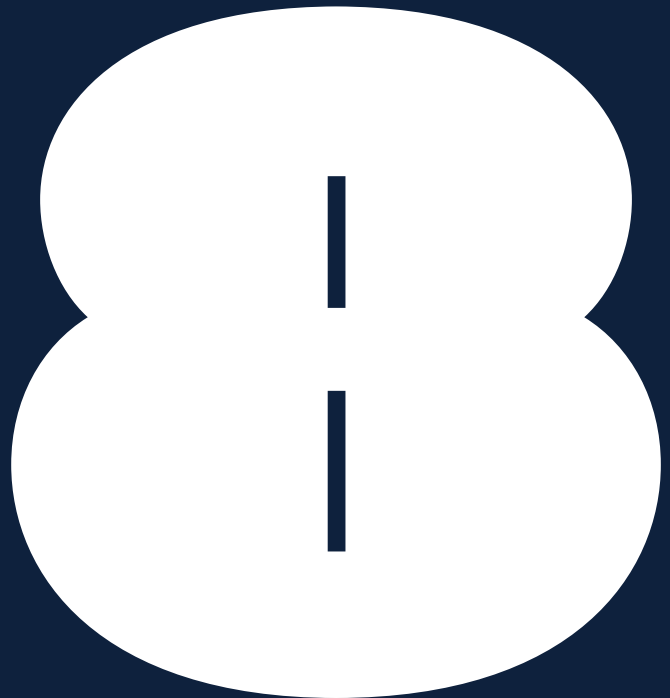
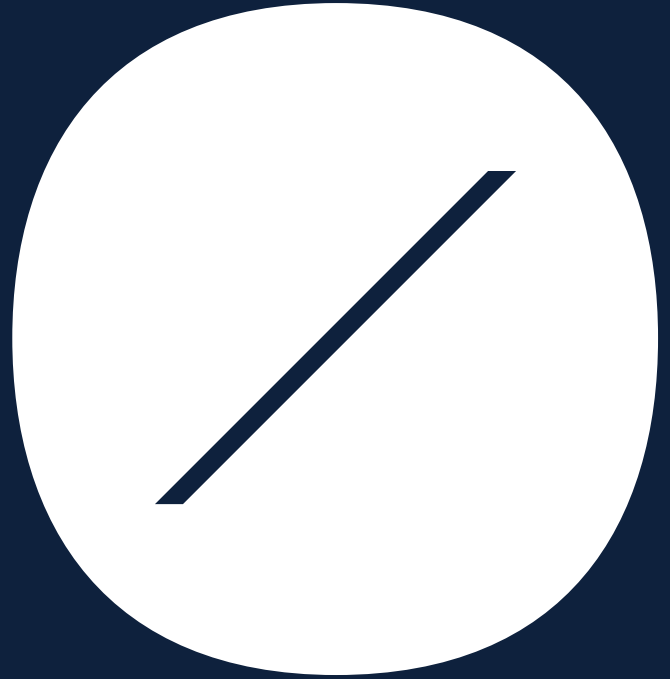


The State of Public Education in New Orleans





The mission of the Cowen Institute is to advance public education and youth success in New Orleans and beyond.

To further that mission, the Cowen Institute focuses on K-12 education, college and career success, and reconnecting opportunity youth to school and work.

The Cowen Institute was founded by Tulane University President Emeritus Scott Cowen in December 2006 and opened its doors in March 2007. Since that time, the Institute has chronicled the transformation of public education in New Orleans. The *State of Public Education in New Orleans* is the Institute's annual report on the city's schools, students, and educators. This is the tenth edition of the report.

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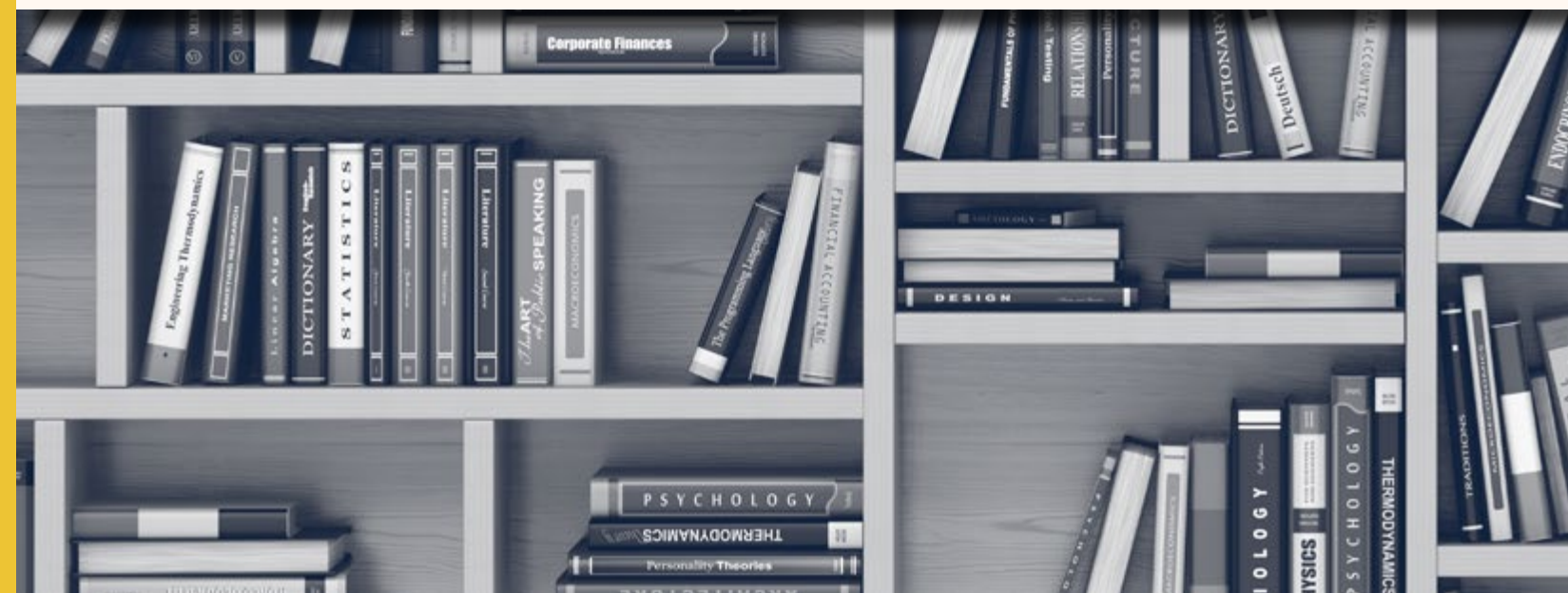


Amanda Hill *Executive Director, Cowen Institute*

At the Cowen Institute, we envision a city where all children have access to a world-class education and where all youth are on inspiring pathways to college and careers. We opened our doors in 2007 to chronicle and analyze the transformation of the K-12 education system in New Orleans. Through our annual *State of Public Education in New Orleans (SPENO)* report, public perception polls, and issue briefs, we aim to share our analysis in relevant and accessible ways.

We are at a pivotal moment in New Orleans' history as schools return to the Orleans Parish School Board's oversight. This report distills the complexities of governance, enrollment, accountability, school performance, student and educator demographics, and transportation. Additionally, this report looks ahead at what is on the horizon for our city's schools. We hope you find this information useful.

As we look forward, we are more committed than ever to ensuring that all students have access to high-quality public education and meaningful post-secondary opportunities. We wish to acknowledge the incredible work and determination of educators, school leaders, parents, non-profit partners, civic leaders, and, most of all, young people in our city.



THIS YEAR'S REPORT

At the Cowen Institute, our mission is to advance public education and youth success in New Orleans and beyond. From its creation in 2007 until today, the Cowen Institute has aimed to serve the public in New Orleans by analyzing and chronicling, in an accessible manner, the transformation of the city's education system. This annual report, *The State of Public Education in New Orleans*, has been the Institute's flagship publication, capturing as much information as possible about our schools in a single document. When coupled with our annual public perception poll conducted over the same period, we have been able to provide the public with wide-ranging, valuable data and insights about how schools and students are performing, the impact of major policy changes, and families' opinions about the educational opportunities available in this city.

This year's report will continue that tradition, but with more of an eye towards the future and what comes next for our schools. The unification of schools is at a significant inflection point for educators and families across New Orleans, and this report considers what must happen in the coming years to ensure continued progress.

The move to a unified system comes at a unique time: Examined from almost any data point, whether student achievement, graduation rates, or school performance, public education in New Orleans has improved dramatically since 2005. Public support for unification remains high, and voters approved three millages to fund schools late last year.¹

Yet, the OPSB will continue to face many challenges once schools come under its oversight. Equity remains a major issue, as many of the city's highest performing schools have selective admissions criteria, and there are not enough A and B rated schools for all students to attend. The highest performing schools are not equally distributed geographically across the city, meaning families often face the choice of long bus rides or attending a lower-performing school. New Orleans also lacks sufficient high-quality early childhood options and schools within the city remain highly segregated along racial and socio-economic lines.

Recently, overall citywide school performance has stagnated and even regressed, dropping from a B to a C grade according to the state's assessment, while the performance of schools statewide has continued to rise.² The city's graduation rate has also fallen over the past five years, and schools face challenges when ensuring that those who do graduate are prepared for college and employment.³

Our goal with this report is to show what will change and remain the same once unification occurs, while also providing a deeper exploration of New Orleans' public school system and the many players therein. We hope that the report serves as a valuable resource for all readers who are interested in learning more about the city's evolving educational ecosystem.

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INTRODUCTION



Public education in New Orleans is at a pivotal juncture in its post-Hurricane Katrina history. Later this year, at the start of the 2018-19 school calendar, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) will become the authorizer and governing entity for all schools currently overseen by the state's Recovery School District (RSD) in New Orleans. When this occurs, it will be the first time since 2005 that the OPSB will be the governing body for the vast majority of public schools in the city.

This process of unifying most of the public schools in the city under the OPSB is a marked change for a system that has come to be known nationally for its decentralized governance model and the profusion of charter schools. Yet, while the transition to a new governance model will result in differences in how, and to whom, schools are held accountable, the autonomy of charter school operators will largely remain intact. The OPSB is also planning to turn over its four remaining direct-run schools to charter operators within the next few years. If that occurs, New Orleans will become the first large district in the country in which all of its public schools are charter schools.

How We Got Here

There were charter schools in New Orleans prior to Katrina, but the devastation wrought by the storm led to a decentralization movement that greatly expanded the number of charter schools. In 2005, the Louisiana Legislature voted to expand the authority of the RSD to take over not just failing, but also low-performing public schools in New Orleans. At the time, New Orleans' schools had some of the poorest financial accountability and academic performance results in Louisiana, a state already near the bottom nationally in terms of how it was providing for its students.^{4,5}

For most of the next decade, oversight for the vast majority of city schools was separated between the OPSB and the RSD, with the OPSB retaining authority over only the highest-performing schools. Individual charter schools and networks, however, have had a great deal of autonomy in terms of making decisions about their curriculum, staffing, operations, and finances.⁶ A handful of RSD charter schools, having made sufficient academic progress, voluntarily opted to come under the OPSB's oversight, but the vast majority remained under the state's purview. However, in 2016, the Louisiana Legislature passed a bill requiring all New Orleans RSD schools to come under the OPSB's authority by June 2018.⁷ In response, an increased number of schools chose to move to the OPSB early, and the 2017-18 school year was the first since 2005 in which there were more New Orleans public schools overseen by the OPSB than the RSD.

Since 2016, the OPSB has prepared for the unification of schools under the guidance of a plan adopted and implemented by Superintendent Henderson Lewis and its seven elected board members. That plan focuses on strengthening accountability standards and incorporating more community and family input into the direction of city schools. In November 2017, the OPSB also released *A Unified Path Forward*, a document that captures the entity's eight goals for schools in the unified system, which include improving student performance at all grade levels, with an emphasis on high school, as well as increasing the equity of the system as a whole.⁸

2018-2019

WHAT'S CHANGING FOR NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS... AND WHAT'S NOT

Notable Changes



Governance

The OPSB will become the authorizer for all current RSD charter schools in New Orleans.



Accountability

School Performance Scores will be based on new statewide accountability standards adopted by the LDOE. The OPSB will implement a new citywide accountability framework.



Science Assessment

The state will use a new science test next year to assess student knowledge and growth.



Accountability

BESE implemented a curve on school letter grades in 2013-14 to ensure the percentage of schools receiving C, D, or F grades did not increase as schools transitioned to new accountability standards. It will expire this year. Starting in 2017-18, school letter grades will not include a curve and we will likely see a decrease in the number of schools receiving an A and an increase in the number of schools receiving an F statewide.

Remaining the Same

Hiring

Charter schools, and not the OPSB, will retain their autonomy over hiring and staffing decisions.



Curriculum

Charter schools, and not the OPSB, will retain their autonomy over curriculum (how students are taught).



OneApp

Students will continue to apply to schools through OneApp. Additionally, no schools that are currently outside the system will join next year.



GOVERNANCE



As mentioned in the introduction, since Hurricane Katrina, governance for most of the schools in the city has been divided between the RSD and the OPSB. But, at the end of this year, that divided governance model will end: All of the schools under RSD governance will come under the OPSB's oversight at the start of the 2018-19 school year.

State legislation passed in 2016 required all RSD schools to come under the OPSB's oversight by July 1, 2018. The OPSB hired consultants and formed an advisory committee of educators, administrators, and advocates to guide the transition process. Over the past two years, the OPSB has planned and worked to implement a process to ensure it is ready to act as the authorizer for the vast majority of New Orleans schools. That effort involved extensive community engagement and task forces devoted to finalizing new protocols around accountability, system-wide services, the maintenance of facilities, transportation, and community involvement.

