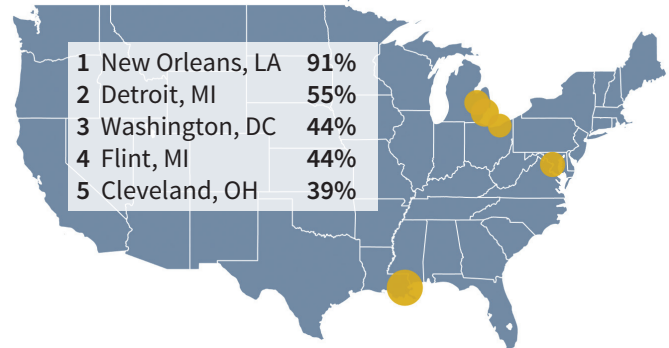
Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) & Louisiana Department of Education



*“Before the storm, it was almost accepted that you have schools that were deemed failing and for a number of years operated in that posture. Today our accountability system doesn’t allow that to happen.”*

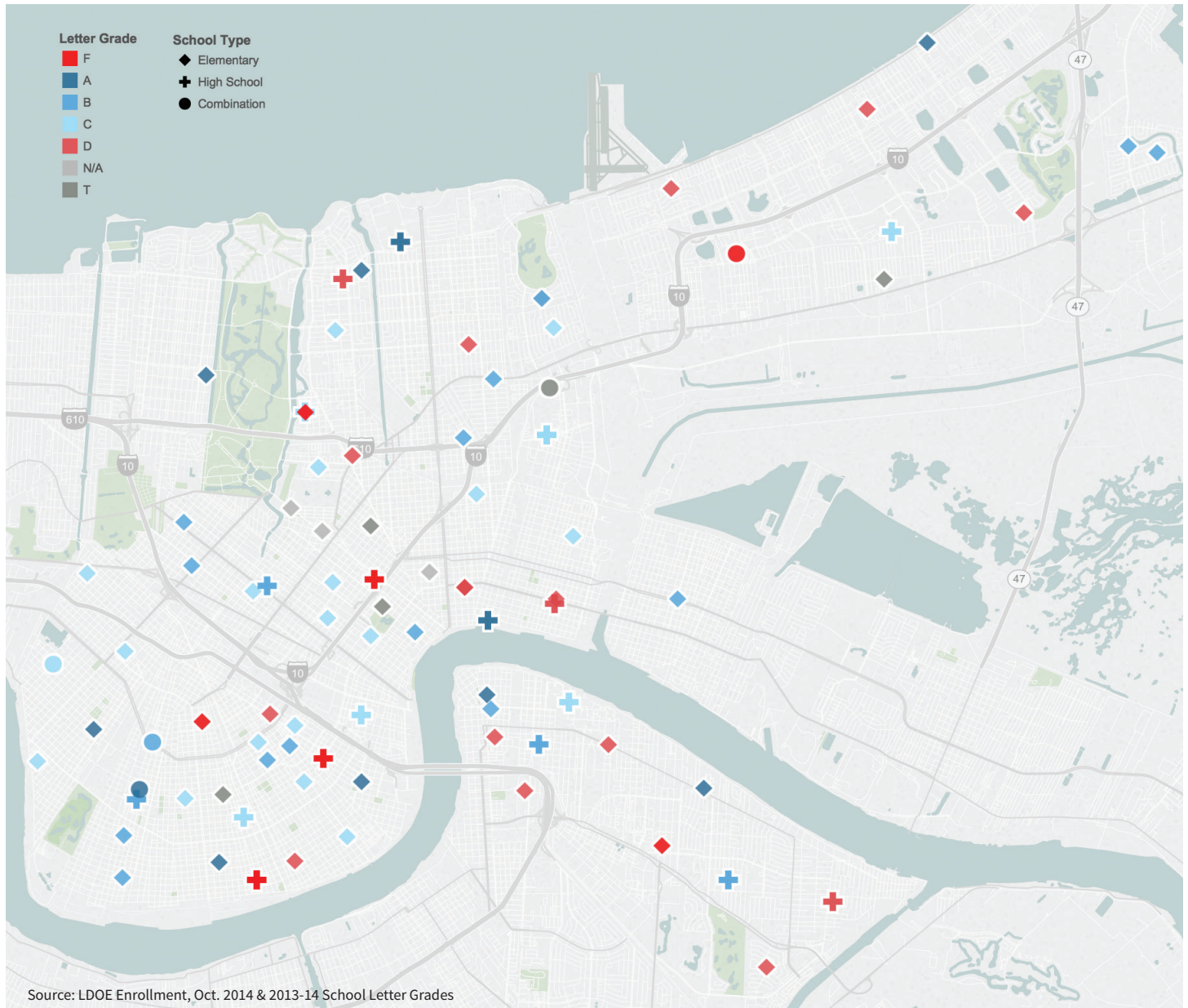
**Patrick Dobard,**  
Superintendent, Recovery School District

### U.S. Cities with the Highest Charter School Enrollment | 2013-14



Source: *A Growing Movement: America’s Largest Charter School Communities*, National Association of Public Charter Schools (2014).

### Map of New Orleans Schools by Letter Grade & School Type | 2014-15



# » A Brief History

## Before the Storm

The story of New Orleans' public schools mirrors that of many other cities. White and middle-class exodus to the suburbs from the 1950s onward led to a smaller local tax base to fund schools and a less diverse student population. Furthermore, due in part to a faltering local economy and a lack of social support services, the students who remained faced significant difficulties, with 38 percent living below the poverty line and 73 percent qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch in 2005.<sup>13</sup>

Governance and management problems at the OPSB exacerbated the challenges in New Orleans. In the decade prior to Katrina, the OPSB was led by numerous permanent and interim superintendents. Board meetings were often contentious.<sup>14</sup> The OPSB was also wracked by ineffective administration, budget deficits, scandal, and corruption, culminating in investigations by the FBI, state auditors, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Many former employees were ultimately indicted for a range of charges, including soliciting bribes. The system was, for all purposes, bankrupt in the months before Hurricane Katrina. The OPSB had not filed a clean audit since 1999, and in July 2005, a private consulting firm took over the OPSB's finances at the bequest of the federal government.<sup>15</sup>

## Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina made landfall in New Orleans on August 29, 2005, at the beginning of a new school year. All public school students, as well as the entire school system's staff, were forced to evacuate the city. Wind and flooding further battered the city's already dilapidated school facilities. As the waters receded, uncertainty surrounded the future of the OPSB and when, or even if, schools would reopen.

The OPSB's operational and governance problems, coupled with the damage caused by the levee failures, provided an opportunity for the state to assume control over the operations of most of the city's public schools. In November 2005, a special session of the Louisiana Legislature passed, and Governor Kathleen Blanco signed into law, Act No. 35.<sup>16</sup> This measure expanded on pre-storm legislation and allowed the state to intervene in school districts designated "academically in crisis" by increasing the bar to include schools deemed "academically unacceptable."<sup>17</sup> The state could now take over any school performing below the state average in certain districts, instead of just failing ones. Only schools in New Orleans were immediately affected by the legislation.

The 107 lowest-performing OPSB schools were transferred to the RSD, a division of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) charged with the turnaround of the lowest-performing schools. Though the RSD had existed prior to the storm, only five schools had come under its auspices before Hurricane Katrina. The RSD was tasked with opening and operating schools under its control for an initial period of five years, and

was also given control of the facilities in which the schools were located. The OPSB retained control over 16 schools that had performed above the state average before Katrina. Because schools had not reopened and the OPSB lacked funds to pay teachers, in September 2005, the OPSB placed more than 7,000 teachers and school employees on leave without pay. The board then fired the teachers in early 2006 and all were forced to reapply in order to teach in the city's schools.<sup>18</sup>

This state takeover led to an increasingly decentralized system of schools in the city. As students returned to New Orleans, the RSD and OPSB both reopened and launched district-run and charter schools. The RSD directly ran schools until 2014, when all of its schools became charters. School governance shifted dramatically as a result of these changes. No longer were all schools overseen or run by a single, district-wide, elected board. Schools are now operated by the OPSB, independent charter boards, or CMOs.

## The Past Ten Years

In the decade since Katrina, New Orleans' public education system has continued its singular evolution. In New Orleans, a system of independent schools now operates under performance contracts with a governmental oversight body. But each school has a great deal of autonomy – with the ability to hire, allocate budgets, and contract for services as the school leadership sees fit. Schools are assessed mainly on student performance on statewide standardized tests as well as compliance with the financial and operational terms of their charters. Those that fail to meet benchmarks for academic performance, or fail to meet the non-academic needs of all students, can have their charter revoked or not renewed.

The leaderships of both the RSD and the OPSB have undergone multiple changes in the last ten years. Patrick Dobard, a New Orleans native, has led the RSD since 2012.<sup>19</sup> In January 2015, the OPSB chose Henderson Lewis, Jr. as its superintendent after two and a half years without a permanent superintendent. Upon assuming the role, Lewis created a plan that focuses on governance, organizational structures, operations, finance, student achievement, and public and community relations. The OPSB's financial controls and bond rating have significantly improved in the last ten years, though in early 2015, a board member resigned after he was charged with soliciting a bribe.<sup>20</sup>

The RSD and OPSB have also begun to work together to address problems facing all city schools with a common application system and a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement.

# Students

## Who are the students?

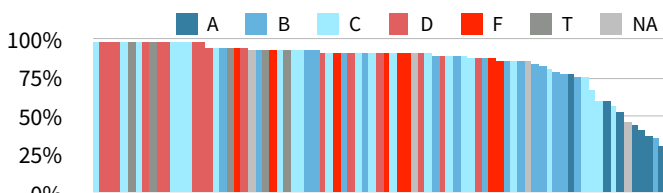
### Public School Enrollment

Beginning in the 1960s, White and middle-class flight to more socioeconomically and racially homogeneous suburbs left a poorer population within the city and a shrinking, less diverse student population within the public schools. While public school enrollment in the city used to be evenly split among White and African-American students, the student population gradually became predominately African-American.<sup>21</sup>

New Orleans' student enrollment, as well as the city's overall population, decreased significantly in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. New Orleans public schools had lost over 60 percent of their students by the first full school year after the storm. The biggest losses came from African-American students who did not immediately return. However, in the years since the storm, public school enrollment has grown by 63.9 percent (from 2006-07 to 2014-15). There has been strong growth among all races, with White and Hispanic student populations having the highest growth rates.<sup>22</sup>

Regardless, the 2014-15 school year's enrollment was still only about 70 percent of pre-Katrina levels, a trend that mirrors the changes seen in the total population of New Orleans as it continues to recover.<sup>23</sup>

### Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students, by School & Letter Grade | 2014-15



Source: LDOE Fall 2015 Enrollment & 2013-14 School Letter Grades.

Poverty remains a prevalent obstacle faced by students in New Orleans public schools. The LDOE categorizes students who are eligible for Medicaid, free lunches, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as "economically disadvantaged."<sup>24</sup> Eighty-three percent of New Orleans public school students are in this category.<sup>25</sup>

Schools with especially low rates of economically disadvantaged students, which often have selective admission procedures, are most often OPSB and BESE schools with higher school performance scores. Many schools with high poverty rates, however, are performing at the B and C level.<sup>26</sup>

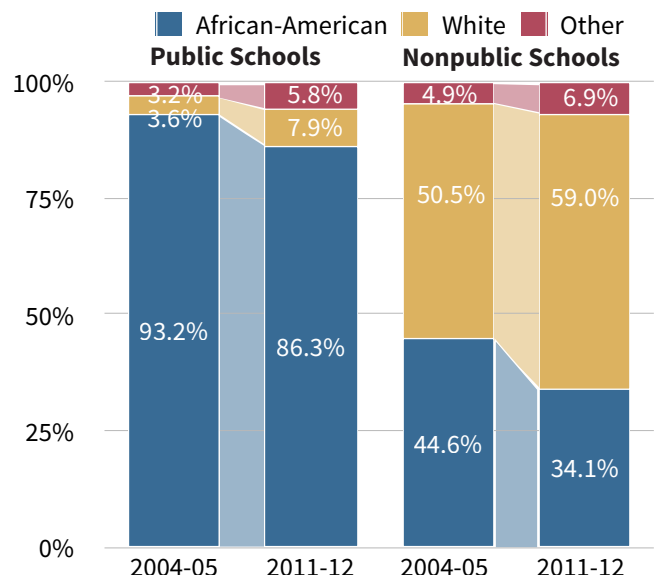
### Public vs. Nonpublic Enrollment

From 1950 onwards, in addition to White and middle-class families leaving New Orleans entirely, many families chose to send their children to private and parochial schools. These schools remain popular today. Around 25 percent of all school-aged children in New Orleans are estimated to attend a nonpublic school, one of the highest rates for any city in the nation.<sup>27</sup> Yet, since Katrina, nonpublic school enrollment has grown at a slower rate than in public schools: nonpublic schools had less of a drop-off in enrollment after Katrina (32.5 percent), but their post-Katrina growth rate was also significantly lower than public schools (7.2 percent compared to 63.9 percent).<sup>28</sup>

Nonpublic schools tend to have a different demographic makeup than public schools. In the 2011-12 school year, the most recent data available on nonpublic school enrollment in New Orleans, 34.1 percent of nonpublic school students were African-American, compared to 86.3 percent of public school students.<sup>29</sup>

The most recent data from 2006 to 2012 shows that White enrollment in nonpublic schools increased only 1.5 percent between 2006-07 and 2011-12, and decreased overall compared to pre-Katrina levels. In comparison, White enrollment in public schools increased by 38.3 percent during that period. The causes for this growth are difficult to identify, but it appears more White families have chosen to send their children to public schools instead of nonpublic schools in recent years.<sup>30</sup>

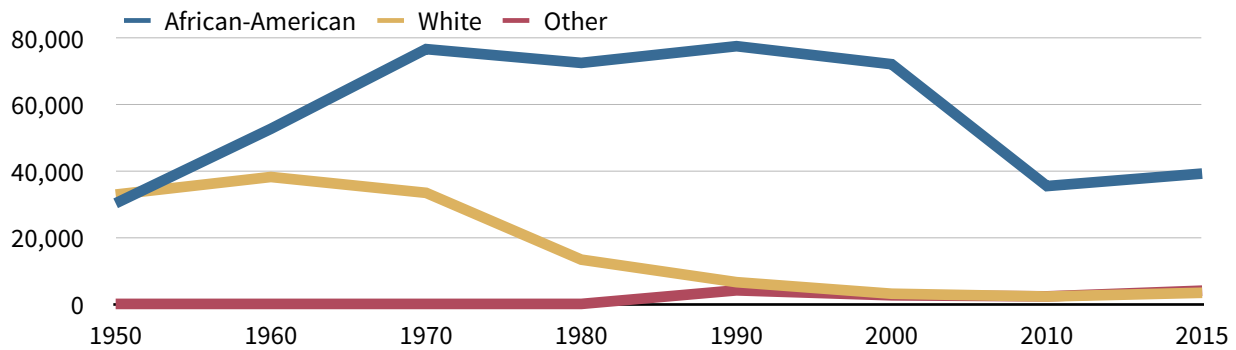
### New Orleans School Enrollment, by Race | 2004-2012



Source: LDOE, Multiple Statistics by Site for Elementary/Secondary School Student, October 2006-2011 & Annual Financial Statistic Reports, 2004-05 to 2011-2012.



