



COWEN INSTITUTE
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*This Supplement to the 2008 State of Public
Education in New Orleans Report was prepared by:*

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The Cowen Institute, founded in March 2007, is an action-oriented think-tank that actively addresses the issues impeding student achievement by designing and advancing innovative, high-impact policies and programs. Using a multidisciplinary approach, we are pioneering a new model for the role of universities in the transformation of public education.

January 2009

Public School Performance in New Orleans

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE 2008 STATE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NEW ORLEANS REPORT

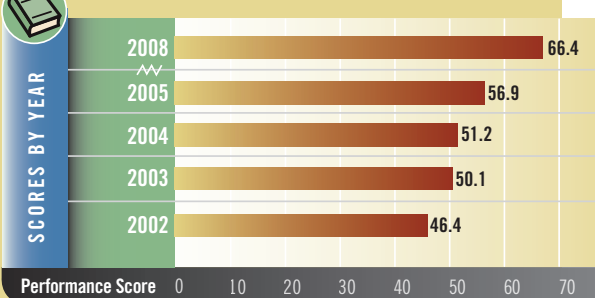


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District Performance Scores for All NOLA Schools



Executive Summary

The performance of school districts in Louisiana is measured by a district performance score.

The district performance score (DPS) sums up the performance of students in a school district on a variety of state standardized tests and a few other indicators, like attendance, into a single number. If schools in New Orleans were still in one district, their district performance score would be 66.4 for the 2007-2008 school year. While this is low compared to the state performance score of 86.3, this represents a significant increase of nearly 10 points from the district's pre-Katrina score of 56.9 in the 2004-2005 school year.

To put this 10-point increase into perspective, New Orleans public schools also improved by about 10 points in the three years between 2002 and 2005; however, no major disaster occurred during that period. Indeed, considering that many students came back to the city after Katrina having spent time out of school and suffering from the trauma of displacement, this increase in overall performance is promising.

At the same time, it is unclear how similar the current population of students is to the student population before the storm. Because it was harder for poor New Orleanians to return to the city after Hurricane Katrina, the proportion of families living in extreme poverty in New Orleans has declined according to US Census Bureau estimates. It is possible that part of the increase in achievement is due to the loss of some of the poorest and most challenged students that attended public schools before Katrina.

It is difficult to compare scores for different schools in New Orleans because the context from one school to the next is very different.

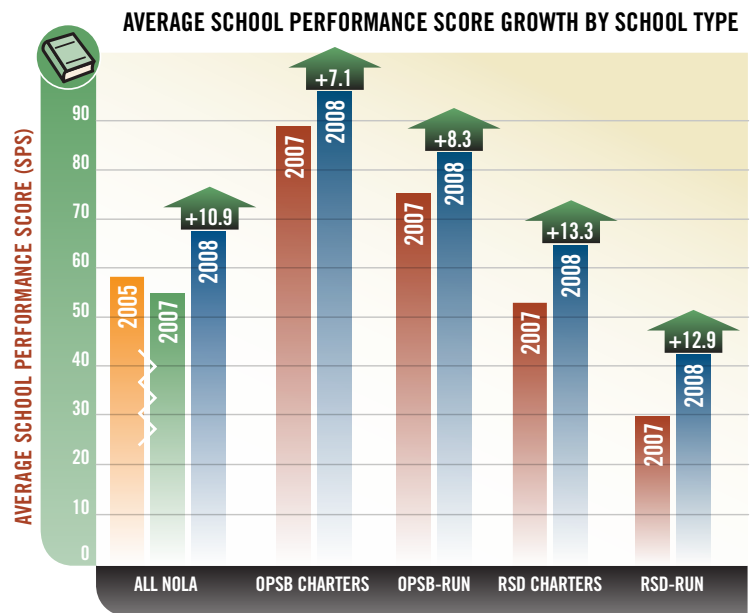
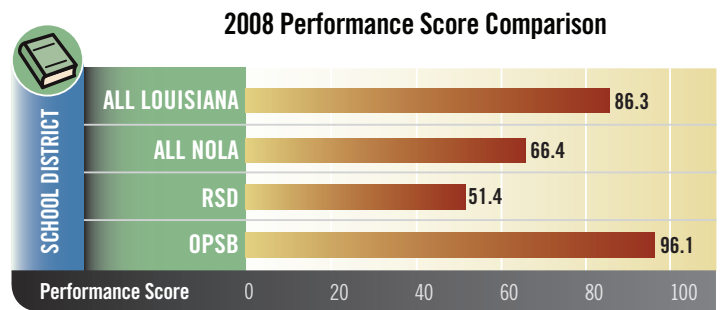
- Following Hurricane Katrina, the school system was split by the state takeover of failing schools.
- Over 100 low-performing New Orleans schools were placed into the state-run Recovery School District (RSD). Some schools became open-admission charter schools, others were opened as RSD-run schools, and some remain closed.
- Higher-performing schools that were not taken over, many of which had some form of selective admissions, were either chartered or continued to be operated by the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB).
- Because schools were assigned to one of the two post-storm systems, RSD and OPSB, based on their previous academic performance, it is not useful or valid to expect similar performance from OPSB and RSD schools, at least in the near term. They serve, on average, very different groups of students.
- Consequently, though the district performance score (DPS) of the entire district if it still existed would have been 66.4, the RSD's score was 51.4 while the OPSB scored 96.1.