There are 86 public schools located in New Orleans during the 2017-18 school year.⁹ Of those, the OPSB is the authorizer for 41 and the RSD for 38. Thus, when unification occurs, all schools but the six overseen by BESE, and NOCCA, overseen by the Louisiana Legislature, will come under the OPSB's oversight.

What Unification Means for Schools

While the change to a unified system is significant from a governance perspective, as it moves authorizing control of most schools in the city to the local level, the effect on the day-to-day operations of schools will be less profound. The schools in New Orleans will continue to comprise a portfolio district, with the OPSB overseeing a system of schools operating under performance-based accountability and parental choice. As is currently the case, the OPSB will not directly operate the charter schools under its authority. Many of the core features that have defined public education in New Orleans over the past decade will remain the same.

Once unification occurs, the OPSB plans to focus primarily on five main objectives, including ensuring the high-quality performance of individual schools, achieving system-wide objectives for all schools under its oversight, providing oversight for the facilities and finances of schools, and engaging parents, students, and the community at-large. The OPSB is currently in the process of finalizing new charter oversight and renewal standards, which reflect the new statewide accountability measures that were approved last year. The OPSB's accountability framework will dictate the performance, financial, and regulatory benchmarks schools must achieve to maintain, renew, and/or extend their charter contracts. Another main goal of the OPSB going forward is to promote equity across the school system to ensure equal access to quality education opportunities for all students.

UNDER A UNIFIED SYSTEM:

School operators will retain their autonomy:

Under unified governance, charter school operators (rather than the OPSB) will keep their ability to control and make decisions about curriculum, staffing, and finances.

Open enrollment will continue:

With a few exceptions, students and families will continue to apply for, and have the option to attend, any school in the city, regardless of where they live. The city's online open enrollment system, OneApp, will continue to be the centralized application for RSD and OPSB schools, and schools that are not currently a part of OneApp are required to join upon their next charter renewal.

Charter boards will continue their oversight of schools:

In addition to being authorized by a state or local entity, in New Orleans, every charter school or CMO is also overseen by its own charter board. This oversight capacity will also occur under unification.

OPSB's UNIFICATION PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. HIGH STANDARDS

Ensuring every child in every neighborhood has access to great public schools.

2. CONTINUED PROGRESS

Building on the progress of the past ten years by keeping expectations high and cultivating new leaders and quality education opportunities for all students.

3. CHOICES FOR FAMILIES

Creating a diverse set of school options that can be accessed through an equitable, clear process that provides every family with the right fit for their child.

4. ENSURING EQUITY

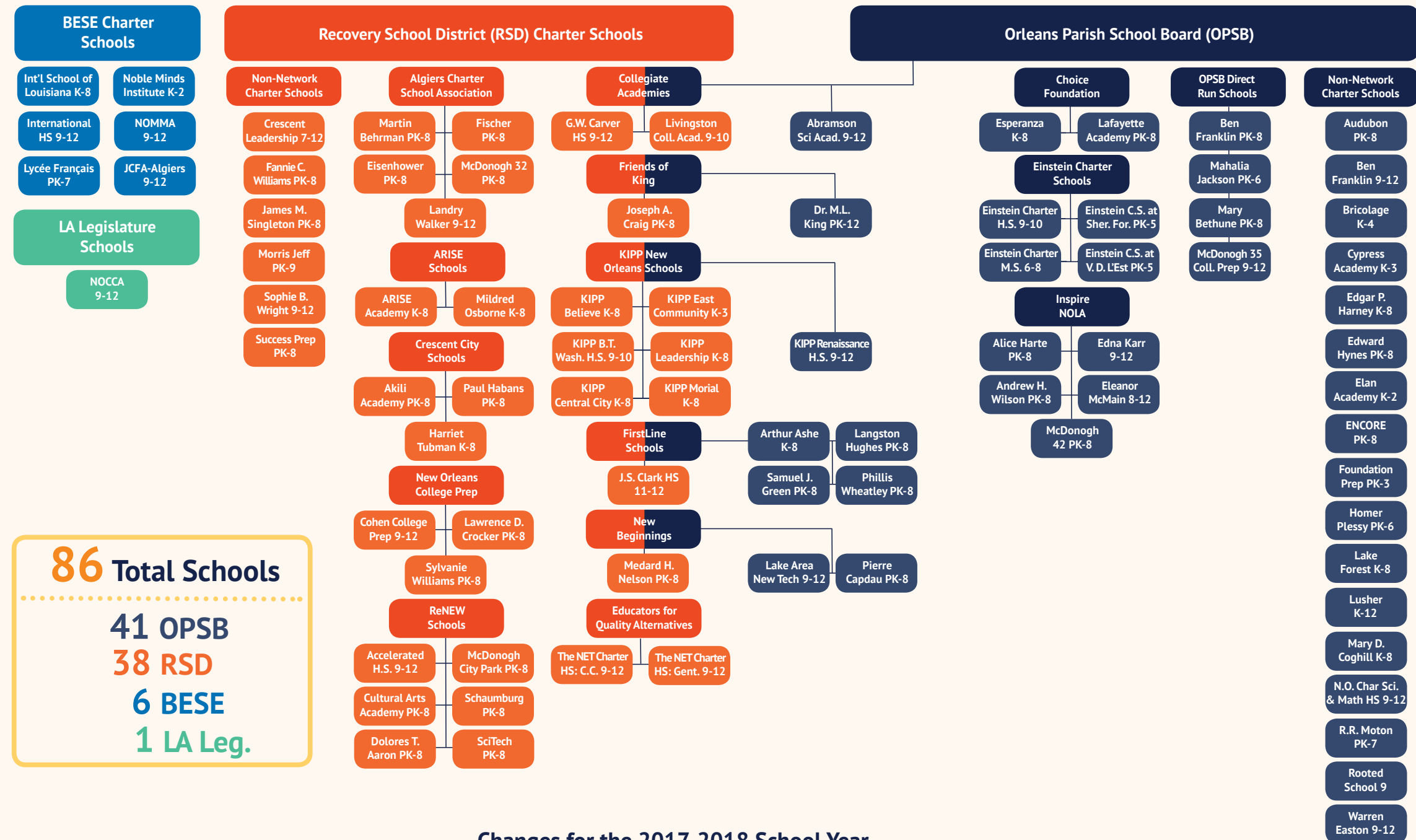
Providing students and schools with differentiated resources to meet the needs of all students.

5. EMPOWERING SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Continuing to empower the educators closest to students and families to make academic and school-level decisions to benefit students, while also ensuring there is transparency across all schools for families.

Public School Governance in New Orleans: 2017-2018 School Year

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



86 Total Schools

41 OPSB
38 RSD
6 BESE
1 LA Leg.

Changes for the 2017-2018 School Year

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>New Schools - 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elan Academy K-2 (OPSB) • McDonough 42 (OPSB) • Noble Minds Institute K-2 (BESE) • Rooted School 9 (OPSB) • The NET Charter HS: Gentilly (RSD) <p>Schools Changing Names - 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIPP McDonough 15 is now KIPP Morial | <p>Closed Schools - 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algiers Tech 9-12 (RSD) • McDonough 35 Academy 8 (OPSB) • McDonough 42 (RSD) • Milestone Academy K-8 (BESE) <p>Transforming Schools - 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleanor McMain 8-12 (Inspire NOLA) • McDonough 42 PK-8 (Inspire NOLA) | <p>New Transfers to OPSB - 8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abramson Sci Academy 9-12 (Coll. Acad.) • Arthur Ashe K-8 (FirstLine) • Edgar P. Harney K-8 (Non-Network) • Esperanza K-8 (Choice) • Lafayette Academy PK-8 (Choice) • Langston Hughes PK-8 (FirstLine) • Phillis Wheatley PK-8 (FirstLine) • Samuel J. Green PK-8 (FirstLine) <p>School Mergers - 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIPP Central City is a merger of KIPP Central City Primary & Central City Academy • Gentilly Terrace merged with Pierre Capdau | <p>Schools Adding a Grade - 14:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akili Academy - Pre-K • KIPP B.T. Washington H.S. - 10th Grade • Bricolage - 4th Grade • Cypress Academy - 3rd Grade • Einstein Charter H.S. - 10th Grade • Foundation Prep - 3rd Grade • Homer Plessy - 6th Grade • KIPP East Community - 3rd Grade • Livingston Collegiate Academy - 10th Grade • Lycée Français - 7th Grade • Mahalia Jackson - 6th Grade • Mary Bethune - 8th Grade • Samuel J. Green - Pre-K • Sylvania Williams - 8th Grade |
|--|---|--|---|

SCHOOLS AND ENROLLMENT



Schools and Enrollment

The New Orleans K-12 system is different from other public education systems across the U.S. in many respects. Most notably, New Orleans continues to have the highest percentage of public school students attending charter schools, 94 percent, and one of the highest percentages of school-aged children attending private schools, 25 percent, in the nation.^{10,11}

In the 2017-18 school year, New Orleans' 86 public schools are serving 48,545 K-12 students according to the October 2017 reporting period.¹² These 86 schools include RSD charters, OPSB charters, OPSB network schools, and Type-2 charters overseen by the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Overall, the type of charter school signifies the entity the school is accountable to, how it is funded, and in what parish its students may reside. The graphs on pages 14-15 provide a visual overview of enrollment trends in the city, including overall enrollment numbers, enrollment by school type, enrollment by race and socioeconomic status (SES) over time, and the total number of students enrolled by school letter grade. Over time, the percentage of Black students in the system has steadily decreased while proportions of White and Hispanic students have increased. The majority of New Orleans public school students, 59 percent, are enrolled in a school with a C or D letter grade; however, this distribution varies greatly by race and socio-economic status.

Overall enrollment numbers in the city have steadily increased since 2007, though total enrollment is still below pre-Katrina levels by approximately 18,000 seats.¹³ Over the last four years, the total number of students attending charter schools, specifically OPSB charter schools, has increased, while the number attending RSD operated schools has decreased, as a number of schools switched authorizers in recent years. In the 2017-18 academic year, the OPSB now serves as the school authorizer for the majority of public school students in New Orleans for the first time since 2005.

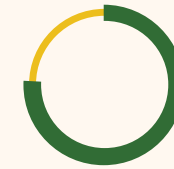
While the total number of students enrolled in New Orleans public schools has increased over the past several years, the number of children entering Kindergarten has continued to decline steadily since 2014. From the 2016-17 school year to 2017-18, Kindergarten enrollment declined by six percent.¹⁴ This trend is evident in the data but, at this stage, we are unsure of what is triggering this decline. It is crucial for stakeholders to continue to monitor this trend in new student enrollment when planning for long-term needs in the local public school system.

OneApp

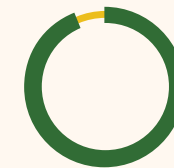
Another unique aspect of New Orleans' public education system is that all schools in the city are choice schools, meaning that students are not assigned a school based on geographical catchment zones. Rather, parents apply to schools using a centralized online application known as OneApp and rank up to eight schools. Then, OneApp allocates students to available seats using an algorithm and a series of predictive factors including parents' school rank, the number of available seats per grade, school priorities (such as siblings of current students or geographic area), and the student's randomly assigned lottery number.

According to EnrollNOLA's 2017 annual report, 92.2 percent of New Orleans students returned to their school in the 2017-18 school year. This is a slight increase from the previous year's rate of 91.5 percent. Of new applicants, OneApp matched 76 percent of students to one of their top three school choices in the main round.¹⁵

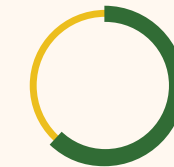
ONEAPP: QUICK FACTS*



76% of applicants were matched to one of their top three schools.



94% of sibling applicants were matched to their sibling's school.



62% of total choices were outside of the applicant's geographic zone.



52% of applicants' first choice school was outside of their geographic zone.

What factors do schools consider?



The most common factor is whether the applicant has siblings that attend the school.



A number of schools prioritize students from designated feeder early childhood centers or K-8 schools.



The second most common factor is if the student lives in the geographic area.



A few schools prioritize low-income and/or ELL students.



Some schools prioritize children of current staff.

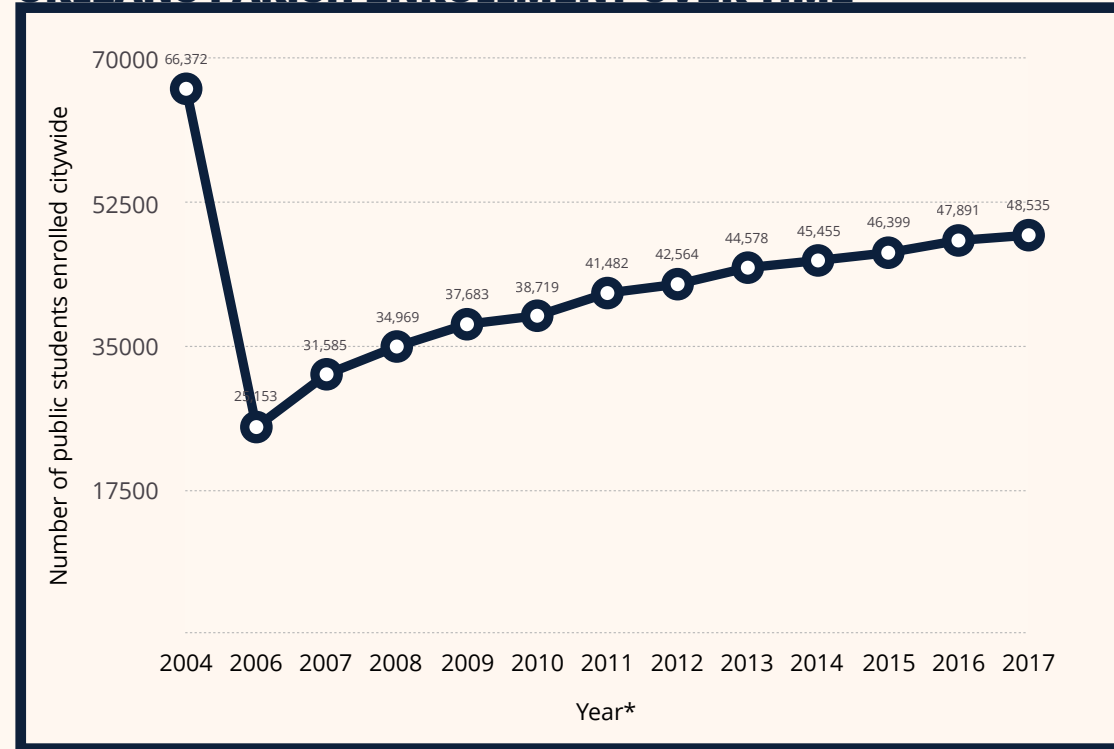


A few schools require academic or language testing prior to admission.