## New Orleans Public School Enrollment, by Race | 1950-2015



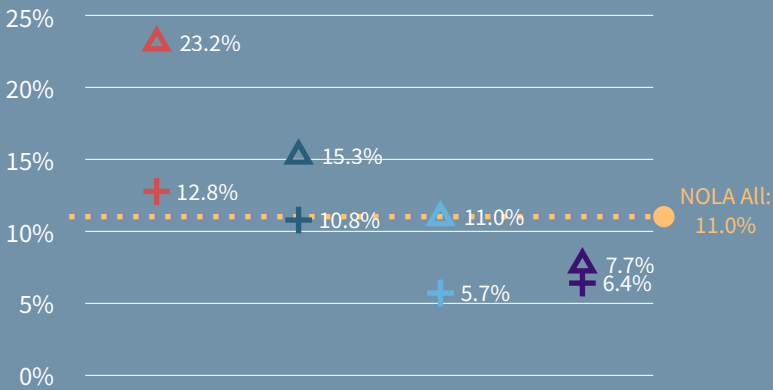
Sources: LDOE, Annual and Biennial Reports, 1860-1970; LDOE, Annual Financial and Statistical Reports; New Orleans Public Schools, Facts and Finances, 1957-1984, boxes 7-9, Financial Records; Annual Reports of the New Orleans Public Schools, 1919-1921 and Statistical Reports of the New Orleans Public Schools, 1921-1940. LDOE, Multiple Statistics by Site for Elementary/Secondary School Student, October 2014.

*"Today, only around five percent of kids are in failing schools, and the results are, we've cut our dropout rate by more than half, and we have many more students graduating, and graduates are better prepared."*

**Leslie Jacobs,**  
Founder, Educate Now!

## Special Education Enrollment | Fall 2014

+ RSD Ave.    + OPSB Charter Ave.    + OPSB Direct Ave.    + BESE Charter Ave.  
▲ RSD High    ▲ OPSB Charter High    ▲ OPSB Direct High    ▲ BESE Charter High



Source: LDOE, Students with Disabilities Enrollment Percentage, October 1 2014.

## Special Education

Special education is a pressing concern for New Orleans public schools. Overall, New Orleans has a similar rate of students who qualify for special education as the state of Louisiana. However, RSD schools have higher percentages of special education students than the state average, while OPSB schools tend to have lower rates than average.<sup>31</sup>

In the years after Hurricane Katrina, decentralization made the task of educating students with special needs even more difficult. In 2010, the Southern Poverty Law Center filed a lawsuit against the LDOE, claiming public schools in New Orleans were not complying with federal special education laws.<sup>32</sup> In 2014, the lawsuit was settled with the defendants acknowledging that public schools had made progress towards improving education for special needs students in the city. As a result of the settlement, the LDOE, BESE, and OPSB agreed to monitor how schools were serving students with special needs.<sup>33</sup>

Even prior to the settlement, schools and educators were working to address the needs of special education students using multiple mechanisms to push additional resources to schools. Through their CEA, RSD and OPSB established a fund to provide approximately \$1.3 million annually to schools serving students with exceptionally high needs. The fund is supported by state revenue sharing dollars and was seeded with approximately \$5 million from OPSB's fund balance.<sup>34</sup>

Since its inception, the RSD has funded schools on a differentiated per-pupil basis, with additional funds being available for students with disabilities according to the disability category. In 2014-15, the formula was changed to incorporate the number of service minutes each student is provided, ensuring that students with more intensive needs are funded at a higher level.<sup>35</sup> In addition, New Schools for New Orleans, an organization that supports New Orleans public schools, has

also provided funding to create new high-quality special education programs for students with disabilities. They recently received a federal Charter School Program grant for \$2.4 million to increase the capacity of schools, teachers, and special education coordinators across the city to serve their students.<sup>36</sup>

Issues persist, however. Lagniappe Academies was closed at the end of the 2014-15 school year after the RSD and BESE found it to be inadequately serving students with special needs.<sup>37</sup> While this disrupted the students and the families attending the school, it also demonstrated the RSD and BESE's commitment to special education accountability.

As a state, Louisiana is still lagging behind most of the nation for graduating students with special needs. Nationally, 62 percent of students with disabilities graduated on time, compared to 37 percent in Louisiana and 60 percent in Orleans Parish.<sup>38</sup> Louisiana's graduation rate is among the five worst states in the country.

## Opportunity Youth

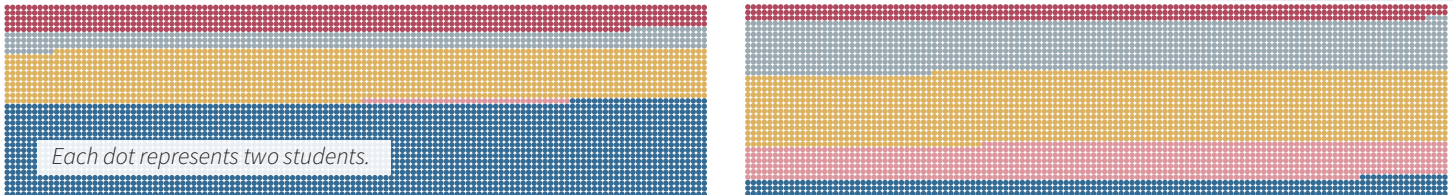
K-12 education is only one step in a young person's progress towards post-secondary education or employment success. This is particularly true in New Orleans, which has had a high population of opportunity youth for decades. Opportunity youth are 16 to 24 year olds who are neither employed nor enrolled in school. The term opportunity youth refers to the potential these youth could bring to their communities if reconnected to education and employment opportunities. Currently, at 18.2 percent of all youth between 16 to 24 years old, the New Orleans area has the third highest estimated rate of opportunity youth among the 50 largest metro areas in the United States. This has profound impacts on the local economy, costing the region an estimated \$360 million annually in lost tax revenues and higher spending on social services.<sup>39</sup> There is no one-size fits all solution to re-engaging opportunity youth. Though more than 50 percent of opportunity youth have a high school degree, many are high school dropouts. Ensuring schools retain students through graduation and improving career awareness and education are vital to decreasing the city's population of opportunity youth.

*“Many people at this point in time, ten years post-Katrina, are ready to judge whether or not we are a success. People need to understand that this is a work in progress. We are still trying to figure out the best way to meet the needs of all of our students.”*

**Erika McConduit-Diggs**, President and CEO, Urban League of Greater New Orleans

## Number of Public School Students Enrolled in Orleans Parish by Race/Ethnicity

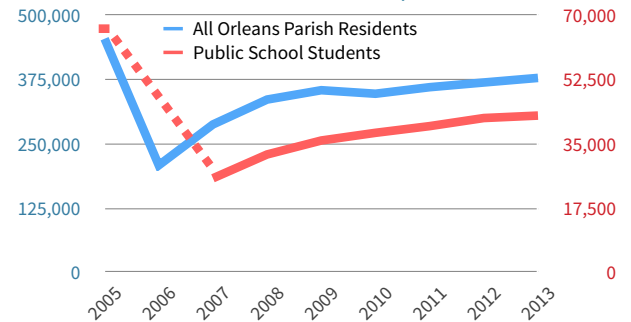
2004-05    2014-15



Each dot represents two students.

1,252	1.9%	Asian	1.6%	760
812	1.2%	Hispanic	5.1%	2,380
2,416	3.6%	White	7.2%	3,345
38	0.1%	Other	1.8%	837
61,854	93.2%	African-American	84.2%	39,135

### New Orleans Population Changes | 2005-2013



Source: The Data Center, *Who Lives in New Orleans and Metro Parishes Now?* & The Louisiana Department of Education enrollment files.

# Choice

## How do students and families choose schools?

Choice has been a foundational cornerstone of public education in New Orleans in the last ten years – both in terms of which schools students can attend and how they choose to enroll in them. Rather than attending an assigned school based on their home address, New Orleans parents and students choose among all schools in the city. Students may apply to any school regardless of geography, although some schools have additional selective admissions criteria. From 2006 to 2011, schools made enrollment decisions at the building level; except for those with selective admission policies, schools accepted students on a first-come/first-served basis until all seats were filled and maintained a waiting list thereafter, with selections then made by lottery.<sup>40</sup>

Parents were required to apply directly to multiple schools in order to secure a slot for their child and, in the process, could potentially secure multiple slots. This enrollment process severely disadvantaged students whose parents lacked the time and resources to visit multiple schools, usually during business hours, throughout the entire city. The lack of a centralized enrollment system also resulted in a lack of transparency regarding how schools managed enrollment, which resulted in allegations that schools were not enrolling special education students and confusion over which students were actually attending which schools. This lack of transparency undermined state accountability systems for academic performance and the delivery of mandated services, such as special education. This decentralized enrollment process also created challenges for schools, which could not determine their actual enrollment until after school opened when students holding places at multiple schools formally enrolled in just one, thereby releasing slots at the schools they did not choose.

In 2011, building on work by parents and non-profits, the RSD initiated a centralized, single-application system called *OneApp* in order to streamline the previously cumbersome process of enrollment.<sup>41</sup> Initially, only RSD schools participated, but the number of participating schools has grown annually with all RSD schools, as well as OPSB direct-run and some OPSB charter schools, participating. According to current policy, the OPSB schools not currently in the *OneApp* system must join when their charters come up for renewal in the coming years.<sup>42</sup>

Under *OneApp*, parents are able to fill out a single application to apply to all but ten schools in the city, ranking up to eight schools they are willing to consider. Students are assigned to one of their designated schools based on an algorithm that considers not only how families prioritized their choices, but also sibling enrollment and, for grades K-8, geographic location. Students attending schools that will not operate

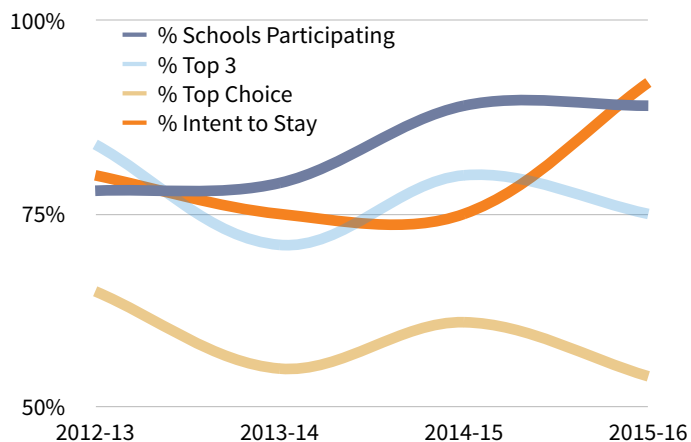
the following year receive preference when applying to new schools. This ensures that students in schools closing for low academic performance have an opportunity to enroll in a higher performing school the following year.<sup>43</sup>

While neighborhood attendance zones no longer exist, the RSD has divided the city into six large geographic catchment areas that may be prioritized by the *OneApp* algorithm. *OneApp* offers parents and students multiple rounds to apply to schools.

Since *OneApp* launched during the 2012-13 school year, the participation rate of schools using the system has grown from 78 to 89 percent. The rate of New Orleans students enrolled in schools within *OneApp* has also grown, from 59 to 84 percent, with the number served increasing from 25,000 students to nearly 40,000.<sup>44</sup>

The vast majority of families and students opt to stay with the school they are currently in: during the 2014-15 school year, 92 percent of students who could return to their current school chose not to transfer. *OneApp* has also consistently improved the rate at which it has matched students to a school listed on their application. In the 2014-15 school year, 82 percent of students received a match, up from 78 percent in *OneApp*'s launch year. Expectedly, the more schools listed, the higher the chance students will receive a match to a school on their application: in 2014-15, 93 percent of students with four or more schools listed were matched, compared to 69 percent who only listed one school. The match rate for schools within the top three of a student's application went from 77 percent in 2012-13, to 72 percent in 2013-14, and then to 75 percent in the 2014-15. However, it should be noted that the algorithm can place a child in any school with an open seat if no spots are available at any of his or her ranked schools.<sup>45</sup>

### OneApp Statistics | 2012-2015



Source: EnrollNOLA, *Annual Report* (2015) & additional data provided by EnrollNOLA.

For 2014-15, students wishing to attend a school within their geographic zone matched at an in-zone school at a rate of 93 percent. Ninety-seven percent of students applying for placement at a school their sibling already attended received that placement. Eighty-two percent of family-linked students (siblings applying at the same time for enrollment in the same school) received a paired placement; this represents an 11 percent increase over year three.<sup>46</sup>

While the majority of schools in New Orleans are open admission, meaning they have no selective criteria for students, some schools do maintain selective admission criteria. Selective admission schools can participate in *OneApp* with the stipulation that they communicate admissions criteria transparently. These criteria may include academic requirements, foreign language fluency, musical audition, and/or attendance at an open house or school tour.

