



2010 Regular Session
of the Louisiana Legislature

PK-12 Public Education in Louisiana

March 2010



**The Scott S. Cowen Institute
for Public Education Initiatives
at Tulane University**

The Cowen Institute is an action-oriented think tank that informs and advances solutions – through policies, programs, and partnerships – to eliminate the challenges impeding the success of K-12 education in New Orleans and beyond. It also serves as a clearinghouse for K-12 public schools in New Orleans to directly access the myriad of experts and resources available at Tulane University. Our work is in the following key areas:



Applied Research



Public Policy



University-Based Initiatives



College Readiness Programs

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Louisiana PK-12 Education: Governance, Demographics, and Enrollment

Local & State Governance Organization Chart

Basic Facts About Louisiana Public Schools

- Student Enrollment: 696,444
- Grades Served: PK-12
- Percent Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch: 65.7%
- Charter School Enrollment: 31,549

Louisiana Legislature

- Drafts and passes laws related to education in the areas of accountability, curriculum, and school district employment requirements
- Gives corporate power to local school boards and grants them the right to levy taxes
- Appropriates money for the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) to fund K-12 public education across the state

State Board of Elementary & Secondary Education (BESE)

- Established by the Louisiana Legislature at the Constitutional Convention of 1973
- Acts as administrative policy making body for elementary and secondary public schools
- Comprised of eleven members, eight elected from single member districts and three appointed by the Governor
- Responsible for preparing the MFP, approving teacher certification, adopting policies for student assessment, and adopting operating standards for schools
- Authority to grant charters to schools throughout the state

Local School Boards

- Created by the Louisiana Legislature pursuant to the Louisiana Constitution
- Governing body of the school district
- Able to levy local taxes to fund schools
- Bound by policies set by BESE, including mandatory participation in the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP)
- Policy setting bodies for local school districts
- Elected by citizens of the district
- Authority to grant charters to schools in their district

State Superintendent of Education

- Appointed by BESE
- Mission is to recommend and implement policy in accordance with applicable legislation, the Constitution, and the policy set forth by BESE
- Responsible for directing and overseeing the Louisiana Department of Education

Local School District Superintendents

- Hired by local school boards to oversee the administration and operation of districts
- Responsible for implementing the policy set by the board
- Subject to qualifications set by BESE

Louisiana Department of Education

- Manages, budgets, and allocates to districts and programs funds from federal appropriations and the MFP
- Provides ancillary educational services, such as those related to nutrition, drug-free schools, transportation, and adult education
- Establishes a statewide curriculum and standards and administers the student assessment and school accountability system