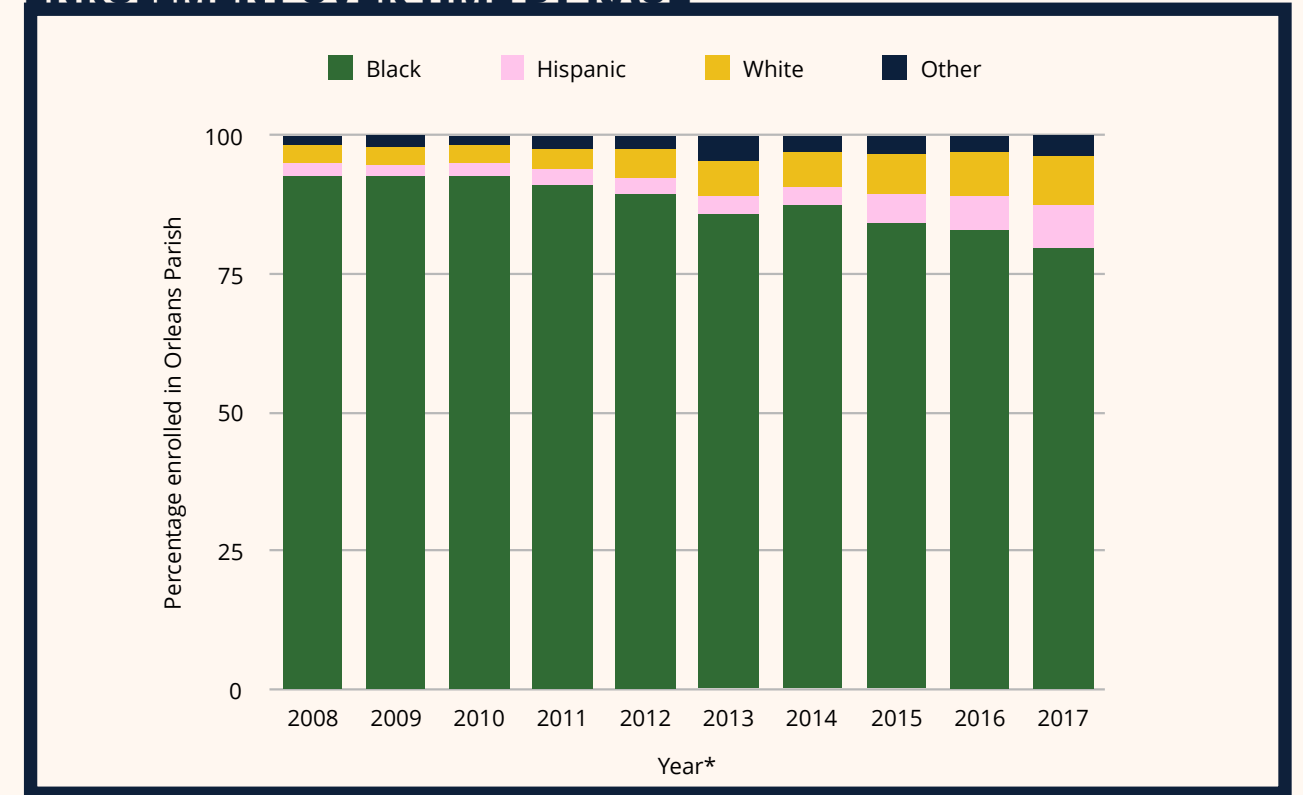
*All data is from EnrollNOLA's 2017 Annual Report and schools' stated preferences on the EnrollNOLA website.

ENROLLMENT

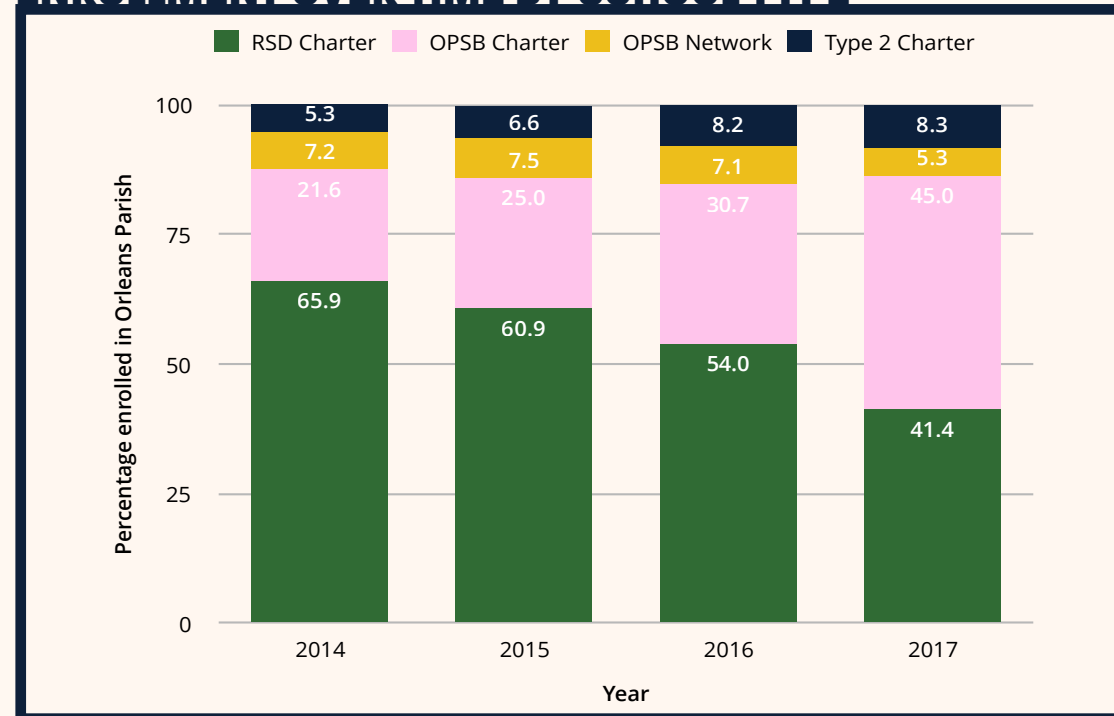
ORLEANS PARISH ENROLLMENT OVER TIME



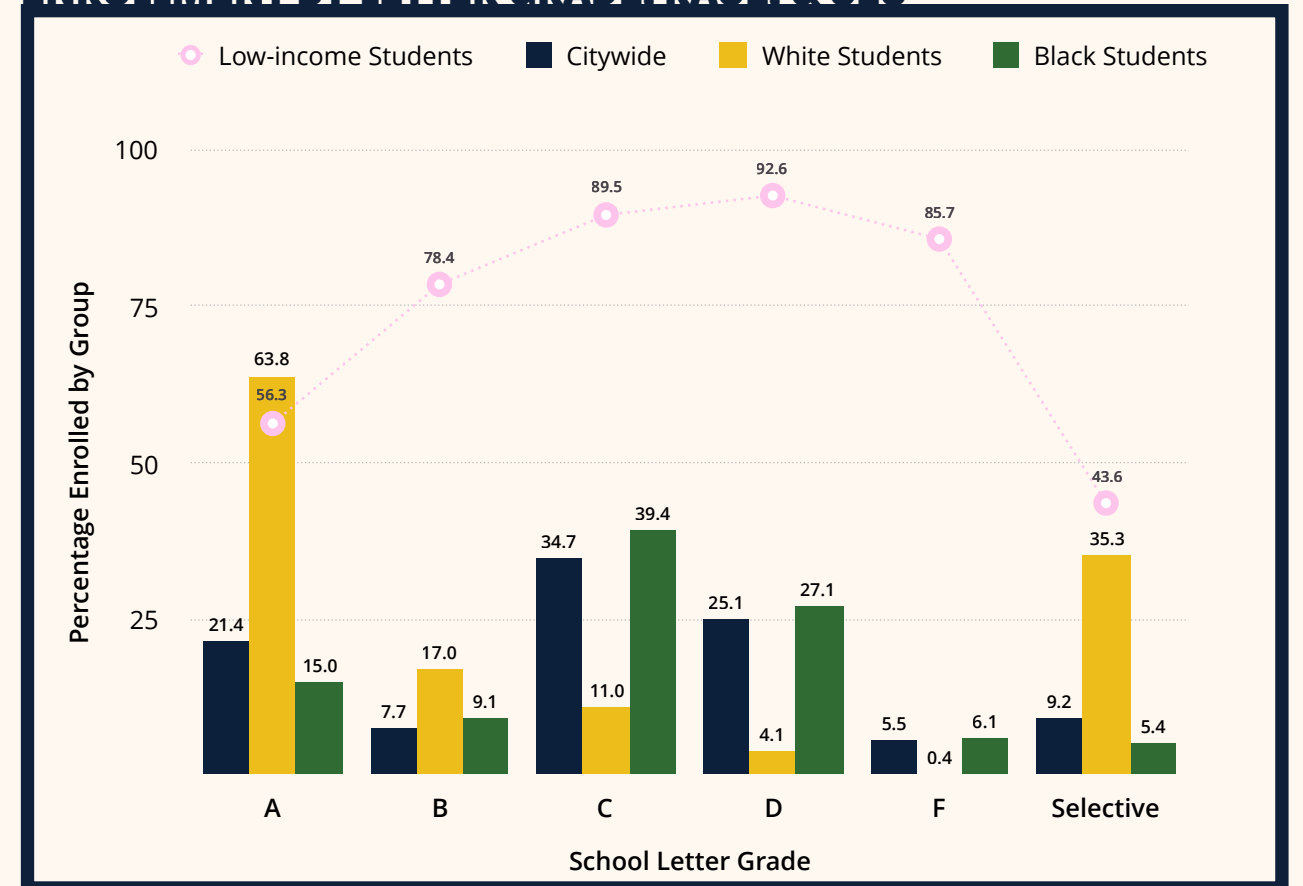
ENROLLMENT OVER TIME BY RACE



ENROLLMENT OVER TIME BY SCHOOL TYPE



ENROLLMENT BY LETTER GRADE, RACE, & SES



*All enrollment data is from the LDOE's Louisiana Believes Site. Enrollment data is from MFP fall counts. No data is available for fall 2005.

*Selective stands for 'Selective Admissions,' which includes public schools that require academic testing for admissions.

ACCOUNTABILITY



This past year has seen a dramatic shift in accountability standards across the country, state, and city. As the RSD and OPSB charter schools prepare to unify under the OPSB's governance, the OPSB faced the challenge of designing an accountability framework that would ensure high performance among schools across the city while adhering to state and national accountability standards, and protecting the autonomy of individual charters and Charter Management Organizations (CMOs). The draft of the city's new accountability framework is currently in the final stages of development and will be released sometime in 2018.

Meanwhile, the state undertook a comprehensive planning process to create new accountability standards in compliance with federal regulations laid out by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), approved by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in 2016.¹⁶ According to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the department convened 136 meetings and received feedback on the framework from over 200 organizations and 1,000 individuals.¹⁷ The state's proposed framework received approval from BESE in March 2017 and was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) in April 2017. On August 15, 2017, the state received approval from the U.S. DOE for Louisiana's new statewide accountability standards.

In Louisiana, schools are held accountable through a scoring system known as school performance scores (SPS), which measures academic tests, graduation rates, diploma strength, and progress. There are variations between high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, highlighted in the infographic on page 19. Currently, schools are assessed on a 150-point scale. Schools are then assigned a letter grade from A to F based on their cumulative score. The roll-out of the state's new accountability standards will take place over the next several years. Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, school performance scores will include a measure of academic growth. In 2018-19, points will be awarded to schools based on progress towards English language proficiency among English language learners. By the 2019-20 school year, the new framework will be fully implemented, including growth measures and measures for "interests and opportunities".¹⁸

The LDOE began its roll-out of the new ESSA standards in the 2017-18 academic year. Rather than curving school performance scores throughout the transition, the state will immediately shift to defining mastery as the standard for achieving an A letter grade. Beginning in 2017-18, schools will be awarded an A (100 points) for students achieving mastery, for earning a 21 on the ACT, and for a cohort graduation rate of 90 percent. This marks a major shift from the preexisting standards for mastery. The state will then raise standards for achieving an A again in 2022 and one final time in 2025, gradually incorporating these changes over time.

KEY CHANGES UNDER THE STATE'S NEW PLAN

1

Higher Standards. The new standards establish that an A letter grade signals mastery of key academic outcome areas (math, English, science, and social studies), thus substantially raising the requirements for schools to achieve this marker. Standards were also raised on the ACT/WorkKeys, credit accumulation, and growth rates.