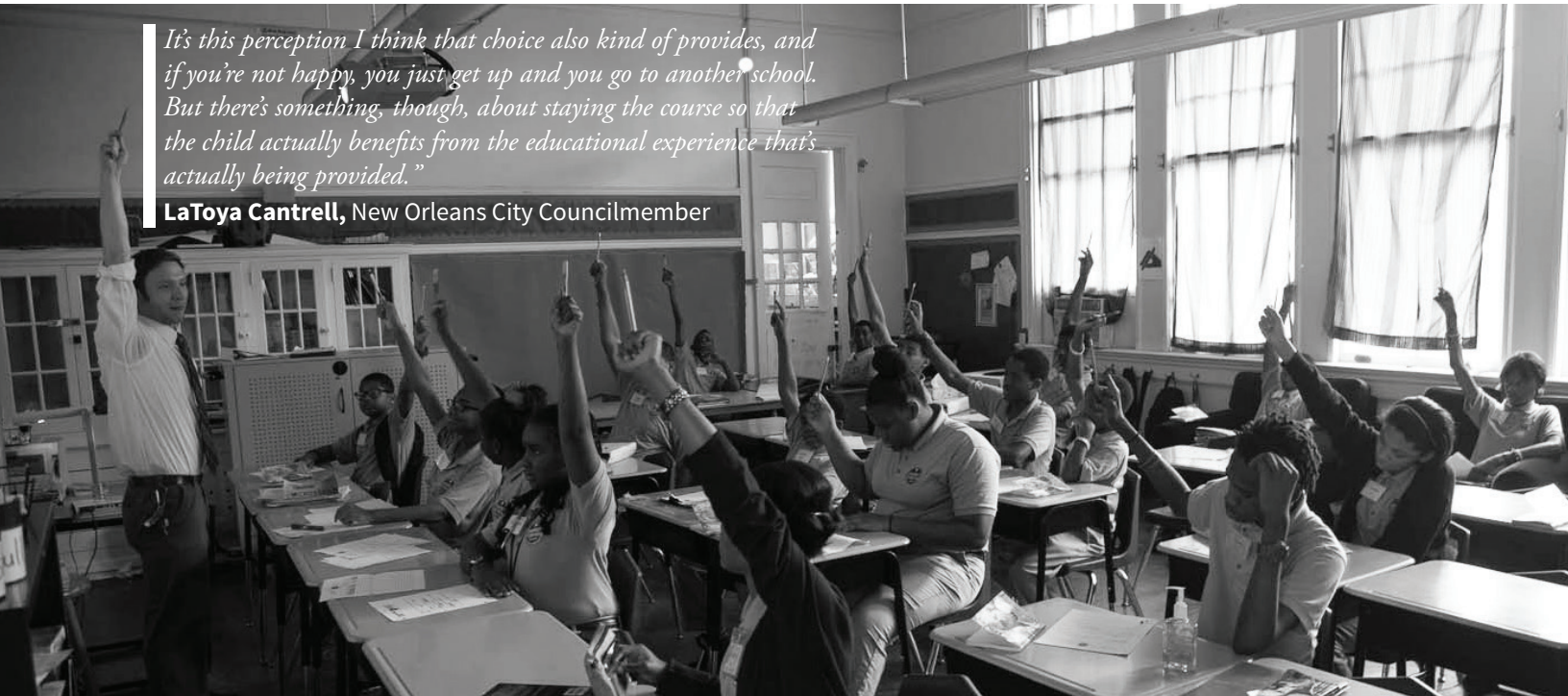
Centralized enrollment removes the burden from parents of managing multiple applications to multiple schools – *OneApp* allows students to designate all schools they will consider attending in one place. This system also provides schools with their enrolled rosters sooner, streamlining a school’s preparation for incoming students, and prevents individual schools from manipulating enrollment to build a selective student body by subtly encouraging or discouraging enrollment by particular families. Yet, some parents have also experienced frustration with the *OneApp* system. In July 2014, insufficient staffing during the enrollment process led to parents experiencing long lines and others being turned away while trying to enroll their children.<sup>47</sup> Some parents have also been frustrated that they did not get their top choice – in the 2014-15 school year, 61 percent of applicants were assigned to their top choice.<sup>48</sup>

## Vouchers

As mentioned previously, many families in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana choose to enroll their children in nonpublic schools. The Louisiana Scholarship Program, Louisiana’s voucher program, provides financial support for qualified children to attend nonpublic schools. The number of participating students is small: over 2,800 voucher students in Orleans Parish were enrolled in the fall of 2014, which is about 100 students more than the previous year. Orleans Parish, which hosted the pilot voucher program, has the highest share of the more than 7,000 participants statewide. Voucher enrollment in New Orleans is about six percent of the city’s public school enrollment, compared to one percent across Louisiana. This year, the state is spending around \$42 million total on vouchers, averaging \$5,545 per student.<sup>49</sup>

In order to qualify for financial support, a student must either have been enrolled in a “C,” “D,” or “F,” school in the previous school year or be enrolling in kindergarten for the first time, and the student’s family income cannot exceed 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for his or her family size.<sup>50</sup>

Voucher recipients are still required to take the same standardized tests as public school students. A Scholarship Cohort Index (SCI) is assigned to participating schools based on their scholarship students’ performance, which is similar to the School Performance Score (SPS) that public schools receive. Participating schools that score below a 50, which would represent an “F” score on the SPS scale, cannot enroll new students on vouchers. Schools that score below 50 for three of any four years of participation are no longer be able to participate in the scholarship program.<sup>51</sup>



*It's this perception I think that choice also kind of provides, and if you're not happy, you just get up and you go to another school. But there's something, though, about staying the course so that the child actually benefits from the educational experience that's actually being provided."*

**LaToya Cantrell**, New Orleans City Councilmember

# Achievement

## How have students performed?



Though many aspects of the post-Katrina public education landscape are hotly debated in New Orleans, most would agree that student performance has improved significantly in the past ten years. In a 2015 poll, the Cowen Institute found 50 percent of parents polled stated they were more likely to send their child to a public school than before the storm, compared to 30 percent who said they were less likely.<sup>52</sup> On all objective measures, from standardized tests to graduation rates to college enrollment, progress has been made by the city's students and educators.

Each year, schools are assessed based on their students' performance and assigned a school performance score (SPS) and a corresponding letter grade. Districts are also assigned a district performance score (DPS) based on the performance of all of its students. The SPS is a high-stakes measurement, which is used to determine if a school is performing well enough to continue operating. Persistently failing schools will be closed or turned over to a new operator. This accountability structure places added emphasis on standardized tests.

*"The most important thing is to recognize that a community can make sure that every child has a right to learn in a good school with a good teacher with good academic standards, that it is actually possible to turn education around."*

**Mitchell Landrieu**, Mayor of the City of New Orleans

### The Debate Over Common Core

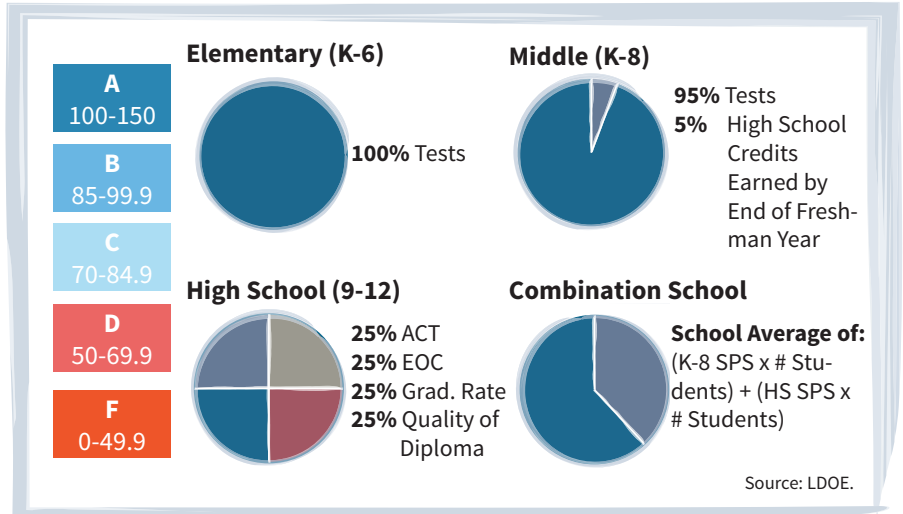
Rising anti-Common Core sentiment in Louisiana created uncertainty and confusion around the immediate future of public education assessment in Louisiana. Governor Jindal reversed his support for Common Core, while State Superintendent John White continued to support the standards. This led to a compromise forged in the 2015 legislative session under which BESE will review and possibly rewrite current standards. BESE will be required to adopt new standards by March of 2016. The state's newly-elected governor and oversight committees will only be able to veto the standards in their entirety and will not have line-item veto authority.

During the 2015-16 school year, students will take assessments based on standards that may resemble Common Core, but can include no more than 49 percent of the questions used on Common Core standardized tests.<sup>53</sup> If the standards proposed by BESE are not approved, then the current standards will remain until new standards can be agreed upon. Numerous public meetings will be held across the state to allow for public discourse. The goal of the compromise is to provide educators with stability and clarity going forward in terms of how students will be assessed.

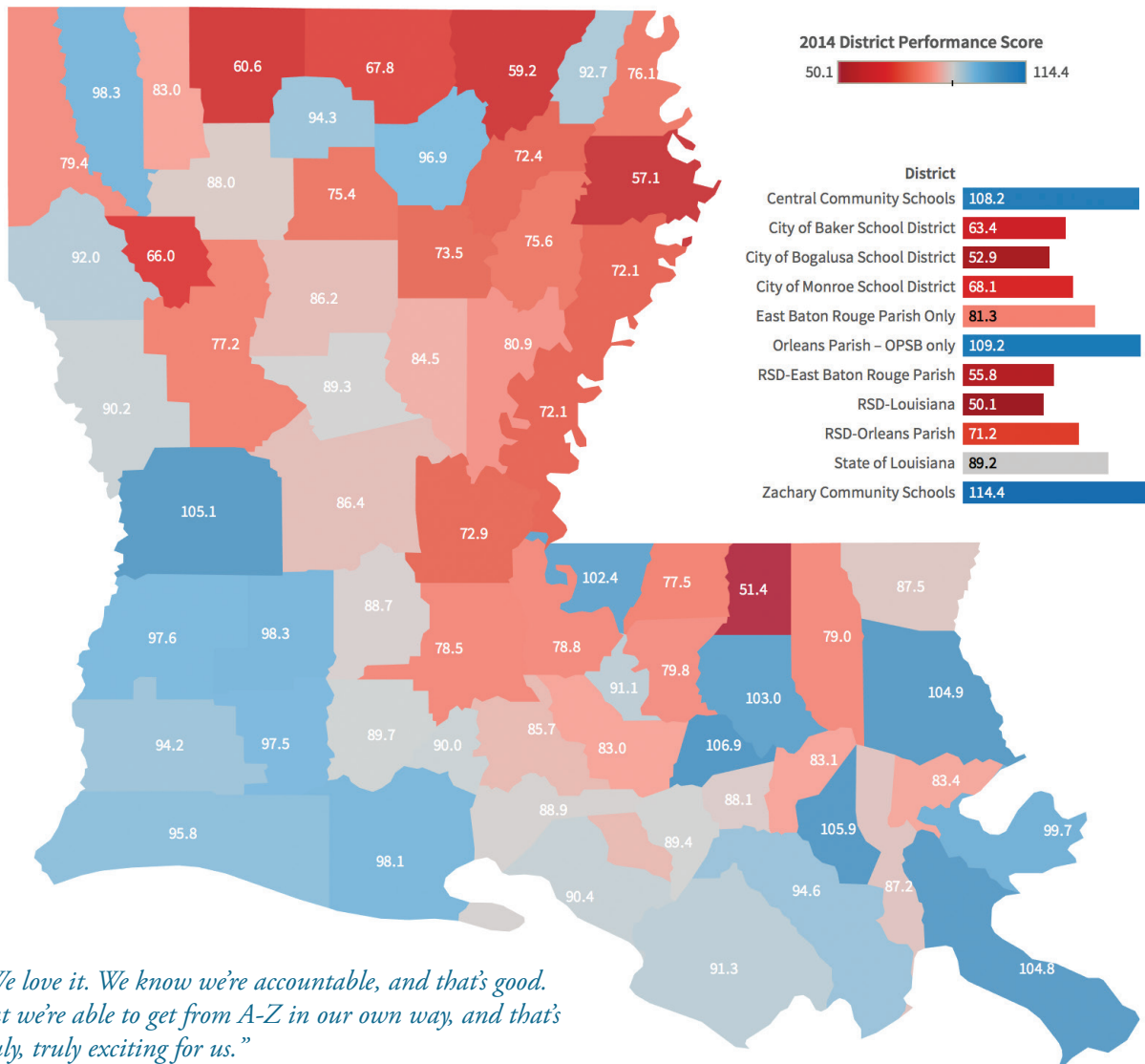
## School Performance Score Scale and Formulas

The way schools are measured has changed over time, but the current scale and formulas are listed to the right. Most schools are assessed almost entirely based on their students' performance on standardized tests, but high schools are also graded on graduation rates and the quality of their graduates' diplomas.

While student performance as a whole still lags behind the state average, it has made significant improvement in recent years. In 2005, Orleans Parish had a lower district performance score than all but one other parish. By 2014, it was out-performing 25 other parishes.