Within each district, there were also significant differences between the average performance of charter and traditional schools.

- Like districts, individual schools receive a school performance score (SPS) based on student performance on state tests and other indicators.
- In both the OPSB and the RSD, charter schools had higher average performance scores than traditional district-run schools.
- Within the OPSB, charters tend to be more selective than district-run schools, which explains a part of their higher performance.
- Within the RSD, charters and district-run schools both serve similar student demographics in terms of ethnicity and poverty.
- However, some key differences remain:
 - RSD-run schools have higher student mobility rates and serve a higher proportion of special education students than RSD charters.
 - Parents and teachers in RSD charters reported higher rates of satisfaction with their schools than their RSD-run counterparts in Cowen Institute surveys. This could indicate that RSD charters are more effective at educating students.

In spite of their lower absolute scores, school performance scores grew more for RSD schools than for OPSB schools between the 2006-2007 school year and the 2007-2008 school year.

The promising news: the average performance for every school type in New Orleans grew significantly over the past two years.



Conclusion:

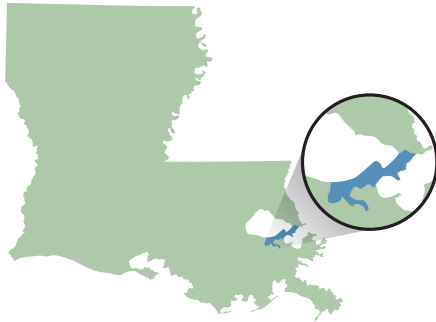
In general, it is hard to know at this point what accounts for different school outcomes without more detailed information about the operating environment of individual schools and the performance of individual students.

The abolishment of school attendance zones has allowed more students and parents to choose among a variety of public school options. Because schools in New Orleans now recruit students from across the city, it is more difficult to know what skill levels students bring to a school versus what a school imparts to them. In addition, more students are self-selecting into certain types of schools, making it that much more difficult to identify the key determinants of school performance.

That said, it is very promising that schools are improving across the board in New Orleans. More information is needed, however, before we can understand why schools are improving and identify those practices and models that work. Finally, the success or failure of public education reforms in New Orleans will not be fully evident until more information becomes available in the years ahead.

State, National, and International Academic Rankings

ORLEANS VS LA

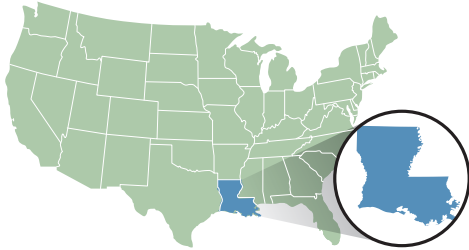


2008 District Performance Scores

Rank	District	Performance Score
1	Zachary Community School District	112.6
2	West Feliciana Parish	105.9
3	St. Tammany Parish	105.7
16	Calcasieu Parish	96.8
17	Orleans Parish	96.1
18	Catahoula Parish	94.5
65	City of Bogalusa School District	66.8
66	City of Baker School District	65.9
67	Madison Parish	61.1
68	St. Helena Parish	57.4
69	Recovery School District	51.4

All New Orleans Schools 66.4

LOUISIANA VS USA



2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

4TH GRADE READING

Rank	District	Score
1	Massachusetts	236
2	New Jersey	231
3	New Hampshire	229
48	California	209
49	Mississippi	208
50	Louisiana	207
51	District of Columbia	197

4TH GRADE MATH

Rank	District	Score
1	Massachusetts	252
2	New Jersey	249
3	New Hampshire	249
45	Nevada	232
46	Louisiana	230
47	California	230
48	Alabama	229

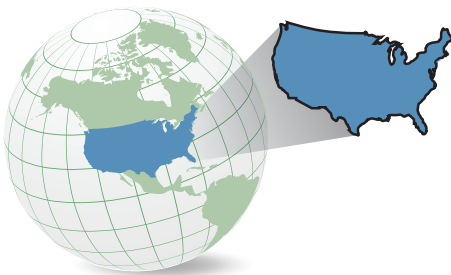
8TH GRADE READING

Rank	District	Score
1	Massachusetts	273
2	Vermont	273
3	Montana	271
43	Arizona	255
44	Louisiana	253
45	Nevada	252
45	Alabama	252

8TH GRADE MATH

Rank	District	Score
1	Massachusetts	298
2	Minnesota	292
3	North Dakota	292
42	Arkansas	274
43	Louisiana	272
44	Nevada	271
45	California	270

USA VS WORLD



Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

15 YEAR-OLDS: READING (2000)

Rank	District	Score
1	Finland	546
2	Canada	534
3	New Zealand	529
14	France	505
15	United States	504
16	Denmark	497

15 YEAR-OLDS: MATH (2006)

Rank	District	Score
1	Taiwan	549
2	Finland	548
3	Hong Kong (China)	547
34	Azerbaijan	476
35	United States	474
36	Croatia	467

15 YEAR-OLDS: SCIENCE (2006)

Rank	District	Score
1	Finland	563
2	Hong Kong (China)	542
3	Canada	534
28	Latvia	490
29	United States	489
30	Slovak Republic	488