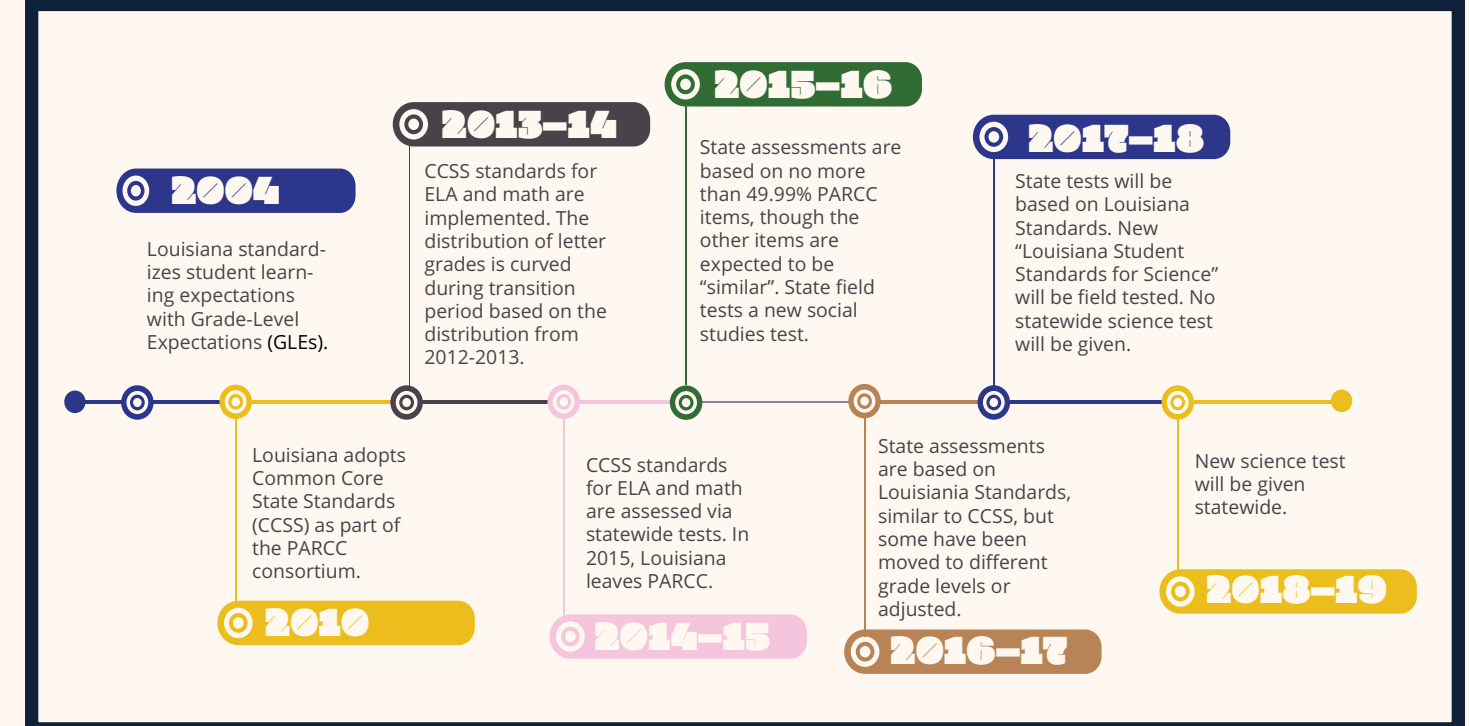
2

Measuring Growth. School performance scores will include a measure of individual students' academic progress, including whether students are on track to achieve mastery in math and ELA and how their growth compares to that of their peers statewide (including those with similar demographic and academic profiles). Being "on track" to Mastery will be assessed by students' achievement of growth target scores on an annual basis. Students will also earn points on a tiered system based on their percentile growth relative to their peers.

3

New Ways to Earn Points. School performance scores will include five percentage points for schools providing "interests and opportunities" for students. However, what this means is yet to be defined. School performance scores will also consider progress towards English language proficiency among English language learners, as mandated by ESSA legislation.

STATE ASSESSMENT MEASURES OVER TIME



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



Elementary and Middle School Performance

Public schools across the state of Louisiana administer a number of screening assessments for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to grade 3. These assessments vary based on the needs and preferences of each school district. Students in grades 3-8 participate annually in standardized statewide assessments. Prior to 2014, grades 4 and 8 were known as promotional grades, meaning that students had to reach a specified level of proficiency on the assessment in order to advance to the next grade. This requirement was put on pause due to the adoption and subsequent replacement of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). At meetings in both October 2017 and January 2018, BESE decided to require underperforming students to receive an individual academic improvement plan to be signed by a parent or legal guardian. BESE also removed the requirement to retain underperforming students so that districts would have the authority to decide whether to promote or retain students.

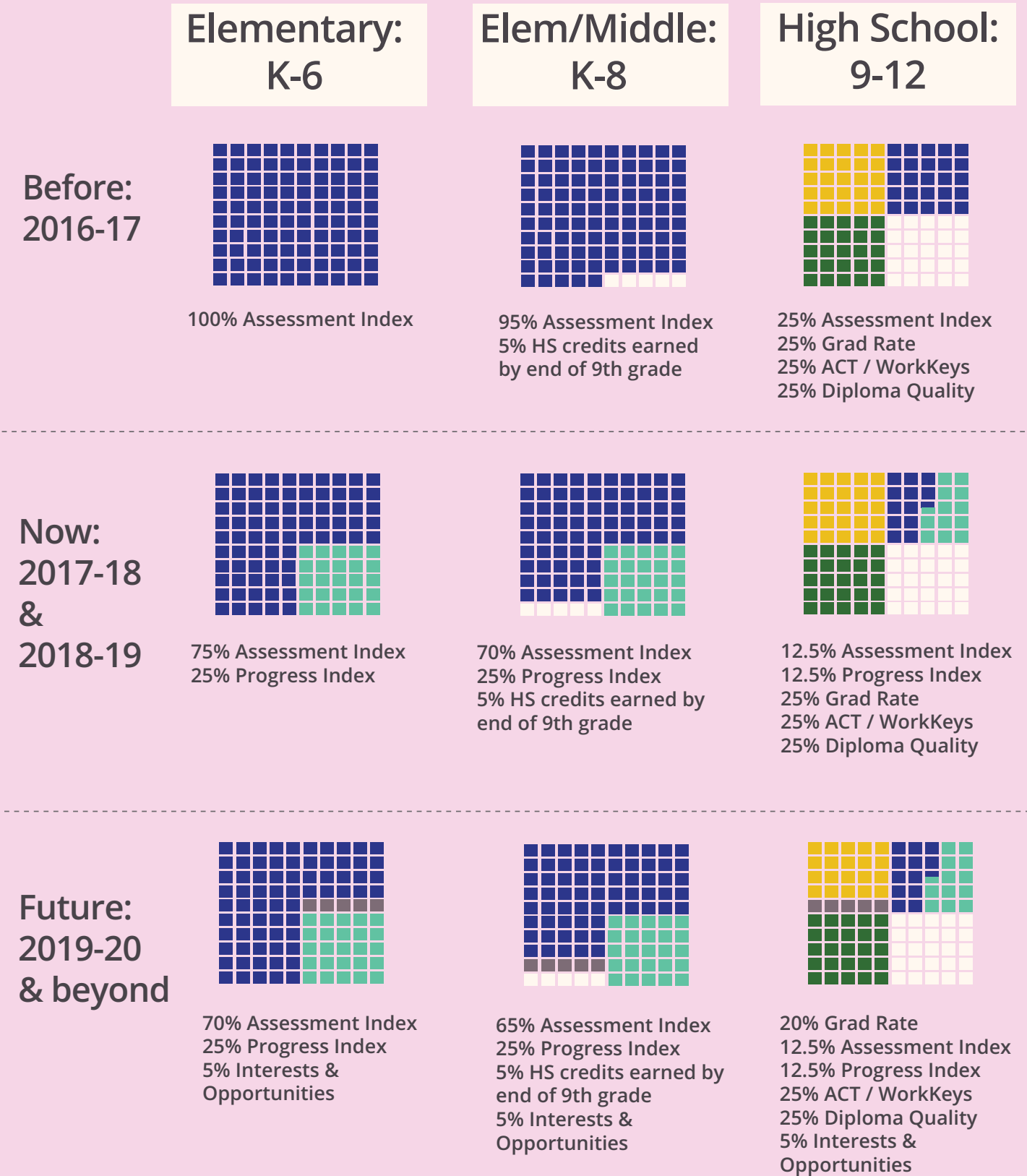
Assessment scores in grades 3-8 are measured by proficiency levels. There are five levels of performance possible on each assessment subject:

- Advanced
- Mastery
- Basic
- Approaching Basic
- Unsatisfactory

Previously, the state relied on the third of the five levels (Basic) in determining whether schools received an A letter grade. The bar is now gradually being raised to Mastery for achieving the top letter grade. The state shifted to an expectation of Mastery in 2015 and the gradual shift of score allocations reflects this decision. In 2017-18, the number of points schools receive for students achieving varying levels of proficiency will shift as part of the state's new accountability formula.¹⁹

Citywide, there has been an overall growth in the number of students achieving Mastery or above over the past decade. In the 2004-05 school year, prior to Hurricane Katrina, six percent of New Orleans students reached an overall level of Mastery or above. In the first year following the storm, 2006-07, 23 percent of OPSB students were at Mastery, compared with three percent of RSD students who reached the same bar. Since then, students in both OPSB and RSD schools have achieved significantly higher performance. In 2015-16, 24 percent of RSD students in grades 3-8 reached Mastery, while 49 percent in OPSB did the same. Assessment scores declined across the state in 2016-17, and 25 percent of students in Orleans Parish (OSPB + RSD) as a whole reached Mastery. Graphs on pages 22-23 highlight these changes over time.²⁰

HOW ARE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORES CALCULATED?



High School Performance

High school students in Louisiana participate in statewide End-of-Course (EOC) testing and national ACT testing. Like the elementary and middle school performance standards, there are levels of proficiency for high school EOCs, as well:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Needs Improvement

In 2008-09, 43 percent of students in Louisiana scored proficient (good or excellent) on EOC subject assessments. By May of 2015, that figure increased to 62 percent. Local and statewide average scores have fallen since 2014-15, but Orleans Parish (OPSB + RSD) students have still shown improvement from 33 percent proficient in 2009 to 52 percent in 2017. Graphs on pages 22-23 highlight these changes over time.

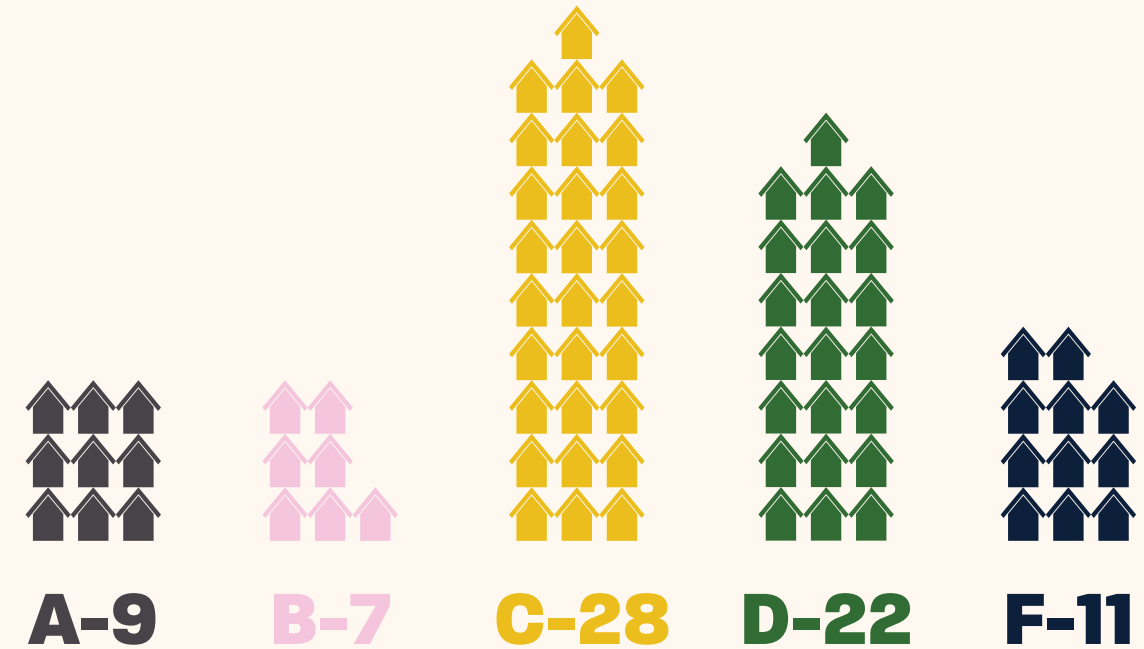
New Orleans Without the Curve: What to Expect

As previously mentioned, Louisiana has made several changes aimed towards increasing expectations for students. The bar for proficiency was moved from Basic to Mastery, and Louisiana adopted CCSS, followed more recently by the Louisiana Standards. In order to maintain consistent school letter grades during this period of change, BÉSE created a mathematical curve that took effect in the 2013-14 school year. This curve ensured that the percentage of schools receiving low letter grades would not increase with the school performance scores. Instead, the curve set a floor on the total percentage of schools in each letter grade. In practice, many schools that would have otherwise earned a C, D, or F letter grade received a higher letter grade, but it did not impact the letter grades of schools with an A or B already at the top of the curve.