## District Performance Scores by Parish | 2014



*“We love it. We know we’re accountable, and that’s good. But we’re able to get from A-Z in our own way, and that’s truly, truly exciting for us.”*

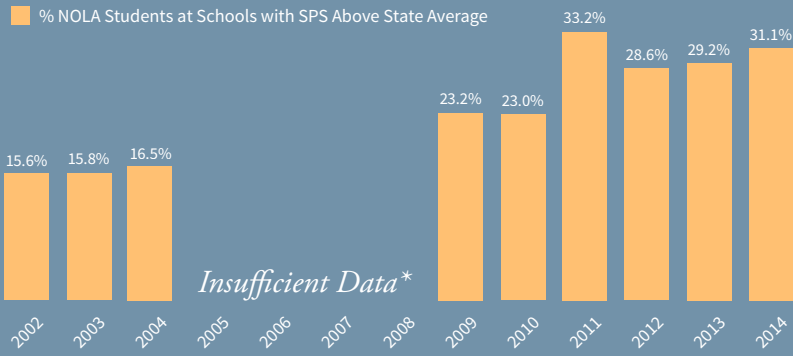
**Dr. Doris Hicks**, CEO, Friends of King

Source: LDOE, 2014 District Performance Scores/Letter Grades.

*"We have schools in our district now that I truly know that the number one priority is children – that we're educating children to higher levels"*

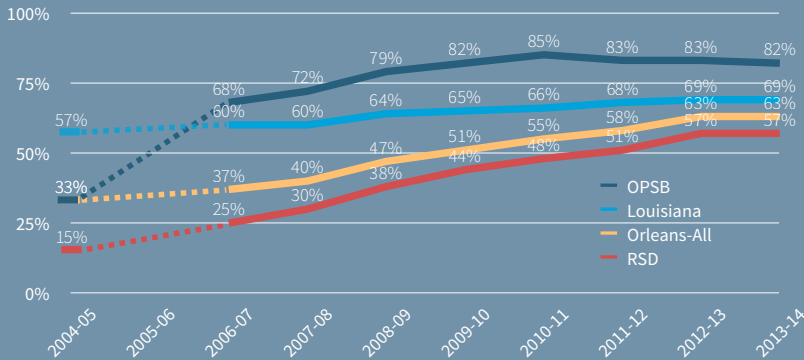
**Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr.,**  
Superintendent, Orleans Parish School Board

### Above State Average | 2002-2014



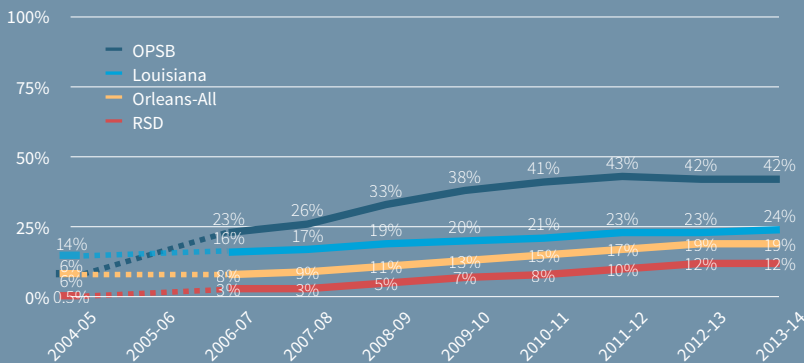
\*The LDOE did not report annual/growth or baseline SPS for schools in Orleans Parish for 2006 and 2007. The LDOE did not report annual/growth SPS for 2005 and 2008.

### Basic & Above | % Students Scoring Basic & Above



Source: LDOE.

### Mastery & Above | % Students Scoring Mastery & Above



Source: LDOE.

## Student Performance

It is difficult to compare the performance of schools over time since the way schools are measured has changed frequently since 2005. To help account for some of this inconsistency, the chart to the left illustrates the percentage of students enrolled in public schools in New Orleans that have a higher SPS than the state's performance score. This rate has nearly doubled in New Orleans since the storm, which highlights the fact that more students in the city are in better schools today than ten years ago.

Further evidence of progress can be found in standardized tests. Students in grades 3-8 are assessed in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Students who score at the basic level exhibit a fundamental understanding of the relevant knowledge at their grade level. The percentage of students at basic or above has increased 15 percentage points over the past six years. That growth has largely come from the RSD, which has improved by 20 percentage points. Schools' performance on standardized tests across the state in 2013-14, and in OPSB and RSD, remained unchanged from the 2012-13 school year.

In Louisiana, implementation of more rigorous standards will raise the passing scores gradually to the Mastery level by the year 2025. Superintendent John White said that in order for a district to earn an A in 2025, it will be required to have its average student at Mastery or above, which no district currently demonstrates. Students at the mastery level are considered well-prepared for the next grade level. If measured by that standard today, few districts are performing well. Only 24 percent of Louisiana students, and 19 percent of New Orleans students, scored at Mastery and above in 2014. Schools under OPSB performed relatively well, with 42 percent of students at Mastery and above, while RSD schools had just 12 percent of its students at that level. Overall, only about one in every five students in New Orleans meets this standard.<sup>54</sup>



## High School Performance

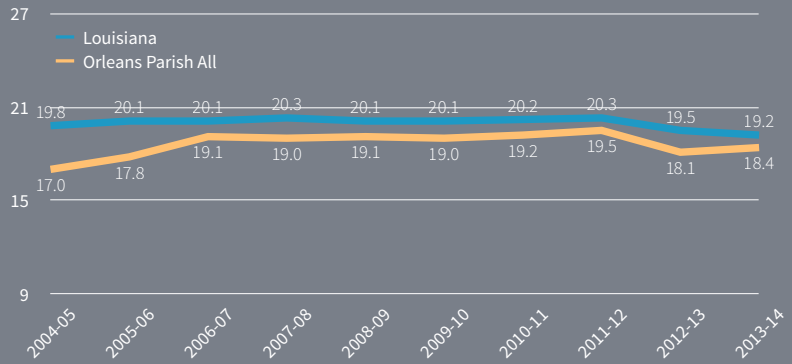
The ACT is important for students hoping to go to college and for eligibility for the Taylor Opportunity Scholarship (TOPS), an in-state scholarship. Average performance in New Orleans and Louisiana declined slightly in 2012-13, the first year that all public high school students were required to take the tests. Otherwise, test scores tend to be largely steady statewide, but highly variable among schools. Benjamin Franklin (28.2) and Lusher (24.1), both of which have selective enrollment, for example, are in the top 10 in the state, while others rank among the lowest in the state.

End of Course (EOC) tests are administered to high school students in six subjects: Algebra I, Geometry, English II and III, Biology, and U.S. History. High schools in New Orleans have greatly improved their outcomes on these assessments. Since 2005, the RSD has improved its rate of students scoring “Good” or “Excellent” by 34 percentage points. New Orleans as a whole has improved by 26 percentage points.

Improved test performance has also led to higher graduation rates in the city. Prior to the storm, only 56 percent of students graduated within their four-year cohort group compared to 73 percent today.

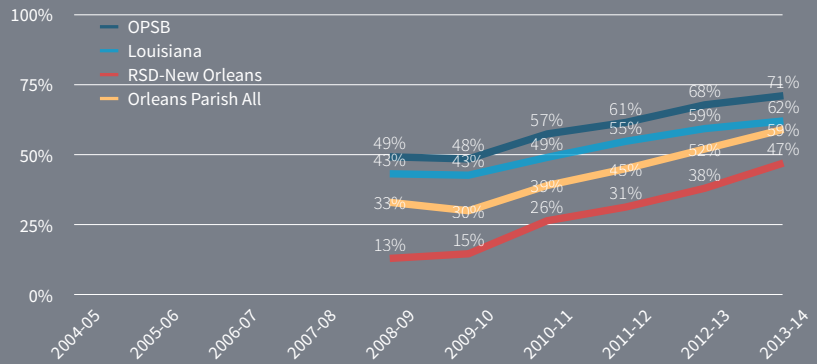
To qualify for the TOPS Opportunity Award, a scholarship that can be used at state universities, a student must receive an ACT score above the previous year’s state average and have at least a 2.50 GPA in their core courses.<sup>55</sup> To be eligible for the TOPS Tech Award, which can be used at state technical and community colleges, the ACT requirement is 17. TOPS eligibility has increased since 2005, especially among RSD schools.

### ACT | Average Score



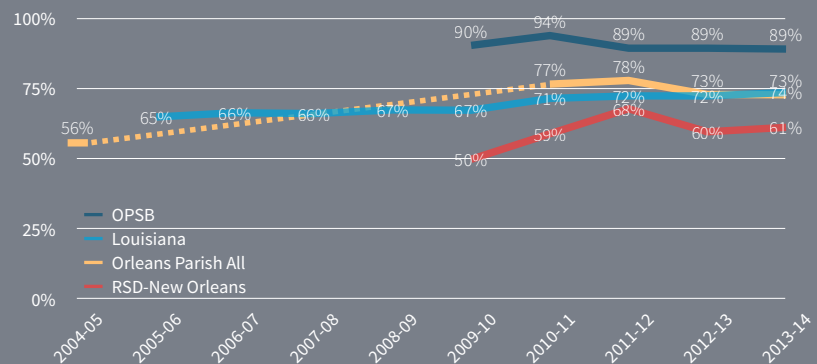
Source: LDOE, ACT & TOPS Eligibility Combined Scores, 2004-2014.

### EOC | % Students Scoring Good & Excellent



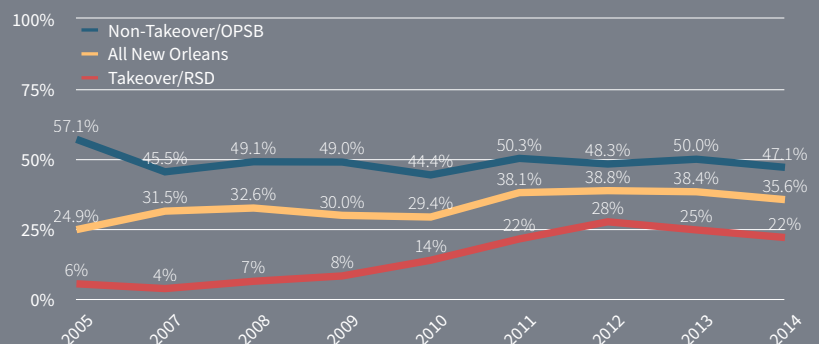
Source: LDOE, Comparison of Average Percent of Students Scoring Good or Excellent, 2009-2014.

### Graduation Rates | 2004-2014



Source: LDOE, District and State Graduation Rates (2005-2006 to 2013-2014).

### TOPS Eligibility | % Students with Qualifying Scores



Source: LDOE, ACT & TOPS Eligibility Combined Scores, 2004-2014.



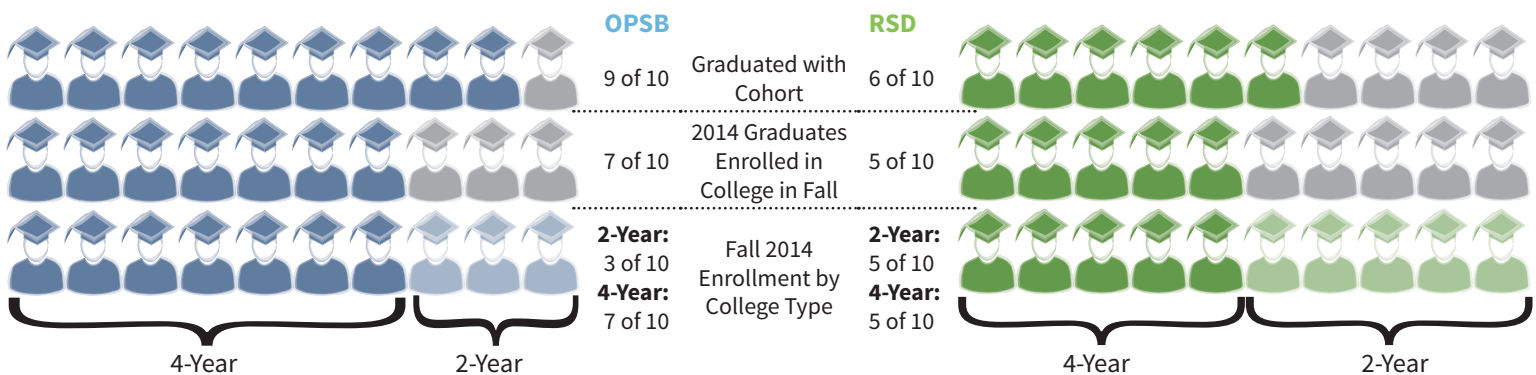
It is critical that successes from K-12 education are carried over into graduates' post-secondary lives. While graduation rates have improved over the past ten years, it is harder to measure how much progress has been made with post-secondary achievement.

Since the 2011-12 school year, the LDOE has tracked graduates' college enrollment using the National Student Clearinghouse, which contains data from nearly all colleges and universities in the country. The overall college enrollment rate among New Orleans graduates has been relatively steady since 2011-12, with 59 percent of graduates enrolling in the fall of 2014.<sup>56</sup> OPSB schools have consistently had higher graduation and

college enrollment rates than RSD schools. OPSB graduates are also more likely to attend four-year colleges than RSD graduates. Overall, 63 percent of graduates enrolling in college attended a four-year school.

While college enrollment and persistence are valuable measures, it is also important to follow graduates' career success. Many students may not attend college, but may find sustainable career paths in fields that do not require a baccalaureate degree. This will be especially relevant as Jump Start, a new high school degree track, is implemented and students' coursework counts toward credentials in high-growth sectors, such as carpentry, plumbing, construction, and medicine.

### Class of 2014 Graduation Rates and Post-Secondary Enrollment




Source: Louisiana Department of Education, College Going/Enrollment Data for 2013-2014 High School Graduates.

## Jump Start

In 2014, the LDOE announced that the career diploma offered for Louisiana high school students pursuing a vocational track would be replaced with the new Jump Start initiative. Starting in the 2016-17 school year, high school students who are interested in pursuing vocational and technical training will have the chance to receive more rigorous and ambitious instruction. Jump Start aims to better align K-12 and higher education with the private sector so that graduates have the skills to fill the state's high-wage jobs.<sup>57</sup>

Realigning technical and vocational training in high schools is a logical and needed step for Louisiana. In a May 2015 poll, the Cowen Institute found that more than 90 percent of those polled in New Orleans believe high schools should offer career and technical training

to students.<sup>58</sup> Multiple studies have also found that the state will experience a job boom in the next decade; yet, many of those same reports indicate that there is currently a shortage of skilled workers to fill those positions. In design, Jump Start also seeks to de-stigmatize vocational training and ensure that students are not forced to be on a lesser track: all students will receive the same high school education through 10th grade at which point students will choose between pursuing a career or traditional diploma. By enhancing the vocational curriculum, and incentivizing schools by tying their participation in Jump Start to their School Performance Score, policy-makers have tried to ensure that graduates, regardless of which diploma they receive, are able to enroll in two- or four-year colleges and be prepared for employment with industry certified credentials.<sup>59</sup>



*“We as a community and as a city and as a state are holding schools accountable in a different way for their results and for [their] service to students. We’re not just saying and defining what school failure is, we’re actually not tolerating it.”*

**Rhonda Kalifey-Aluise,**  
Executive Director, KIPP New Orleans

# Talent

## Who are the teachers?

*“The system today is a system run by parents and educators, not a system run by politicians.”*

**John White**, Superintendent,  
Louisiana Department of Education



In most cases, employment decisions, such as hiring, firing, and professional development, are conducted at the school-level, rather than district-level, in New Orleans. Traditional districts have a centralized human resources department to make uniform decisions across all schools regarding hiring, training, salary, and benefits. In New Orleans, individual schools or CMOs recruit their own faculty and staff, set their own pay scales, and compete with all other schools and CMOs for the same talent pool.

This decentralization, along with the collapse of the pre-storm collective bargaining agreement between United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO) and OPSB in 2006, has resulted in wide variation across the city in teacher salaries and experience levels.<sup>60</sup> Over time, the demographics of the teacher corps have changed as well, becoming younger, whiter, less indigenous, and more likely to come from an alternative certification program (such as TeachNOLA or Teach For America) than in the past.<sup>61</sup> These changes have been among the most hotly contested by some education advocates, community organizers, and former teachers.

More than 7,000 teachers filed a lawsuit in 2006 against the state of Louisiana and the OPSB, claiming that they were wrongfully dismissed after Hurricane Katrina. In October of 2014, the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled against the teachers and in May of 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear their case. While this was the last judicial avenue the teachers had, they have vowed to pursue legislative solutions instead.<sup>62</sup>

The demographics of the teacher corps still diverge from that of the student body: in 2013, the most recent year for which teacher data are available, New Orleans public school students were 87 percent African-American, compared to only 54 percent of teachers.<sup>63</sup>

Orleans Parish teachers continue to demonstrate gains in student growth. Thirty-three percent of RSD teachers and 40 percent of OPSB teachers are in the top percentile group for student growth on value-added measures.<sup>64</sup> Statewide, only 18 percent of teachers reach the top percentile group on student growth, indicating that teachers in Orleans Parish are out-pacing teachers statewide on growth and beginning to close the gap for students in New Orleans.

*“In January of 2006, there were so many people, locally, doing so much work getting schools back up and running. There were veteran educators who found by any means necessary a way to get their schools open.”*

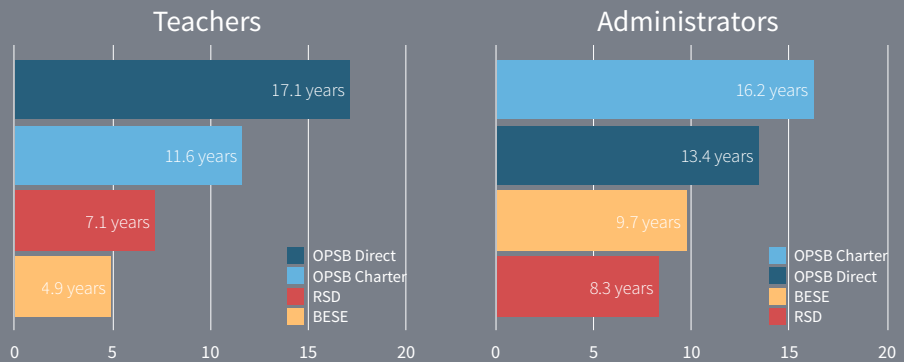
**Sarah Usdin**, Orleans Parish School Board Member

*“A lot of the faces that I see in leading schools are, in fact, black educators from New Orleans who were doing this work before and are still doing this.”*

**Aesha Rasheed**, Author of *New Orleans Parents Guide*

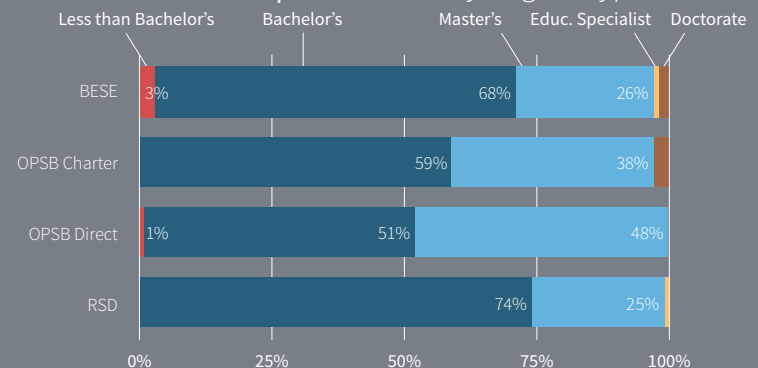
Teachers in OPSB tend to be more experienced than their RSD and BESE peers. In the 2013-14 school year, teachers in OPSB direct-run schools had an average of 17.1 years of experience in the classroom. OPSB charter school teachers had 11.6 years of experience, while RSD teachers averaged 7.1 years.

### Experience | Average Number of Years, 2013-14



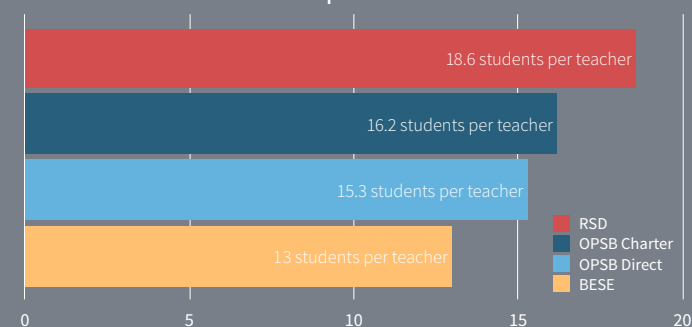
Forty-eight percent of OPSB direct-run teachers hold a Master’s degree or higher and 41 percent of OPSB charter teachers have a post-baccalaureate degree. In RSD schools, only 26 percent of teachers have a graduate degree.

### Teacher Education | Distribution by Degree Type, 2013-14



Student-teacher ratios vary across OPSB direct-run, OPSB charter, and RSD schools. RSD schools have the highest student-teacher ratio, with an average of 18.6 students per teacher in RSD classrooms. OPSB charter schools have a ratio of 16.2 students per teacher while OPSB direct-run schools maintain a ratio of 15.3 students per teacher.<sup>65</sup>

### Student-Teacher Ratio | 2013-14



Source: All teacher data come from compiled LDOE School-by-School Financial Reports, 2013-14 School Year.

# Facilities

## What are the facilities like?

As families and educators returned to New Orleans in 2005, one of the major questions they faced was where students would be educated. Even prior to the flooding, school facilities in New Orleans had been in disrepair. As of 2005, 73 percent of the city’s public school buildings had been constructed between 1852 and 1975 – and many of those buildings suffered from poor care and a lack of funding for maintenance, repairs, or larger capital investment.<sup>66</sup>

Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent levee failures only worsened this situation, with 80 percent of the city flooded and the vast majority of school buildings damaged or destroyed. In the immediate aftermath, school officials often relied on modular trailers in order to get students back into seats as quickly as possible, while seeking more permanent solutions. In 2007, the RSD and LDOE planned to construct five new “quick start” schools that would help launch the rebuilding of the city’s entire school infrastructure while continuing to negotiate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regarding the amount of financial settlement that the federal government would contribute to rebuilding New Orleans’ schools.<sup>67</sup>

A larger planning process that incorporated public input resulted in a more comprehensive strategy adopted in 2008, when the OPSB and RSD approved the School Facilities Master Plan for Orleans Parish. The Master Plan created a nearly \$2 billion blueprint for renovating and rebuilding school facilities through 2016. In 2010, the RSD and OPSB then reached a final, single lump-sum payment settlement with the FEMA for \$1.8 billion, which greatly accelerated the pace of repairing and rebuilding the city’s schools.<sup>68</sup> In addition to setting a vision for the city’s school facilities, the plan also included Disadvantaged Business Program participation requirements aimed at improving the rates at which women and minorities received construction project contracts.

Even with the FEMA settlement, the Master Plan included unfunded projects. Consequently, OPSB and BESE approved an amended plan in summer 2011 with the goal of ensuring “that all public school students in New Orleans would attend school in a new, renovated, or refurbished building.” Using demographic projections at the time, the 2011 plan aimed to create sufficient facilities to house 55,000 students by 2016 with 35 newly constructed schools, 18 full renovations, and 28 refurbishments.<sup>69</sup>

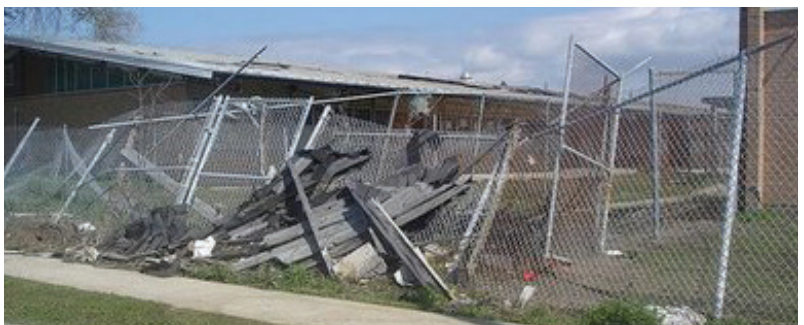


Photo Credits: The photos on the left and top right were kindly provided by Dennis Joseph.

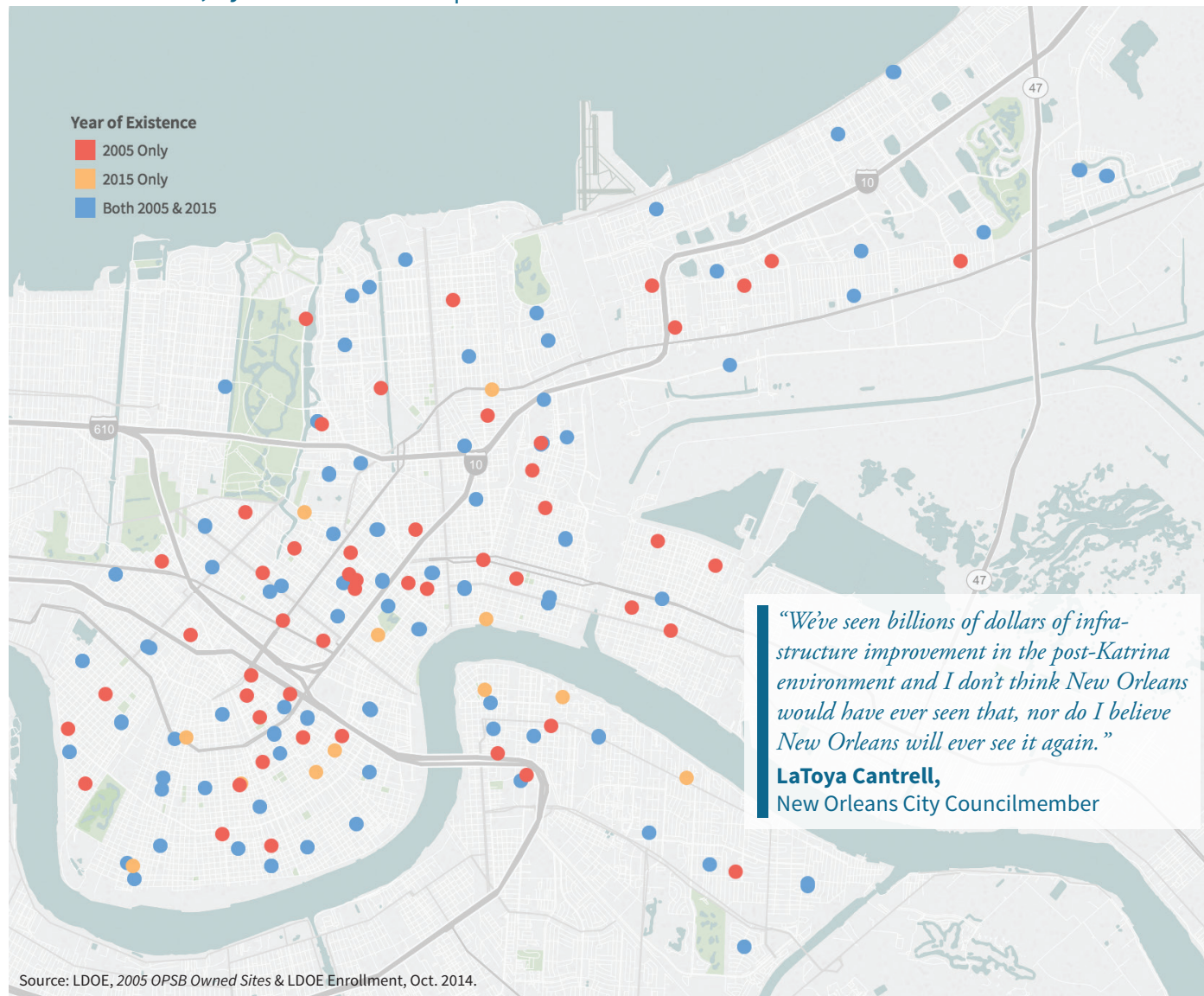
As of 2015, nearly 90 percent of those projects were either completed or underway. Of the 81 projects originally called for, 30 had been completed, 42 were under construction and another nine were in the design phase. To put that in student terms, more than 49,000 of the 55,000 student seats targeted by the plan were either completed or under construction. The plan calls for all projects to be completed by 2019.<sup>70</sup>

Significant progress has been made towards improving the overall quality of school facilities. However, the plan has faced challenges. Due to higher than expected demand for construction services, project costs in the New Orleans market area have run nearly 20 percent higher than originally anticipated. Individual schools have also had to switch locations multiple times over the course of a few years. Thus far, the RSD, BESE, and OPSB have used tax credits and qualified school construction bonds to help pay for construction.