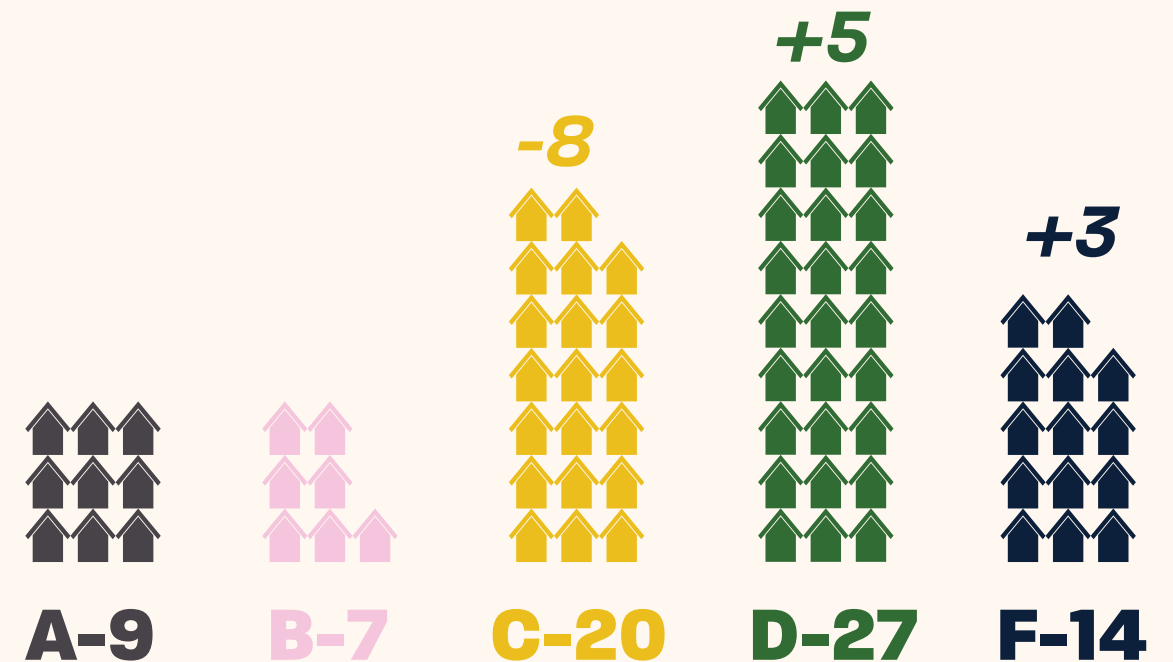
The curve is set to expire following the 2016-17 assessment cycle, which means that school letter grades issued for 2017-18 will not be curved. Over the years, school letter grades and the curve have been the focal point of much discussion and debate among school leaders, educators, and politicians.²¹⁻²³ Coupled with the new statewide accountability standards, it is predicted that school letter grades will drop significantly in 2017-18, with the state's latest projections estimating a 38 percent reduction in A schools and a 57 percent increase in F schools.²⁴

The infographic on page 21 looks at how school letter grades in New Orleans in 2016-17 would have differed without the curve. We see that the number of A and B schools remains the same, the number of C schools drops, and the number of D and F schools increases. This infographic is not an accurate prediction of what school letter grades will look like next year, as there will be other changes to accountability frameworks and standards. However, it does provide a rough estimate of the impact that the curve has had on school letter grades in the city and, coupled with the state's projections, suggests that New Orleans' school letter grades in 2017-18 will experience a notable drop. While this drop does not necessarily indicate a drop in actual school performance, it is important for local families and stakeholders to be aware of the shifting standards in the event that the city experiences a dramatic shift in overall school letter grades, as they are typically used as the main indicator of school performance in the media and the community at-large.