Due to changing demographic projections, the original plan called for too few elementary and too many high school seats. The RSD made further adjustments in 2013, coupled with adjusted scopes of work for select projects, resulting in a cost savings of \$117.9M.<sup>71</sup>

Voters seem committed to ensuring the past does not repeat itself regarding school facilities. In December 2014, nearly 60 percent of Orleans voters approved a ballot measure designed to fund school facilities preservation, which are estimated to total at least \$30 million annually by 2025. The measure renewed an existing tax millage, and rededicated the funds for capital replacements, repairs, and improvements at schools. Related legislation, Act 543, passed the Legislature in 2014 and also directed a portion of sales tax revenue to facility maintenance.<sup>72</sup> Schools will receive funding for facility maintenance based on their student enrollment.

### School Facilities, by Year of Existence | 2005 & 2015



Source: LDOE, 2005 OPSB Owned Sites & LDOE Enrollment, Oct. 2014.

# Finances

## How is public education paid for?



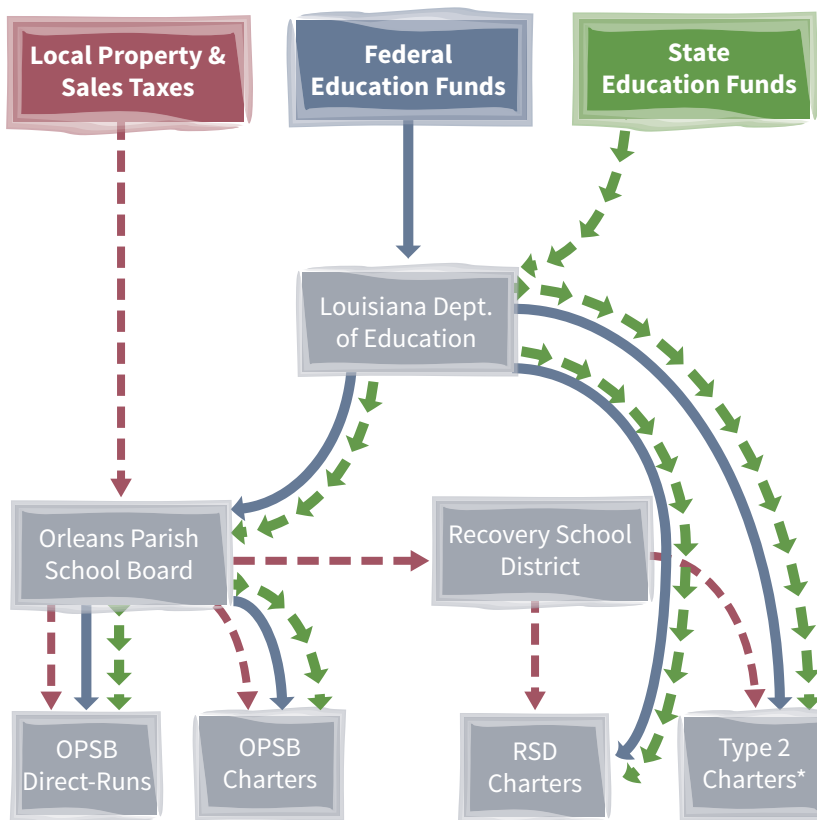
School funding in Louisiana is derived from three main sources: federal grants (15 percent in 2012-13), state tax dollars (38 percent in 2012-13), and local tax dollars (47 percent in 2012-13).<sup>73</sup> Federal grants are usually administered to the state, which then distributes the funds locally to districts and schools. State tax dollars and local tax dollars are dispersed through the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP), which funds the remainder of public education in the state.

The MFP distributes funds on a per-pupil basis. Districts, and in turn schools, receive additional funding for certain categories of students, including those who are low-income, are English language learners, and those who qualify for special education or gifted and talented services.<sup>74</sup>

An Act, pending the approval of the governor, was passed during the 2015 legislative session would make two changes to charter funding: 1) All charters would be funded based on the percentage of special needs students they educate, rather than a district average; 2) A process would begin to create a uniform funding formula for all Orleans Parish charter schools.<sup>75</sup>

Though Louisiana's academic performance is typically near the bottom nationally, its school funding is much closer to the national average - its total per-pupil funding ranked 21st in the nation in 2012 (including the District of Columbia).<sup>76</sup>

### Education Funding Flows



\*Type 2 charters can be either legacy or non-legacy. The chart does not represent the funding flows for legacy Type 2s: the LDOE funds their local share, not the RSD as outlined above. The only legacy Type 2 in New Orleans is the International School of Louisiana.

Source: *Public Education in New Orleans: A Financial Analysis*, Cowen Institute, 2009.



*“Most of us have now learned how to manage funds because we have to do it, because the buck stops with us.”*

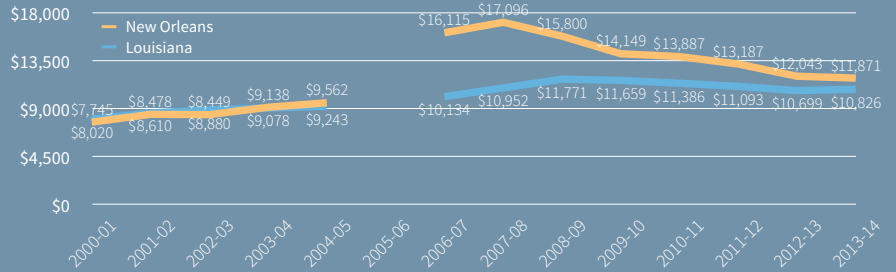
**Alexina Medley**, Principal, Warren Easton High School

Some of the factors that account for New Orleans’ higher per pupil spending include higher local tax revenue and a higher rate of economically disadvantaged students.<sup>77</sup> The OPSB also received more per-pupil dollars from federal funds than any other district in the state in the 2013-14 school year.<sup>78</sup> The RSD also uses a differentiated funding formula which provides higher funding for students with more severe disabilities.<sup>79</sup>

Historically, New Orleans’ per pupil expenditures were generally in line with the LDOE’s state average per pupil spending. Hurricane recovery expenses, including building reconstruction, caused a significant spike in New Orleans’ education spending. However, even without these facilities costs, New Orleans schools were spending significantly more than other parishes on many fixed costs, including restocking supplies. This increased spending was funded by federal “restart” grants, which were largely depleted by the 2009-10 school year.<sup>80</sup> As schools have moved past recovery from Katrina, expenditures per pupil have decreased and become more similar to the state average.

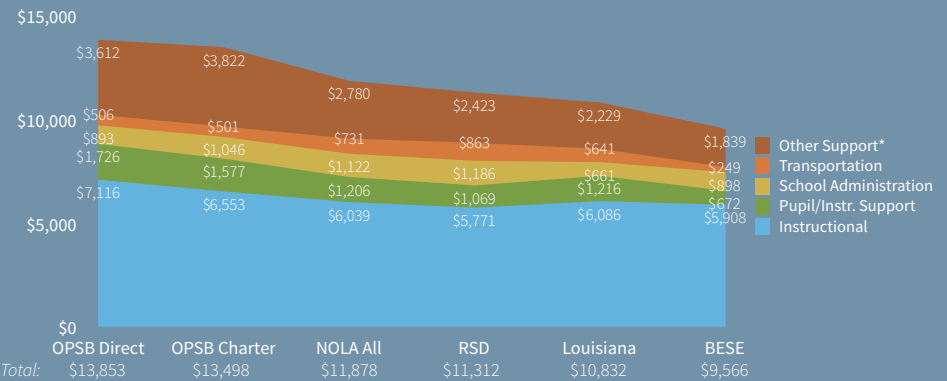
Expenditures also vary within New Orleans, by school and among spending categories. In the 2013-14 school year, OPSB direct-run schools had the highest per-pupil expenditures, followed by OPSB charter schools, RSD, and BESE schools. Schools that utilize the traditional pension system, the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL), tend to spend significantly more on their employees’ pensions than schools that use other retirement systems.<sup>81</sup> On average, New Orleans schools spent more on school administration, transportation, and “other support” than the rest of the state. Charter schools are also better able to raise additional money through grants and outside funding, which is not reflected in these data.<sup>82</sup>

### Expenditures per Pupil | 2000-2014



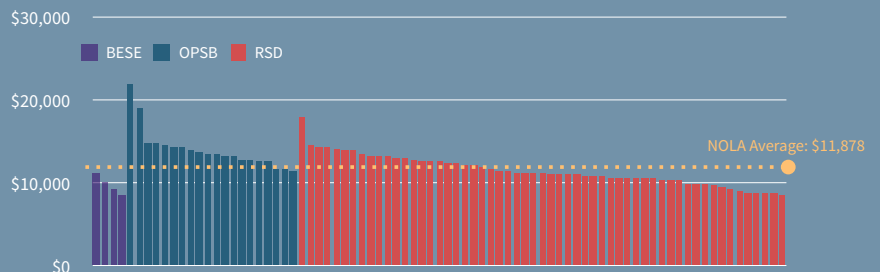
All dollars are adjusted for inflation to reflect 2015 dollars.  
Source: All Expenditure data come from compiled LDOE School-by-School Financial Reports, 2013-14 School Year.

### Expenditures per Pupil by Group | by Authorizer, 2013-2014



\*May include General Administration, Business Services, Operations and Maintenance, Food Service Operations, Enterprise Operations, Community Service Operations, Central Services

### Expenditures per Pupil | by School, 2013-2014



<sup>82</sup>Current expenditures are defined as total expenditures minus equipment costs, facilities acquisitions and construction services costs, and debt service costs.

# Looking Ahead

## Where does New Orleans public education go from here?

*Public education in New Orleans underwent rapid and dramatic change during the past ten years. It is likely the system will continue to evolve in the coming years. This section examines some key education issues that legislators, educators, parents, students, and the public at-large will face in the next decade.*

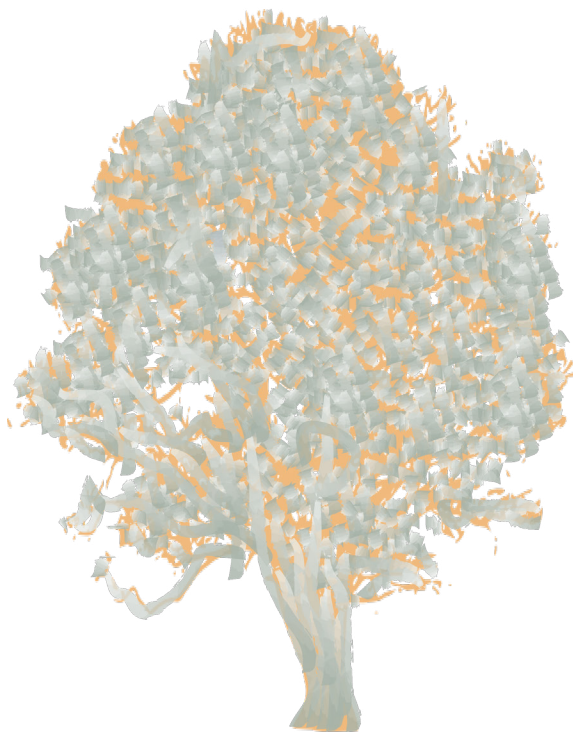
### Governance

Since the state's takeover of the majority of schools, the permanent governance structure of New Orleans' education system has remained an open-ended question. The system of schools is no longer as decentralized as it was in the years immediately after Hurricane Katrina: for instance, the vast majority of schools share a common application, *OneApp*, and a single truancy office, and all schools now share policies for expulsion and special needs students. Yet, the portfolio model still presents challenges, such as the city's lack of a unified data system for all school-age youth, per pupil funding rates that differ depending on school type, and suspension policies that vary across schools. Yet, the portfolio model provides

charter schools, CMOs, and school administrators with far greater autonomy than they would have otherwise.

The public is divided on how they would like to see governance take shape in the future. According to a 2015 Cowen Institute poll, there is no consensus on if, and when, RSD schools should return to the OPSB or on what the best governance structure would be.<sup>83</sup>

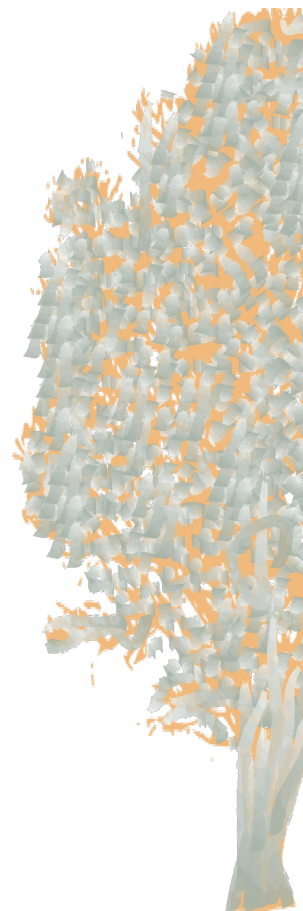
New OPSB Superintendent Henderson Lewis, Jr. has stated his intention to have all schools return to the OPSB in the future. To date, only one eligible charter school has opted to return. Schools that return will retain much of the independence they have enjoyed under the current structure, while receiving some centralized supports from a central OPSB office. School board elections in 2016 will also have an impact on long-term governance. A bill proposed during the 2015 legislative session called for the immediate return of all New Orleans schools to OPSB oversight.<sup>84</sup> Though the bill was ultimately defeated, long-term governance will remain an issue in the years ahead.



**HOPE**



**DEDICATION**



**PERSEVERANCE**

## Choice and Accountability

New Orleans' system of schools is predicated on the notions of school choice and strong accountability. Schools are given greater flexibility and autonomy than in traditional districts based on the understanding that the LDOE, RSD, and OPSB will implement strong oversight to ensure that students receive a high-quality and equitable education. Indeed, the LDOE has exercised that authority in recent years as it closed under-performing schools and handed others over to new charter operators.

While making sure that students attend only good schools is a laudable endeavor, these strong accountability measures can be difficult for students and parents. For example, when Lagniappe Academies was closed for serious violations of its special needs students' rights, parents were forced to quickly find a replacement for the next school year. Many parents were vocal in their displeasure. Though *OneApp* gives these displaced students priority, nine applicants were not assigned a school after the main round, while two-thirds received their top choice. Eighty-eight percent of applicants received one of their top-three choices.<sup>85</sup> For parents who thought they knew

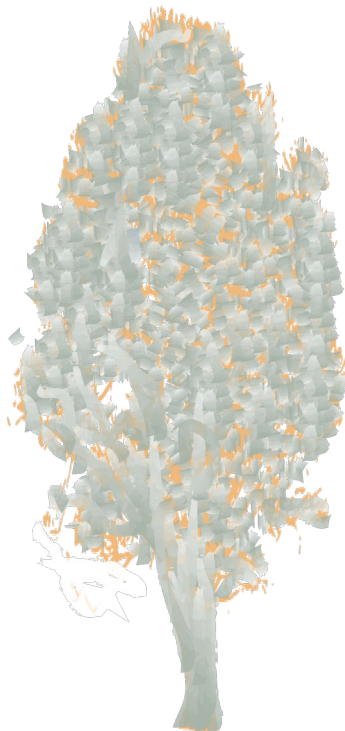
where their child would attend the following year, this can be stressful and frustrating. These concerns ought to be balanced with the need to ensure that all schools are providing a quality education for all students.

The choice and charter system that has developed in New Orleans comes with consequences that are not found in most traditional school systems. Parents face the added stress and pressure of having to search for the right school for their child. The applications for some selective admissions schools can be difficult. Other students are forced to switch schools when their school is closed, a process that generally places students in higher performing schools but creates disruption to students and families in the transition.

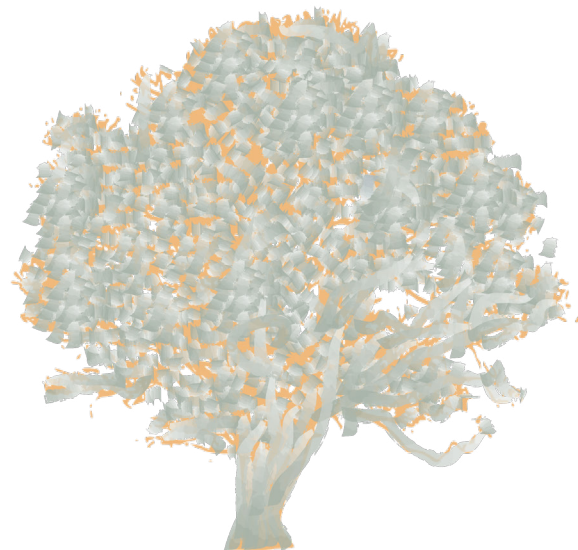
A lack of a centralized office can exacerbate these complications, but educators and administrators have been creative and regularly sought to identify solutions for these issues (e.g. *OneApp*, the Student Hearing Office, etc.). It will be important that New Orleans and Louisiana continue to be vigilant about developing policies that ensure that school accountability and choice benefit all students in an equitable manner.



RANCE



YOUTH



COMMUNITY

## Academic Growth

The academic performance of New Orleans' schools has improved remarkably over the past ten years. Numerous data points mark this progress:

- » In 2005, based on academic performance, only one other parish was worse than Orleans Parish. It is now outperforming 25 parishes.
- » In 2004, just 16.5 percent of New Orleans' students were in schools that performed above the state average performance score; in 2014, that number had nearly doubled to 31.1 percent.
- » In 2005, 62 percent of students in the city attended a failing school. That number is now down to seven percent.
- » In 2005, 56 percent of New Orleans students graduated on time. In 2014, 73 percent did.<sup>86</sup>

With increasing test scores and graduation rates, everyone involved in education should feel proud of the progress made thus far. Yet, New Orleans public education still has ample room for growth. Schools have gone from failing to average: overall, Orleans Parish schools are rated as a C and only nine percent of schools in the city received an A in 2014.<sup>87</sup> OPSB schools consistently receive higher grades than RSD schools,

but also serve populations with fewer special education students and are more likely to have selective admission policies. This leads to inequitable differences in the quality of the education that students receive. Ideally, all schools in the city should offer an A-level education. It has taken tireless efforts by educators to achieve the type of progress schools have seen in the last decade. Their next challenge may be even more difficult: to take schools from good to great.

## College Attainment and Graduation

For most young people, graduating high school is the first step towards adulthood and either enrolling in post-secondary education or obtaining a living-wage job. Currently, New Orleans high schools are about on par with high schools statewide: in 2014, the high school graduation rate for all New Orleans schools was 73 percent, a rate that is slightly below the state average. But as is true for academic performance, there is a significant gap between the rate at OPSB and RSD schools, which is a continuous challenge for equity across the education system in the city. College attainment has increased in the last decade, with 59 percent of graduates now enrolling in a two- or four-year institution compared to 37 percent in 2004.<sup>88</sup>

Yet, high school performance still lags state and national averages. In 2014, 59 percent of New Orleans students scored



“Good” or “Excellent” on their End of Course high school exams, compared to 62 percent of students statewide. Students also had an average score of 18.4 on the ACT, which trailed the statewide average of 19.5<sup>89</sup> and the U.S. average of 20.9<sup>90</sup>. For the city to truly offer world-class public education, it will not be enough for high schools to be better than they were before Katrina; they will have to be able to match the results of schools nationwide. Part of this advancement will require that New Orleans schools ensure that every student can access an appropriate post-secondary pathway upon graduation, whether that is further education or employment.

### Career and Technical Education

The state’s Jump Start initiative will change the way in which career and technical education is taught in public schools. The program aims to align the skills being taught in schools with the skills the state’s employers seek in employees. Yet, the program is still in its infancy. Though high schools are required to participate in the program, in many ways, it will be up to administrators to decide how Jump Start will operate in their individual schools. Depending on student interest in the new diploma, Jump Start could lead to significant changes in the classes and experiences high schools offer to students. School administrators will also likely have to make curriculum and staffing adjustments in order to successfully implement Jump Start, given the new accountability requirements. They will need to build partnerships with existing training providers, such as community colleges and private businesses, to enable their students to have access to the type of real-world training Jump Start promotes.

### Ensuring Public Participation

While the RSD, LDOE, and OPSB provide oversight to schools, New Orleans also has 44 school boards, significantly more than in a traditional district, due to its substantial number of charter schools. This raises questions regarding public participation in the control and oversight of public schools. In the current, decentralized system, far more people are directly engaged in the governance of New Orleans’ schools than ever before. However, most students are now in schools with charter boards that are not democratically elected and it can be difficult for charters to recruit and train high-quality board members. Given that these members are appointed, not elected, there is no way for the public to vote them out of their positions. The main recourse families have if they dislike their charter’s board is to change schools.

With the diffusion of boards, it can also be challenging for the public to navigate and find information on all the school boards, and similarly for organizations that want to work with multiple schools on a single issue. Additionally, there is not currently sufficient central capacity to ensure that boards are meeting all of their obligations, including open meeting laws, and ethics trainings. In the coming years, it will be important to ensure that public schools in New Orleans encourage the public’s participation by operating transparently and being open to public input.

*“The future of our city is dependent on the quality of the public school system. If it does not thrive, this city will not thrive.”*

**Scott Cowen**, President Emeritus, Tulane University

### Moving Forward

New Orleans educators should be commended for the progress they have made in the last ten years. Most notably, student and school performance have improved, and students are now learning in facilities that are a dramatic improvement over school buildings before Hurricane Katrina. The city’s public education system remains unique for its decentralized governance structure, the autonomy granted to its schools and educators, and its open enrollment policy. But just as important are the strides educators and policymakers have made in recent years to address challenges with standardized solutions that apply to most schools and students citywide. The challenge now is for all those involved in the city’s public education system, from policymakers to parents to teachers, to build on these gains and help to make the future of New Orleans a model of excellence for the nation.

**Visit our website at [www.speno2015.com](http://www.speno2015.com) for videos, an interactive historical timeline of education in New Orleans, and other special online features.**

# Appendix

## New Orleans Public School Data

School	Grades Served	Enrollment	% Econ. Disadvantaged	2014 Letter Grade	2013 Letter Grade
<b>Independent State School</b>					
New Orleans Center for Creative Arts	9-12	242	38%	A	A
<b>BESE Charter Schools</b>					
International High School of New Orleans	9-12	546	67%	C	D
International School of Louisiana	K-8	908	54%	A	A
Lycee Francais de la Nouvelle-Orleans	PK4,K-4	467	36%	B	N/A
New Orleans Military/Maritime Academy	9-12	540	56%	C	B
<b>OPSB Charter Schools</b>					
Alice M. Harte Elementary Charter School	K-8	750	78%	A	B
Audubon Charter School	PK,K-8	802	44%	A	A
Benjamin Franklin High School	9-12	894	30%	A	A
Bricolage Academy	K-1	150	46%	N/A	N/A
Edna Karr High School	9-12	1080	82%	B	B
Edward Hynes Charter School	K-8	684	41%	A	A
Einstein Charter School	PK,K-8	996	86%	B	B
ENCORE Academy	PK4,K-6	430	80%	C	D
Homer A. Plessy Community School	PK-3	182	85%	N/A	N/A
Lake Forest Elementary Charter School	K-8	546	60%	A	A
Lusher Charter School	K-12	1691	21%	A	A
New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics HS	9-12	415	76%	B	C
Robert Russa Moton Charter School	PK,K-6	398	94%	B	D
Warren Easton Senior High School	9-12	990	79%	B	B
<b>OPSB Direct-Run</b>					
Benjamin Franklin Elem. Math and Science	PK4,K-8	817	78%	B	B
Eleanor McMain Secondary School	7-12	814	85%	B	B
Mahalia Jackson Elementary School	PK4,K-2	215	93%	B	B
Mary Bethune Elementary Literature/Technology	PK,K-6	414	90%	B	B
McDonogh #35 Academy	7-8	186	91%	F	D
McDonogh #35 College Preparatory School	9-12	853	90%	C	C
<b>RSD Charter Schools</b>					
Akili Academy of New Orleans	K-6	487	>95%	C	C
Algiers Technology Academy	9-12	299	91%	D	D

Andrew H. Wilson Charter School	PK4,K-8	628	94%	F	D
Arise Academy	PK4,K-6	425	>95%	D	C
Arthur Ashe Charter School	K-8	694	91%	C	B
Cohen College Prep	9-12	464	91%	C	D
Crescent Leadership Academy	7-12	162	93%	T	T
Dr. Martin Luther King Charter School for Sci/Tech	PK,K-12	801	91%	B	C
Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School	PK,K-8	795	90%	D	C
Edgar P. Harney Spirit of Excellence Academy	K-8	387	93%	C	D
Esperanza Charter School	K-8	453	84%	B	C
Fannie C. Williams Charter School	PK4,K-8	597	>95%	D	T
G. W. Carver Collegiate Academy	9-11	305	91%	C	N/A
G. W. Carver Preparatory Academy	9-11	287	76%	C	N/A
Gentilly Terrace Elementary School	PK,K-8	485	92%	D	C
Harriet Tubman Charter School	K-8	543	>95%	D	T
James M. Singleton Charter School	PK,K-8	514	>95%	C	D
John Dibert Community School	PK4,K-8	627	89%	C	B
Joseph A. Craig Charter School	PK4,K-8	428	>95%	T	T
Joseph S. Clark Preparatory High School	9-12	427	92%	F	T
KIPP Believe College Prep (Phillips)	K-3,5-8	797	92%	C	C
KIPP Central City Academy	5-8	418	94%	B	B
KIPP Central City Primary	K-4	516	>95%	C	C
KIPP East Community Primary	K	94	94%	N/A	N/A
KIPP McDonogh 15 School for the Creative Arts	K-4	918	92%	B	B
KIPP New Orleans Leadership Academy	K-3,5-8	834	>95%	D	C
KIPP Renaissance High School	9-12	445	91%	D	D
Lafayette Academy	PK4,K-8	955	93%	C	C
Lagniappe Academy of New Orleans	K-4	180	91%	C	B
Lake Area New Tech Early College High School	9-12	698	92%	D	C
Langston Hughes Charter Academy	PK4,K-8	844	93%	C	C
Lawrence D. Crocker College Prep	PK4,K-5	426	94%	T	N/A
Lord Beaconsfield Landry-Oliver Perry Walker High	9-12	1316	92%	B	B
Martin Behrman Elementary School	PK,K-8	719	88%	B	B
Mary D. Coghill Charter School	PK4,K-8	637	95%	C	N/A

McDonogh #28 City Park Academy	K-8	448	91%	D	C
McDonogh #32 Elementary School	PK,K-8	671	95%	D	C
McDonogh 42 Charter School	PK4,K-8	453	>95%	T	T
Mildred Osborne Charter School	K-7	423	>95%	D	N/A
Miller-McCoy Academy for Mathematics and Business	5-12	365	91%	F	D
Morris Jeff Community School	PK4,K-5	522	60%	C	C
Nelson Elementary School	PK,K-8	519	94%	D	C
Paul Habans Charter School	PK4,K-6	472	91%	F	N/A
Pierre A. Capdau Learning Academy	K-8	405	89%	B	F
ReNEW Accelerated High School #1	6-12	178	87%	F	F
ReNEW Accelerated High School #2	6-12	164	88%	F	F
ReNEW Cultural Arts Academy at Live Oak	PK4,K-8	686	88%	D	D
ReNEW Dolores T. Aaron Elementary	PK4,K-8	806	>95%	D	T
ReNEW SciTech Academy at Laurel	PK4,K-8	745	>95%	C	C
ReNEW Schaumburg Elementary	PK4,K-8	840	93%	T	N/A
Samuel J. Green Charter School	K-8	522	>95%	C	C
Sci Academy	9-12	460	88%	C	B
Sophie B. Wright Learning Academy	6-12	399	86%	C	B
Success Preparatory Academy	K-8	506	>95%	C	C
Sylvanie Williams College Prep	K-5	386	>95%	D	C
The NET Charter High School	9-12	164	93%	F	F
William J. Fischer Elementary School	PK,K-8	650	>95%	D	C

Source: LDOE, Multiple Statistics by Site for Elementary/Secondary School Student, October 2014 & School Performance Scores, 2013-14.