NEW ORLEANS 2016-17 SPS WITH THE CURVE

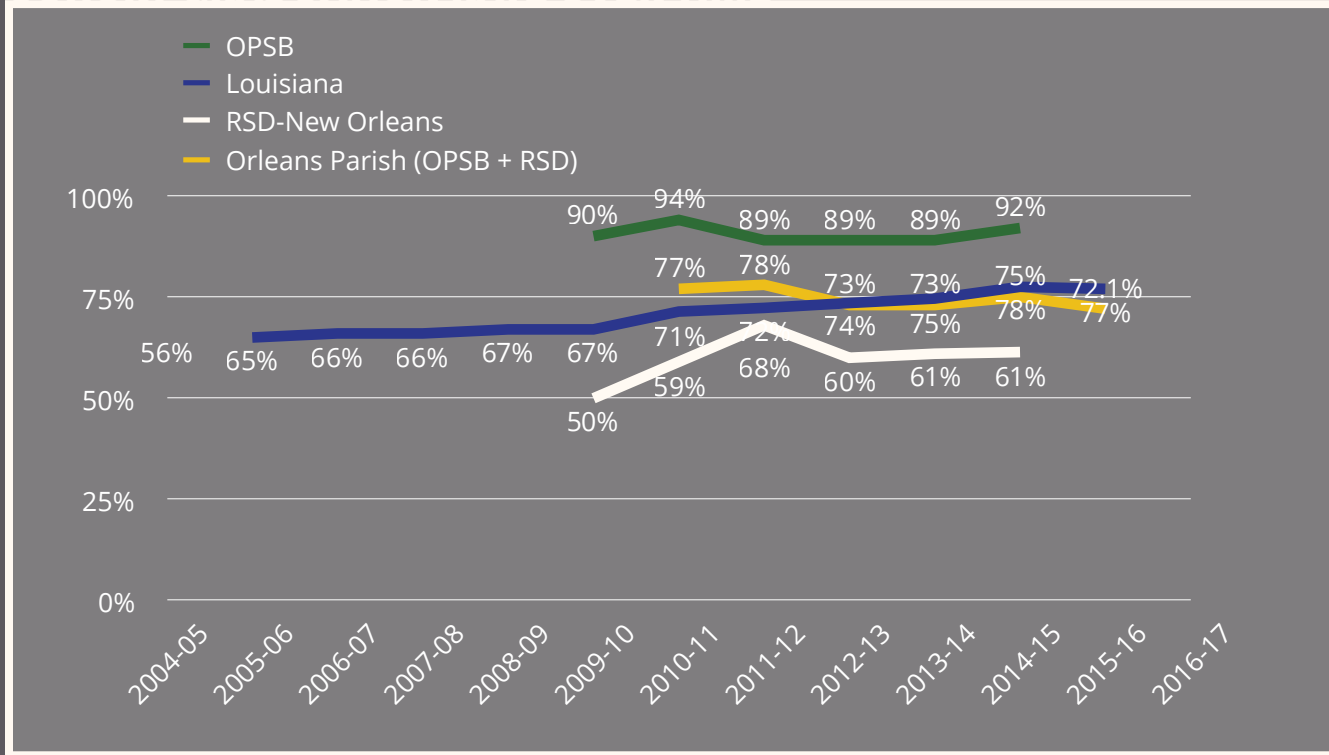


NEW ORLEANS 2016-17 SPS WITHOUT THE CURVE

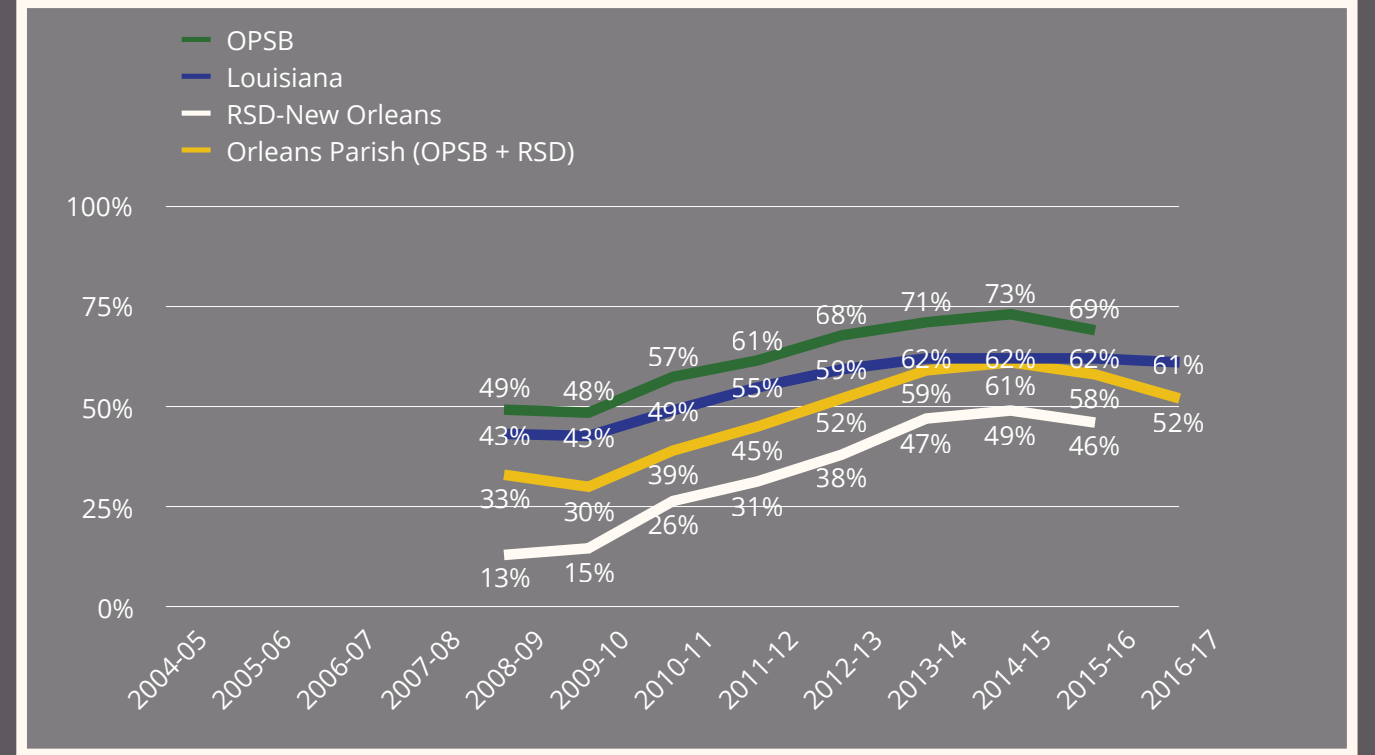


KEY ACADEMIC MEASURES

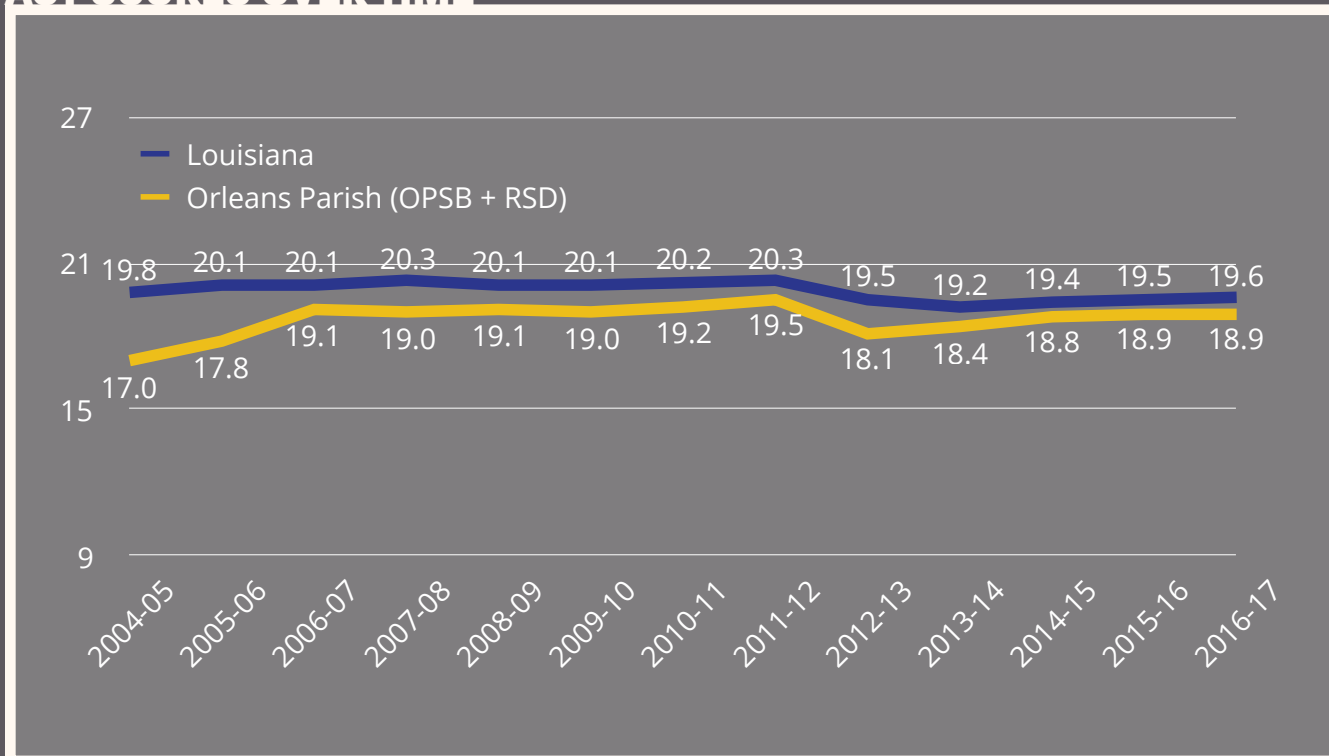
COHORT GRADUATION RATE OVER TIME*25



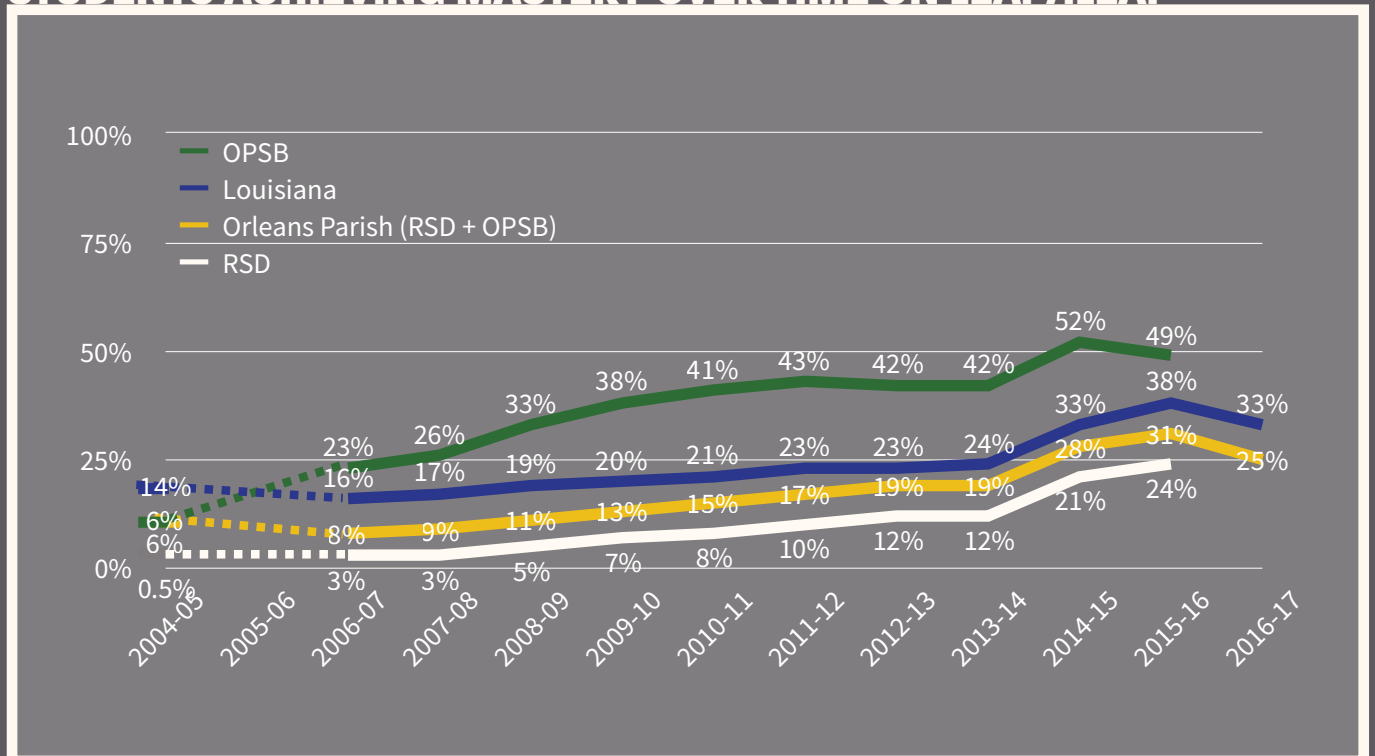
EOC SCORES OVER TIME: GOOD AND EXCELLENT



ACT SCORES OVER TIME*26



STUDENTS ACHIEVING MASTERY OVER TIME ON LEAP/ILEAP



STUDENTS



As of October 2017, there are 48,545 K-12 students enrolled in public schools in New Orleans. Just over half, 50.3 percent, attend OPSB schools, 41.4 percent attend RSD schools, and 8.3 percent attend a state-run Type 2 school or NOCCA.²⁷

This year, the demographic profile of New Orleans public school students remains consistent with previous years. The vast majority of public school students are Black and this group is overrepresented in the system compared with city-wide demographics: 66 percent of the population in Orleans Parish is Black, compared with 80 percent of the public school population.²⁸ That said, in recent years, the largest growth rates in public school enrollment have been among White and Hispanic students, suggesting that public school demographics in the city are shifting. A total of six percent of public students have limited English language proficiency, which is approximately half of the national average but nearly double the Louisiana state average.²⁹

Poverty remains widespread among public school students in the city. A vast majority, 83 percent, of public school students are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This is significantly higher than the national average of 51 percent and more than 15 percent higher than the state average.^{30,31} In figures that mirror national trends, schools with higher levels of socioeconomically disadvantaged students also have higher concentrations of minority students and lower overall performance scores. Conversely, schools with lower enrollment numbers of economically disadvantaged students have lower percentages of minority students.³² Also mirroring national trends, schools with lower concentrations of economically disadvantaged students, which typically are OPSB and BESE schools with selective admissions procedures, more frequently have higher academic performance scores. Among public school students in the city, approximately 17 percent have a special education designation. This is slightly higher than the state average of 15 percent.³³



PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS: 2017

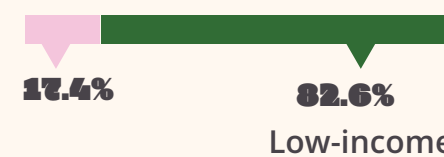
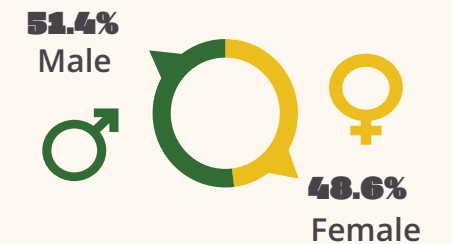
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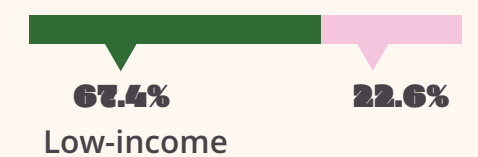
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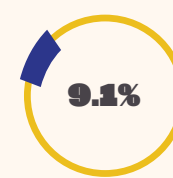
GENDER



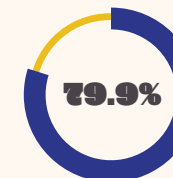
SES



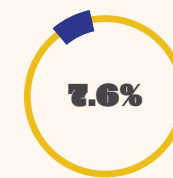
ENGLISH LEARNERS



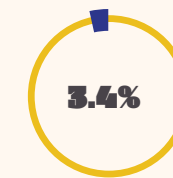
White



Black

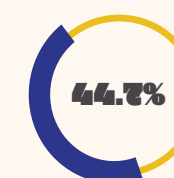


Hispanic

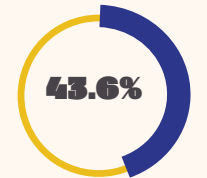


Other

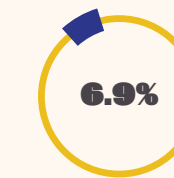
RACE



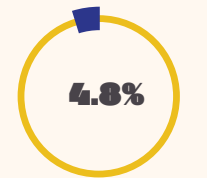
White



Black



Hispanic



Other

EDUCATORS



Staffing decisions are one of the clearest ways in which New Orleans charter schools exercise more autonomy than schools in traditional districts across the U.S. Aside from the handful of schools run directly by the OPSB, employment decisions in New Orleans are made at the school rather than district level. This means that choices around hiring, firing, professional development, and salaries are made by the leaders of individual schools or CMOs, rather than by the OPSB or RSD. This will continue under the unified system.

Over the past decade, the demographics of teachers in New Orleans schools have changed dramatically. Black teachers no longer constitute a majority of the teacher corps, falling from 71 percent in 2003-04 to 50 percent in 2017-18. A majority of teachers in the city now have fewer than five years of teaching experience, compared to a third a decade ago. During that window, teachers with 20 or more years of experience fell from nearly 40 percent to under ten percent.³⁴

Teacher-student ratios were relatively similar at all schools in the city, regardless of their authorizer. In New Orleans, the overall student-teacher ratio is 14:1. The OPSB and the RSD have similar student ratios, at 13.9:1, and 14.3:1, respectively.³⁵ Nationally, the student-teacher ratio is 16.1:1 students.³⁶

Teacher Training and Talent Pipeline

Building out the teacher corps and talent pipeline in New Orleans is a priority for the OPSB and education-focused organizations across the city, especially in light of local and statewide data indicating teacher shortages. Over the past several years, Louisiana has experienced a decline in the total number of people earning teaching credentials. Between 2011 and 2017, the number of people with a Bachelor's degree in education who earned teacher certification statewide fell by 8 percent.³⁷ Among those who earned a credential, more than 80 percent obtained certification in physical education, elementary education, and Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd-grade education. For the past three years, fewer than 20 percent of teachers gained certifications in other academic areas, including middle- and high-school education as well as core subjects like math, science, and English.³⁸

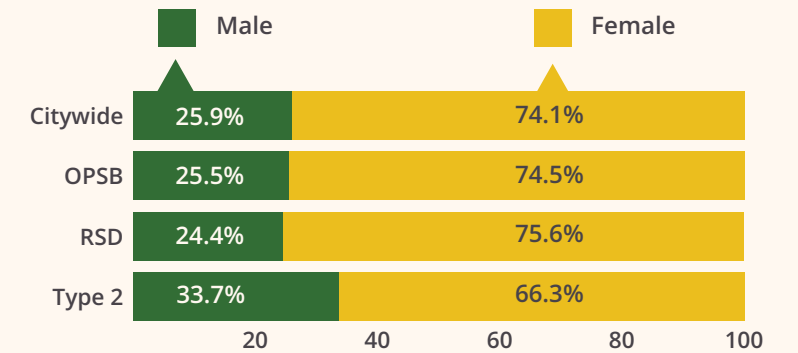
The state has made some efforts to address this teacher shortage. For example, the LDOE has issued over 1,500 temporary teaching certifications since 2014 in an attempt to put more would-be educators into classrooms.³⁹ The OPSB is also exploring strategies to put more veteran and retired teachers into the classroom to help address the shortage. One of the most promising strategies was announced in November 2017, when Xavier University and Loyola University were awarded a \$13 million federal grant from the U.S. Education Department's Supporting Effective Educator Development Program to recruit and train 900 teachers in New Orleans. The schools will partner with Teach For America, teachNOLA, Relay Graduate School of Education, and New Schools for New Orleans to address teacher pipeline challenges in the city.⁴⁰

However, education and training is only one factor contributing the teacher shortage in the city. Another issue affecting teacher retention that gained recent attention is affordability. A national study reported that the average starting salary for teachers in New Orleans is \$40,313 and that in the city, a teacher with five years experience and a Master's degree would have to use 44 percent of his/her salary to cover monthly housing expenses. While this problem isn't unique to New Orleans, it contributes to recruitment challenges and high levels of turnover among teaching staff in the city.^{41,42}

OUR TEACHERS

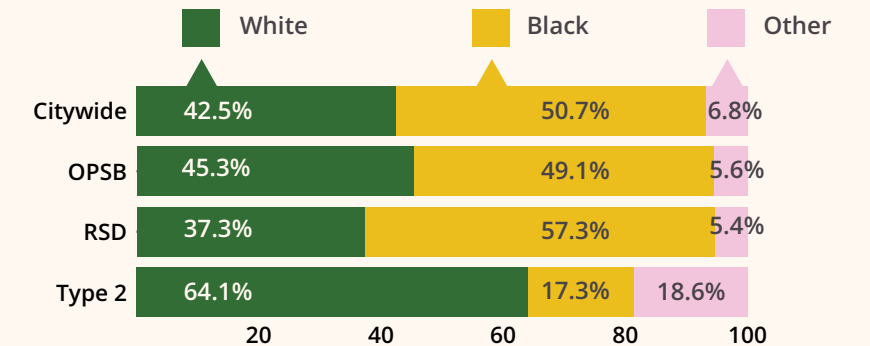
Gender

There are three times as many female teachers as male teachers in the city. The distribution across RSD, OPSB, and Type 2 schools mirrors this citywide trend.



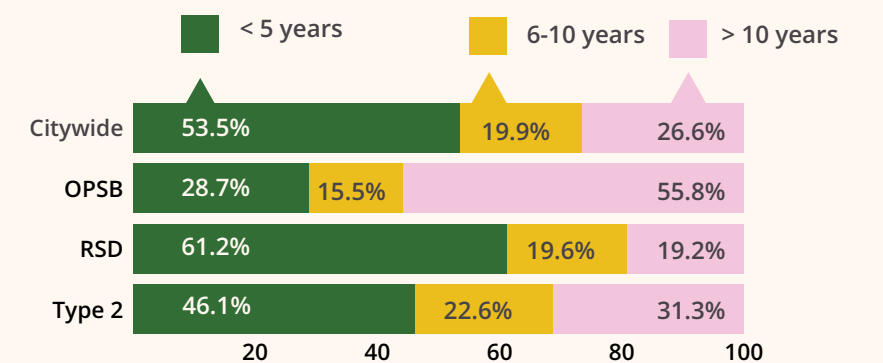
Race

Approximately half of the city's teaching force is Black and another 42.5 percent are White. Racial representation varies between RSD, OPSB, and Type 2 schools.



Experience

The majority of teachers in New Orleans are early in their career, with 73.4 percent having less than 10 years experience. Substantial variation still exists between OPSB and RSD schools with regards to teacher experience.