Note: Schools with "N/A" were not given letter grades in that year. This could be because they are do not yet have tested grades or because they are transformation schools that were recently taken over by a new operator.



# Endnotes

1. Brunkard, J., Namulanda, G., and Ratard, R. (2008). "Hurricane Katrina deaths, Louisiana, 2005," *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 2008, pg. 215-223.
2. Thevenot, Brian, "New probe of N.O. Schools is Launched," *The Times-Picayune*, April 20, 2004.
3. Louisiana Department of Education, "Multiple Statistics By Site for Total Public School Students – Feb. 2 2015," <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/data-center>.
4. Ibid.
5. Recovery School District of Louisiana, October, 2011. "Recovery School District Master Plan," [http://lrds.entest.org/SFMP\\_on%20website.pdf](http://lrds.entest.org/SFMP_on%20website.pdf).
6. Louisiana Department of Education. Public data obtained from Student Information System (SIS). Non-public data obtained from Annual Financial Statistics, 2010-2011, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/financial-data>.
7. Recovery School District of Louisiana, RSD/OPSB Cooperative Endeavor Agreement Summary, March 2014.
8. Louisiana Department of Education, Expulsion Data, Full Year SY 2013-2014 Analysis.
9. Dreilinger, Danielle, "'Historic': First Katrina State Takeover School Returns to New Orleans Control," *The Times-Picayune*, April 14, 2015.
10. OPSB serves as the LEA for its charter schools.
11. Sims, Patrick, "Charter Management Organizations in New Orleans," Cowen Institute at Tulane University, April 2015.
12. *The State of Public Education in New Orleans: Five Years After Hurricane Katrina*, The Cowen Institute at Tulane University, 2010, pg. 2.
13. "School Board Watchdog Curbed, Citizen Panel to Lose Clout," *The Times-Picayune*, September 25, 1996; "School Board President Ousted," *The Times-Picayune*, January 27, 2004; "School Board OKs Outside Managers," *Times-Picayune*, April 12, 2005.
14. *The State of Public Education in New Orleans: Five Years After Hurricane Katrina*, The Cowen Institute at Tulane University, 2010, pg. 3.
15. 2005 La. Act No. 35.
16. To be labeled academically in crisis, a district must have had at least 30 schools that were academically unacceptable or have 50 percent of its students enrolled in academically unacceptable schools. La. Rev. Stat. 17:10.6 (2006).
17. *The State of Public Education in New Orleans: Five Years After Hurricane Katrina*, The Cowen Institute at Tulane University, 2010, pg. 5.
18. *The State of Public Education in New Orleans* annual reports, 2009-2014, The Cowen Institute at Tulane University.
19. Grimm, Andy, "Ira Thomas Pleads Guilty To Taking Bribe from Orleans School Board Contractor," *The Times-Picayune*, May 13, 2015.
20. The Cowen Institute at Tulane University, "New Orleans Public Schools History: A Brief Overview," March 2010, <http://www.coweninstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/NewOrleansSchoolHistory.doc>.
21. Louisiana Department of Education, Enrollment Counts, 2006-07 to 2014-15, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/data-center>.
22. Ibid.
23. Louisiana Department of Education, "Community Eligibility Provision," <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/cep-at-a-glance-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=4>.
24. Louisiana Department of Education, Enrollment Counts, October 2014.
25. Louisiana Department of Education, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/data-center>.
26. Louisiana Department of Education, School Performance Scores, 2013-14, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/performance-scores>.
27. Kolko, Jed, "Where 'Back to School' Means Private School," *Trulia*, Aug. 13, 2014.
28. This is the total enrollment for nonpublic schools located in Orleans Parish, which may include non-Orleans Parish residents.
29. Louisiana Department of Education, public data obtained by request for 2005-2011. Non-public data obtained from Annual Financial Statistics, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/financial-data>.
30. Louisiana Department of Education, Oct Multi stats, 2005-11, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/data-center>.
31. Ibid.
32. Southern Poverty Law Center, Case Docket: *P.B., et al. v. Pastorek*, 2010, <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/case-docket/new-orleans-special-education>.
33. Louisiana Department of Education, *P.B. vs. White*, Consent Judgment, December 2014, <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/newsroom/12-19-14---pb-v-white---settlement-agreement.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.
34. Recovery School District of Louisiana, RSD/OPSB Cooperative Endeavor Agreement Summary, March 2014.
35. Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, "BESE Approves MFP, Increased School Funding" [Press release], March 2014, <http://bese.louisiana.gov/documents-resources/newsroom/2014/03/13/bese-approves-mfp-increased-school-funding>.
36. New Schools for New Orleans. "New Schools for New Orleans Awarded \$2.4 Million to Improve Special Education Training for Teachers and Leaders" [Press release], March 2015, [http://www.newschoolsforneworleans.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CSP-Grant-Press-Release\\_final.pdf](http://www.newschoolsforneworleans.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CSP-Grant-Press-Release_final.pdf).
37. Recovery School District of Louisiana, "Recovery School District Releases Statement on Lagniappe Academies Non-Renewal and Support for Parents" [Press release], March 2015, [http://www.rsdla.net/apps/news/show\\_news.jsp?REC\\_ID=346329&id=0](http://www.rsdla.net/apps/news/show_news.jsp?REC_ID=346329&id=0).
38. Education Week, Graduation Rates by State, Student Group, May 2015, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/dc/2015/map-graduation-rates-by-state-student-group.html>.
39. Sims, Patrick, *Reconnecting Opportunity Youth: Data Reference Guide*, The Cowen Institute at Tulane University, March 2015.
40. Jabbar, H., Education Research Alliance, "How Do School Leaders Respond to Competition? Evidence from New Orleans," March 2015, <http://educationresearchalliancena.org/publications/how-do-school-leaders-respond-to-competition>.
41. Dobard, Patrick, "Education reform a game-changer for New Orleans," WWLTV, October 2013, <http://www.wwltv.com/story/news/2014/09/03/14567536/>.

42. Orleans Parish School Board, OPSB Business Board Meeting Minutes, December 2012, <http://www.opsb.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Minutes-12.18.12.pdf>.
43. EnrollNOLA, "Learn About the Process," <http://enrollnola.org/how-does-oneapp-work/>.
44. EnrollNOLA, *Annual Report*, February 2015.
45. EnrollNOLA, "Learn About the Process," <http://enrollnola.org/how-does-oneapp-work/>.
46. EnrollNOLA, *Annual Report*, February 2015.
47. Dreilinger, Danielle, "Anger, Frustration as Hundreds of New Orleans Parents Turned Away from Public School Enrollment Center," *The Times-Picayune*, July 9, 2014.
48. EnrollNOLA, *Annual Report*, February 2015.
49. Dreilinger, Danielle, "One Third of Louisiana Voucher Students Are Enrolled at Sanctioned Schools," *The Times-Picayune*, February 2, 2015.
50. Louisiana Department of Education, "Louisiana Scholarship Program: 2014-15 Scholarship Schools Frequently Asked Questions," 2014.
51. Ibid.
52. Rossmeier, Vincent, and Patrick Sims, *K-12 Public Education through the Public's Eye: Parents' and Adults' Perceptions of Public Education in New Orleans*, The Cowen Institute, May 2015.
53. O'Donoghue, Julia, "Louisiana Common Core Compromise Earns Support from All Sides – including Bobby Jindal," *The Times-Picayune*, May 27, 2015.
54. Louisiana Department of Education, "Compass Results By Parish, 2013-14," <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2013-2014-compass-teacher-results-by-parish.xlsx?sfvrsn=8>.
55. Louisiana Office of State Financial Assistance, TOPS Opportunity Award, [http://www.osfa.state.la.us/TOPS\\_O.htm](http://www.osfa.state.la.us/TOPS_O.htm).
56. Louisiana Department of Education, "Number of Louisiana Graduates Entering College Improves By Six Percent," April 2015, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/newsroom/news-releases/2015/04/02/number-of-louisiana-graduates-entering-college-improves-by-six-percent>.
57. Louisiana Department of Education, "Jump Start: Expanding Opportunities for Louisiana Students," February 26, 2014.
58. Rossmeier, Vincent, and Patrick Sims, *K-12 Public Education through the Public's Eye: Parents' and Adults' Perceptions of Public Education in New Orleans*, The Cowen Institute, May 2015.
59. Louisiana Department of Education, "Jump Start: Expanding Opportunities for Louisiana Students," February 26, 2014.
60. Supreme Court of Louisiana, *Oliver, Nixon, and Goodwin versus Orleans Parish School Board*, October 2014, <http://www.lasc.org/opinions/2014/14C0329cw14C0330.opn.pdf>.
61. Louisiana Department of Education, Minimum Foundation Program, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/minimum-foundation-program>.
62. Dreilinger, Danielle, "U.S. Supreme Court Denies Teacher's Katrina Layoffs Suit," *The Times-Picayune*, May 18, 2015.
63. Louisiana Department of Education, Enrollment Counts, 2014.
64. Louisiana Department of Education, "Compass Results By Parish, 2013-14," <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2013-2014-compass-teacher-results-by-parish.xlsx?sfvrsn=8>.
65. Cowen Institute analysis of compiled Louisiana Department of Education, School-By-School Financial Reports, 2013-14 School Year.
66. Jacobs/CSRS, "Superintendent's Report March 2015," prepared for the OPSB and RSD; School Facility Master Plan Presentation for the RSD, July 2014.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Louisiana Department of Education, "School Facilities Master Plan," Update, June 2015.
71. Jacobs/CSRS, "Superintendent's Report March 2015," prepared for the OPSB and RSD; School Facility Master Plan Presentation for the RSD, July 2014.
72. 2014 La. Act No. 543.
73. Louisiana Department of Education, Funding and Revenue, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/funding/revenue>.
74. Ibid.
75. SB No. 267 2015 Regular Session La. Legislature.
76. United State Census, Public School System Finances, <http://www.census.gov/govs/school/>.
77. Cowen Institute calculations based on data from the United States Department of Education, <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/DistrictSchoolSearch#districtSearch>.
78. Louisiana Department of Education, "Total Revenue by Parish 2013-14," [https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/fiscal-data/2013-2014-total-local-state-federal-revenue\\_per-pupil.xlsx?sfvrsn=2](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/fiscal-data/2013-2014-total-local-state-federal-revenue_per-pupil.xlsx?sfvrsn=2).
79. Recovery School District, "Differentiated Funding Formula," March 2014, [http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/RSD\\_COW\\_5-2-Differentiated\\_Funding\\_Formula\\_RSD\\_March2014.pdf](http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/RSD_COW_5-2-Differentiated_Funding_Formula_RSD_March2014.pdf).
80. Cowen Institute at Tulane University, "Louisiana Public School Funding," April 2009.
81. Williams, Jessica, "Teachers Face Tough Choices as Charter Schools Drop Pensions," *The Lens*, Nov. 28, 2012.
82. Louisiana Department of Education, "Expenditures by Parish," [https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/fiscal-data/2013-2014-total-exp-by-group\\_per-pupil.xlsx?sfvrsn=2](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/fiscal-data/2013-2014-total-exp-by-group_per-pupil.xlsx?sfvrsn=2).
83. Rossmeier, Vincent, and Patrick Sims, *K-12 Public Education through the Public's Eye: Parents' and Adults' Perceptions of Public Education in New Orleans*, The Cowen Institute, May 2015.
84. Dreilinger, Danielle, "No Return for Recovery School District Charters: Bill Fails in House," *The Times-Picayune*, May 19, 2015.
85. Dreilinger, Danielle, "80% of Miller-McCoy, Lagniappe Pupils Find New Schools Via OneApp," *The Times-Picayune*, April 29, 2015.
86. Louisiana Department of Education, "Louisiana First-Time College Freshmen Data Report," for 2005 and 2014.
87. Louisiana Department of Education, "2014 School Performance Scores/Letter Grades," <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/data-management/2014-school-performance-scores.xlsx?sfvrsn=6>.
88. Louisiana Department of Education, "Louisiana First-Time College Freshmen State Data Report," Fall 2004, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/data-management/fall-2004-college-enrollment-report.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.
89. Louisiana Department of Education, "ACT Composite Scores from 2004-05 to 2013-14 by Parish."
90. ACT.org, "2013 ACT National and State Scores," <http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2013/states.html>.

A long, brightly lit hallway on a ship, likely a crew mess or common area. The hallway is lined with white walls and has a polished floor that reflects the overhead lights. A blue banner hangs from the ceiling, displaying a quote. In the background, an "EXIT" sign is visible above a doorway, and a few people can be seen walking in the distance. The ceiling features exposed pipes and ductwork.

“Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.”

AFRICAN PROVERB



**COWEN INSTITUTE**  
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES

**Cowen Institute for  
Public Education Initiatives**

Tulane University  
1555 Poydras Street, Suite 700  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
504.274.3690  
[www.coweninstitute.org](http://www.coweninstitute.org)  
[www.speno2015.com](http://www.speno2015.com)