FINANCES

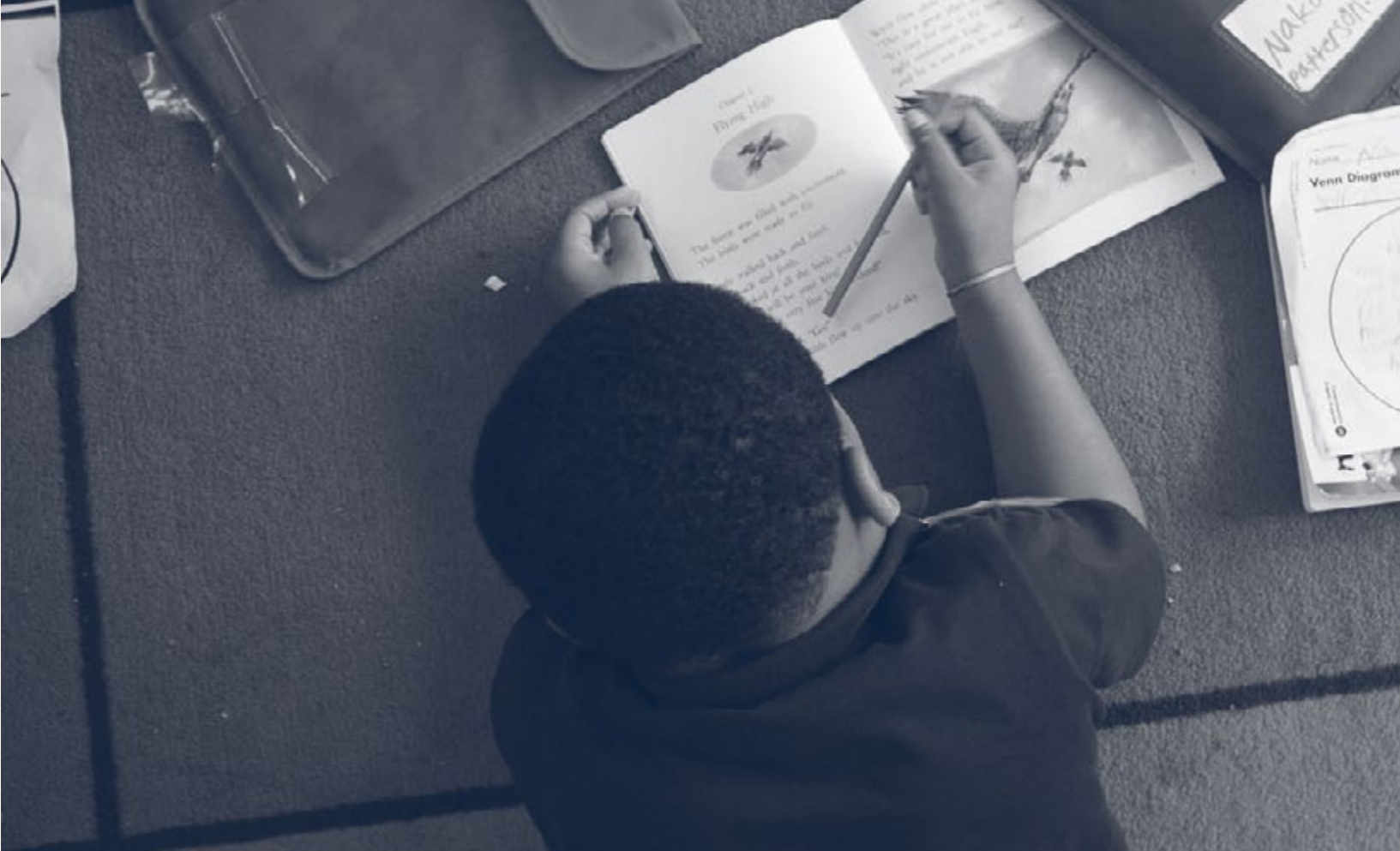
8

K-12 public education funding across the U.S. is a combination of federal, state, and local allocations. It is a common misperception, however, that federal dollars provide the majority of funding for elementary and secondary education in the country. In fact, local and state tax dollars are generally the largest source of funding. As of 2015, in Louisiana, 44 percent of all K-12 education funding came from state tax dollars, 43 percent from local tax dollars, and 13 percent from federal grants. Federal grants are usually administered through the LDOE, which then distributes the funds to districts and schools.

The LDOE distributes state and local tax dollars through the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP), a funding formula that determines how much districts and schools received based on a per-pupil basis. The MFP factors in student enrollment in a school or district, as well as student demographics such as family income and ELL, Gifted & Talented, and Special Needs status.⁴³ The state's base amount per pupil via the MFP has remained constant over the past two years, at around \$4,000. The legislature did approve additional funding last year, however, for K-12 education, it is outside the MFP base rate. Each district across the state gets a unique amount of funding that is calculated in part on how many local tax dollars are also contributed to K-12 education. Across the state and in New Orleans, charter schools, like traditional districts, are also able to raise additional philanthropic dollars through donations and grants.

In New Orleans, the amount spent per pupil in each school varies depending on the type of school and the authorizer of the school. The average spent per pupil across all schools in the city in 2015-16 was \$13,305. OPSB schools, both charters and direct-run schools, had a higher per pupil average rate, compared to the RSD and BESE schools: \$14,854, compared to \$12,498 and \$10,469 respectively (note: the average per pupil expenditure for students at NOCCA, overseen by the Louisiana Legislature, was \$32,558). The numbers vary between the OPSB and RSD schools due in large part to the demographics of the students served (see section on Differentiated Funding). Comparatively, the statewide total per pupil expenditures at schools was \$11,894.⁴⁴

Schools allocate the largest percentage of those funds towards instruction, which covers teacher salaries. On average, across the city 33 percent of all funding went to instruction, but the amount varies amongst schools, with the BESE schools spending 42 percent on instruction compared to 35 percent at the RSD schools and 29 percent at the OPSB schools. The RSD and BESE schools had notably higher costs for transportation than the OPSB schools. The RSD schools spent an average of \$931 per student on transportation, compared to \$652 at the BESE schools, and \$574 at the OPSB schools. Statewide, schools average spending \$671 per pupil on transportation.



Differentiated Funding

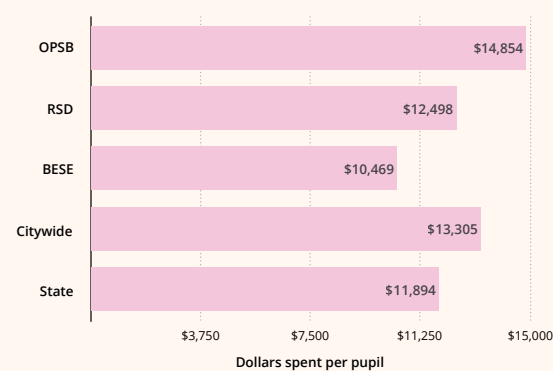
Since 2016, one unique aspect of how funding is allocated across the OPSB and RSD schools in New Orleans compared to schools across the state is differentiated funding, which is a student-based allocation formula. Differentiated funding distributes funds to schools based on the characteristics of their student populations. The goal is to ensure schools serving students with the greatest needs and most severe special education requirements are provided with adequate funding.

Under this formula, schools receive weighted funding on a per-pupil basis for serving special education, gifted and talented, English language learner, and over-age students. Additionally, the severity of disability is separated into five tiers, with schools receiving more funding for educating children with the most severe needs. These tiers provide schools with funding based on the category of the exceptionality of their special education students and the service minutes necessary to educate them. The formula came with a phase-in period in which no school would receive less than 98 percent of the funds it had received in the past.

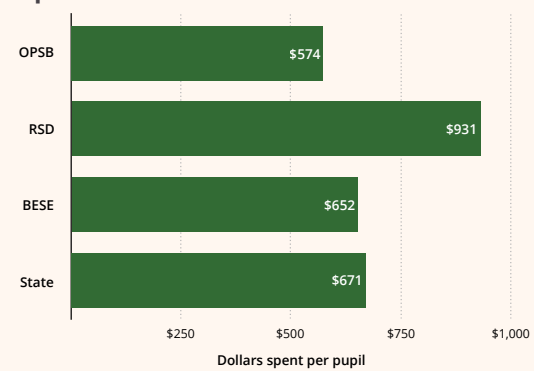
It is important to note that the use of the formula does not result in the OPSB receiving any additional MFP funds. Instead, it reallocates existing funds in a different way that prioritizes higher per-pupil funding for students with special needs. Additionally, while schools receive more funding for working with students with the greatest needs, the additional funding doesn't always fully cover the cost of providing these students with the educational supports they require.

The OPSB is unable to release data on several of the tiers by school due to concerns regarding student data privacy.

Average Spent per Pupil in 2015-2016



Average Spent on Transportation per Pupil in 2015-2016



TRANSPORTATION



When it comes to transportation, expectations and policies differ slightly between the RSD and the OPSB, which means that some public schools will be required to make adjustments as they transition to the OPSB's oversight in July 2018. Since New Orleans offers students the opportunity to apply to and attend any school regardless of the distance between their residence and school, the conversation around transportation has been mostly characterized by concerns of the resources involved. For schools, this is the cost of busing students across the city; while for students, it is the time spent on sometimes lengthy bus routes. In the past, the RSD and the OPSB had different transportation requirements for schools, and that difference in policy added a new layer to the complexity in trying to reconcile access with choice.

In the past year, one notable example of the challenges regarding transportation involved Einstein Charter Schools. In September 2017, the OPSB issued a notice of noncompliance to Einstein Charter Schools citing a failure to provide transportation for students.⁴⁵ The OPSB is the authorizer for Einstein Charter Schools and the notice of noncompliance served as a written warning that Einstein Charter Schools was in violation of their charter agreement. Einstein Charter Schools cited a different interpretation of the language within the contract, but the OPSB filed suit in November alleging a breach of contract.⁴⁶ Facing revocation of their charters from the OPSB, Einstein Charter Schools agreed to begin offering yellow bus transportation in April 2018.⁴⁷

Requirements for School Transportation in Louisiana

In Louisiana, there are no universal requirements for the transportation of students. The requirements vary between a school and its authorizer. However, there are both state and federal standards that factor into the kind of transportation options schools provide to their students. Federal law requires that all students with a documented disability and transportation need be provided transportation that accommodates that need. In some cases, that may include an aid, or even individual transportation.⁴⁸

State law requires that public school districts provide transportation for students that live beyond one mile of their school, which includes the assumption that students living within one mile of the school can walk safely to the facility. BESE's policy does provide some exceptions for students that live within one mile of a school, but are unable to walk due to safety concerns such as registered sexual offenders near the route or other potential hazards.

BESE allows individual charter authorizers to create their own transportation policies, which are negotiated with their authorizer in their charter agreements.⁴⁹ Since BESE is also an authorizer for Type 2 schools, it sets its own transportation policy that is similar to the state requirement. Type 2 charter schools must provide free transportation to any student that resides more than one mile from the school, but since any student in the state can attend a Type 2 charter school, the schools are only required to provide transportation to students that reside within the district. All Type 2 charter schools must comply with this policy by the 2018-19 school year, but there is a waiver process for virtual schools and other special cases.

Transportation in New Orleans

The following Type 2 schools are located in New Orleans. BESE's policy only requires that these charter schools provide free transportation to and from school, but it does not specify the means of transportation. Transportation may include bus service, shuttles, or public transportation passes provided by the school.

- International School of Louisiana
- International High School
- New Orleans Military/Maritime Academy
- Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans
- Noble Minds Institute
- JCFA-Algiers

With the exception of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), which is overseen by the state legislature, the OPSB expects that all other public schools in New Orleans will operate as charter schools under the OPSB by July 2018.

The OPSB's transportation policy for charter schools is much more specific than BESE's. For students in grade 7 and above residing more than one mile from the school, schools must provide "free transportation, free public transportation payments and/or reimbursements".⁵⁰ This means that schools serving older students have the option to use public transportation as long as the cost is covered by the school.

For students in grade 6 and below, the policy requires that all students residing more than one mile from the school be provided "free transportation by a vehicle approved for student transportation."⁵¹ The classic "yellow bus" is a vehicle approved for student transportation, but anything outside that, such as carpooling, is a grey area that the courts will need to decide.

According to the most recently available charter school expenditure data from 2015, charter schools in New Orleans spent an average of six percent of their total expenditures on transportation, and as high as 13 percent of their total budget. As noted earlier, schools in New Orleans, on average, spend significantly more on transportation than schools statewide.

In March 2018, the Urban Institute, a Washington D.C.-based think tank, released "The Road to School" report. The publication examined school transportation in New Orleans, Denver, Detroit, New York City, and Washington, D.C. and the distance between students, the school in which a student was enrolled, and all schools that were available for enrollment. It also modeled estimates for the time it would take for each student to commute to school by car and public transportation. The report found that students in New Orleans were the least likely out of the five cities to have at least one public school in their neighborhood and were more than twice as likely to take a yellow bus to school.⁵²

LOOKING AHEAD



What's next for our city's schools?

As we look forward, we asked a number of educators and education leaders from across the city and state for their perspectives on what it will take for New Orleans schools to continue to make progress in the years ahead. They identified five key issues: curriculum, accountability, teacher quality and retention, post-secondary success, and early childhood education. In the sections below, we provide an overview of the context associated with those issues, as well as quotes from key respondents in areas of interest.

Curriculum

Following the unification of RSD and OPSB schools in New Orleans, individual charter schools and CMOs will maintain autonomy over curriculum. That means that while school operators must all align on what is taught in schools in order to fulfill accountability standards, they will still get to decide individually on how to educate their students, rather than having a city-wide curriculum selected and implemented by the OPSB. Deciding what type of curriculum is best fit to drive student progress will therefore continue to be a key focus of all schools going forward.

Too many of us are focused solely on the system in which our students are learning in and not the content or methods in which they are being taught. We must shift our dialogue to student competencies and ensure that our teachers are equipped with the best evidence-based teaching strategies. We must have funders willing to fund individual schools, programs and services for the betterment of our students. Our students are beyond capable of meeting the bar in which we set, but our schools have limitations that often times fall on the lack of funding and proper staffing. Our schools, teachers and students need more financial and strategic support.

Ethan Ashley,
OPSB Board Member

We believe firmly that high quality curriculum goes hand in hand with teacher quality in promoting the success of students. That is why we have such a strong commitment to ensuring teachers and educators are fully informed on the best curriculum offerings for their schools. Curriculum goes a long way in encouraging equity by putting the same quality books, questions, and activities in front of all students every day. It also increases the speed at which students and teachers can learn. That's why the LDOE is so focused on curriculum as a central part of our efforts to improve education in the state long-term.

Rebecca Kockler,
Asst. Superintendent of
Academic Content, LDOE

Accountability

As mentioned earlier in the report, creating an accountability structure that assesses the quality of schools on a holistic range of factors continues to be a major focus of educators in New Orleans. The OPSB is currently in the process of finalizing standards for all current RSD and OPSB schools that build on new requirements adopted by the LDOE last year. The new standards will increase the importance placed on student growth, instead of focusing only on absolute achievement.

Creating an accountability framework that captures the range of factors that contribute to the quality of an educational experience at a school is a daunting task. The framework must ensure not only high academic performance, but also can include how well schools manage student and parent involvement, compliance with financial and statutory requirements, and non-cognitive measures of student success.

As we noted last year in our report on accountability, *How Can We Measure School Performance?*, nationally, schools, districts, and states use dozens of indicators, in a variety of combinations, to measure school performance.⁵³ Finding the right balance is an ongoing process and even once the new accountability standards go into place in New Orleans, educators must be willing to constantly reevaluate how well they are measuring performance, and be willing to alter the formulas when necessary.

The Charter School Accountability Framework outlines the district's commitment to equity, academic excellence, and high expectations. It reflects ingenuity and compromise, along with the wisdom of families, students, school leaders, teachers and community advocates who called for streamlined services and a system of schools that can serve all students at a high level.

Dina Hasiotis,
Executive Director of School
Performance, OPSB

In order to continue to make progress in our schools, we must do the following three things well: 1) Ensure that every student has access to a high quality instructor, who teaches a rich curriculum that motivates and challenges students, 2) Hold social services to the same high standard as our schools so that our students can access the supports they need, and 3) Advocate for more state and local funding so schools have the resources to provide a robust education for their students.

Kate Mehok,
CEO, Crescent City Schools

Teacher Quality and Retention

New Orleans, like all of Louisiana, is facing a severe teacher shortage. Over the past four years, the number of certified teachers in the state has dropped by around 20 percent, and of those gaining certifications, too few are doing so in the academic realms of middle- and high-school education. A report by the Education Research Alliance found that the rate of teachers leaving the classroom reached a high of 25 percent in 2015.⁵⁴

This trend is not unique to New Orleans. A 2016 report by the Learning Policy Institute found that even as student enrollment and demand for teachers has increased over the past five years, there has been a drop of 35 percent in the number of teacher enrollments nationwide.⁵⁵ The same report also found high rates of attrition. The U.S. Department of Education has also identified teacher recruitment and retention as a major problem, finding that a majority of states are facing a shortage of qualified, trained educators to fill their classrooms.⁵⁶

The reasons for this are complex, but include stagnant salaries for teachers and an improving economy that makes more lucrative professions more attractive, among other factors. Solving this issue will undoubtedly require multiple strategies.

Each year, New Orleans schools need to hire nearly 900 teachers. Like most urban school districts, about 20 percent of our workforce leaves the classroom annually. Left unaddressed, teacher recruitment challenges and retention deficits will limit our ability to make sustainable progress.

NSNO is partnering with Xavier University, Loyola University, Teach For America, teachNOLA/TNTP, and the Relay Graduate School of Education to recruit, prepare, and develop nearly 900 highly-effective, culturally competent teachers from diverse backgrounds by 2020.

We are also working with national experts on teacher retention to identify how our schools—and the city—could make teaching a more sustainable career choice. From teacher pay and working conditions to tax relief and housing subsidies—we need to explore all potential opportunities to support our teachers.

Patrick Dobard,
CEO, New Schools for
New Orleans



In New Orleans, the OPSB and educators are well aware of the necessity to improve the talent pipeline and teacher retention. The OPSB has made the issue a focus of its unification plan, and recently supported a proposal by Louisiana Governor Edwards to create a task force to address teacher shortages statewide.⁵⁷ Additionally, as mentioned earlier in this report, the U.S. DOE awarded \$13 million in federal funds to a coalition of local universities and non-profits, including Xavier University, Loyola University, New Schools for New Orleans, Teach for America, teachNOLA, and Relay Graduate School of Education, to improve the teacher talent pipeline in the city.⁵⁸

Ensuring that the city's schools have a sufficient number of quality teachers is vital to building on the academic progress public education experienced over the past decade. Numerous studies have found that teacher quality continues to be the single most important factor in the academic success of students long-term.⁵⁹

To improve academic achievement across the city, we need a diverse array of talented, passionate people working with our young people. Indeed, the quality of our schools cannot exceed the quality of our teachers. That is why the district with our partners have prioritized recruiting and retaining teachers, with a special focus on finding the next generation of educators from New Orleans. At the same time, we are creating additional opportunities to elevate teacher voice with a new citywide teacher advisory council, which will further advise on how we can make sure there is an excellent educator in every classroom.

Dr. Henderson Lewis Jr.,
Superintendent, OPSB

In order for our schools to continue to make progress, we need to focus on four things: 1) quality curriculum and quality, intensive professional development associated with this curriculum across all schools, 2) develop more depth in the leadership (school and CMO) pool, 3) partner with external organizations and agencies to better serve students with the highest needs, 4) build strong teacher talent pathways.

Jay Altman,
CEO, FirstLine Schools

Post-secondary Success

While our *State of Public Education in New Orleans* reports have always focused on K-12 education in the city, a young person's education does not end after high school graduation. To this end, the Cowen Institute has joined other local partners to focus on improving post-secondary success for New Orleans high school graduates.

This issue remains important as the state continues to face self-inflicted budget shortages that have led to the reduction for higher education in the state, uncertainty about the TOPS program, and tuition hikes for students. These additional costs could reduce the number of local students attending two and four year colleges in the years ahead. Nationally, there is compelling evidence that college degree attainment positively impacts financial stability, employability, and overall wellness among graduates.

Local educators are dedicated to improving outcomes for students once they graduate. Success does not have to include a college diploma, as a number of schools and community organizations are already focusing on expanding and improving Career and Technical Education for students while they are in high school. Providing students with career skills and entryways into employment opportunities before they leave high school will only become more important in the years ahead if New Orleans, and Louisiana as a whole, want to experience economic growth.

The Cowen Institute, in partnership with high schools, non-profit organizations, and universities, leads a number of initiatives focused on increased post-secondary success and life outcomes for youth in New Orleans. These include operating Tulane's Upward Bound program, which provides youth with tutoring, counseling, academic support, and assistance applying to and gaining admittance to post-secondary institutions. Additionally, the Cowen Institute is a founding member and convener for the Louisiana College Access Coalition, which advocates for legislation to ensure low-income Louisiana graduates have equitable access to affordable higher education institutions in the state, both through the TOPS program and other financial supports. The Cowen Institute also leads a citywide College and Career Counseling Collaborative and College Persistence Collaborative which provide high school counselors and practitioners with best practices centered on improving college and career success for New Orleans youth.

At YouthForce NOLA, we believe that increased graduate success will come from the tight integration of academic, technical, and soft skills - combining traditional in-school learning with robust hands-on and career experiences. This real-world learning enables students to find greater relevance in school, better plan and prepare for post-secondary education, and increases their likelihood of successfully connecting to - and advancing in - a well-paying career pathway.

Cate Swinburn,
President, YouthForce NOLA

As a former higher education professional now working to ensure local students receive the support they need to enroll and succeed in college, I'm grateful to work in a city where so many professionals are deeply committed to the success of students attending local public schools. New Orleans is on the precipice of being the exemplar for supporting students from every academic and socioeconomic background. Success will require an all-hands-on-deck approach and we are proud to partner with the Cowen Institute in this work.

Paris Woods,
*Executive Director,
College Beyond*

Early Childhood Education

A wide-range of academic research has long indicated that providing quality early childhood education is a crucial, if not the most important, factor in ensuring success later in life for young people. Children who enter Kindergarten a year or two years behind their grade-level peers struggle to close that gap over the course of their academic careers.⁶⁰

Improving the quality, availability, and number of operators of early childhood education in New Orleans is a crucial part of ensuring the overall success of students in K-12 education and beyond. Unquestionably, additional funding will be needed to make this a reality. In New Orleans, as in most cities and states across the U.S., funding for early childhood education is dramatically less than for K-12 education. Even as some schools in the city have made it easier for parents to access early childhood programs by having them included in OneApp, there are still far too few high quality seats available. On a local level, Agenda for Children is the non-profit organization responsible for ensuring quality early childhood education.

The research is clear: high quality early care and education can have profound long term positive effects on children, including fewer referrals for special education services, fewer grade retentions, and higher test scores and graduation rates. In Louisiana, almost half of our children begin Kindergarten behind. In New Orleans, although over 90 percent of at-risk four-year-olds in the city are enrolled in a publicly funded seat this school year, only 44 percent of at-risk three year olds and only 12 percent of at-risk children under the age of three can access any publicly funded early care and education program.

As the city moves forward to continue to improve its education system, it will be critical to increase access for children from birth through age four to high quality early care and education programs, through both improving the quality of the current programs, and expanding access to publicly funded slots for children under age four.

Melanie Bronfin,
*Executive Director,
Louisiana Policy Institute
for Children*

Over the last two years, the state has implemented a rigorous statewide accountability system for all publicly funded early childhood sites and launched a School and Site Finder to make that information readily available to families.⁶¹ OPSB Supt. Lewis has named early childhood education as a key priority for the OPSB in the coming years, as the impacts on students can be so long-lasting and profound.⁶² The City Council and Mayor Landrieu have also provided additional financial support to assist early childhood education in the city, and Louisiana recently implemented a new ranking system to offer more transparency to parents when selecting an early childhood education provider.⁶³ However, without more systemic financial supports, there will likely remain too few early childhood education opportunities in the city.

Expanding early childhood education in our city is a top priority for the Orleans Parish School Board. Kindergarten readiness for students is critical if we are to continue improving student achievement in our public schools. We also know the children with a quality preschool experience are three times as likely to go to college and own a home. Larger investments in early childhood education in our city will ensure a brighter future for our children for generations to come.

Ben Kleban,
*OPSB Board Member,
former CEO of New Orleans
College Prep, and founder
of Hoffman Early Learning
Center*

We have made considerable progress as an education ecosystem. As we look forward, our goal is to ensure that every child has access to quality PreK-12 public education, top-tier curriculum, and talented educators. Our aim is to provide pathways to prosperity for all of our high school graduates.

John White,
*Louisiana State Superintendent
of Education*



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountability - A set of policies and practices using student performance measures to hold schools and districts responsible for student achievement.

Authorizer - An authorizer is in charge of deciding when to open new schools, which charter management applications to approve, when to close schools, and whether to intervene when schools are not performing up to standards. To make these decisions, the authorizer relies upon a list of rules and policies laid out in the school performance framework. In 2018, the OPSB will become the authorizer of nearly all charter schools in New Orleans.

Autonomy - Autonomy in the context of public education generally refers to decisions that are made at the school level, rather than by a district board. In Orleans Parish, most charter schools are autonomous with regards to curriculum, hiring, and finances. As schools unify, charter schools will retain this autonomy.

Charter School - A charter school is a publicly funded school granted greater flexibility in its operation than a school run by a traditional school district. The charter is a contract outlining the school's mission, program, accountability standards, and students served with the body authorizing the charter's ability to operate.

Charter Management Organization (CMO) - A non-profit entity that manages two or more charter schools.

Local Education Agency (LEA) - An LEA is an entity that operates public schools. Usually, this is synonymous with a school district. In New Orleans, however, many charter schools operate as their own LEAs.

Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) - The state agency that manages all school districts in the state.

Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) - Funding through this program is provided to school districts as a block grant. After satisfying all mandated requirements, school districts have the flexibility to spend the funding to meet the needs of their schools and students.

Open Enrollment - In New Orleans, open enrollment means that any student is eligible to attend any school, regardless of its location or where the student lives, without having to meet any special requirements.

Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) - In Orleans Parish, the school board is a group of seven publicly elected officials who are responsible for maintaining and making decisions regarding public schools. They are meant to be accessible by, and responsible to, the general public. The OPSB is also an administrative entity responsible to the board that oversees many schools in the parish.

Recovery School District (RSD) - The RSD was originally formed in 2003 under the LDOE to transform underperforming schools. However, after Hurricane Katrina, the RSD took over the vast majority of schools in New Orleans, nearly all of which subsequently became charters. All New Orleans RSD schools will come under the OPSB's control in the 2018-19 school year.

Type 1 Charter School - A new school authorized by the local school board (a start-up school).

Type 2 Charter School - A school that is operated and authorized by the state.

Type 3 Charter School - A conversion school authorized by a local school board.

Type 3B Charter School - A school that was formerly under the RSD's oversight that has come under OPSB oversight.

Type 5 Charter School - A school that is under the RSD's oversight.

Unification - When talking about schools in Orleans Parish, unification refers to the bringing together of all RSD and OPSB schools under the OPSB's governance.

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