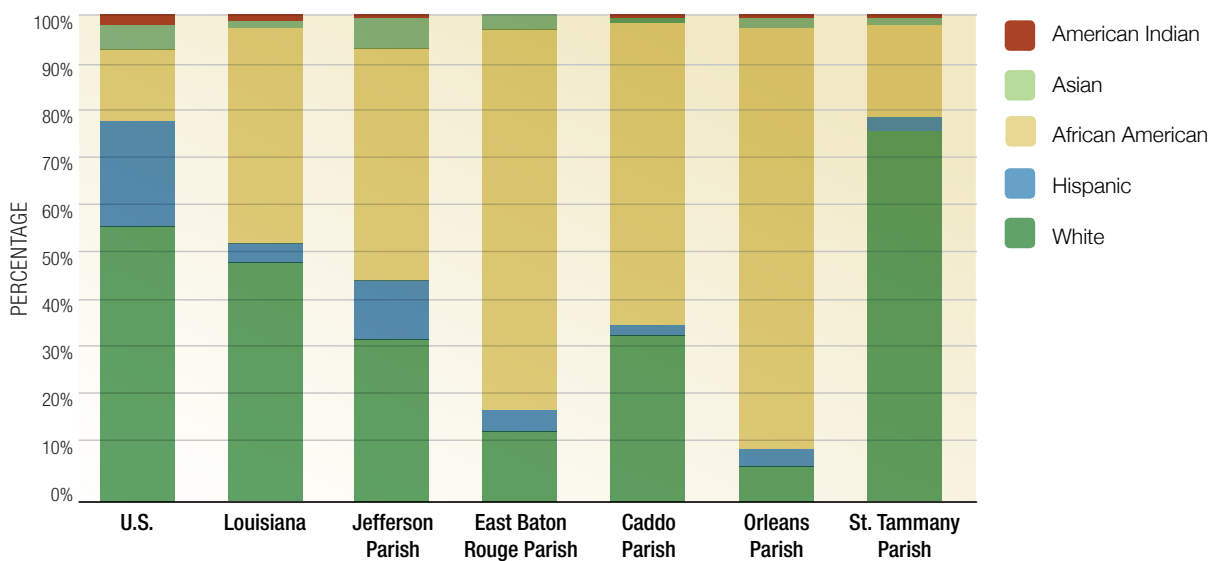
2009-2010 Student Demographics

(for the United States, Louisiana, and the five largest local school districts)

Ethnicity

While ethnic minorities make up less than 50% of public school students across the U.S., they are the overwhelming majority in most of the largest local school districts in Louisiana.

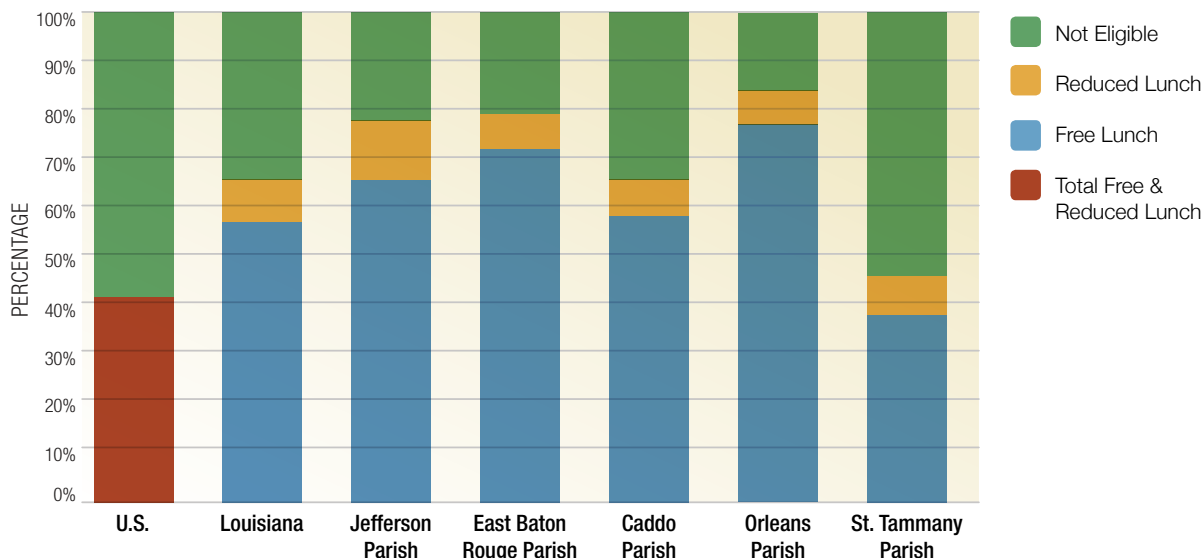
Data on Louisiana students taken from the October 2009 state enrollment counts. National data from the 2007-2008 school year from www.schooldatadirect.org. Data on Orleans Parish includes Orleans Parish School Board and Recovery School District district-run and charter schools as well as Board of Elementary and Secondary Education charter schools.



Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility

Nationally, 41% of public school students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Across Louisiana and most of the state's largest school districts, this percentage is considerably higher.

Data on Louisiana students taken from the October 2009 state enrollment counts. National data from the Cowen Institute's State of Public Education in New Orleans Report. Data on Orleans Parish includes Orleans Parish School Board and Recovery School District district-run and charter schools as well as Board of Elementary and Secondary Education charter schools.



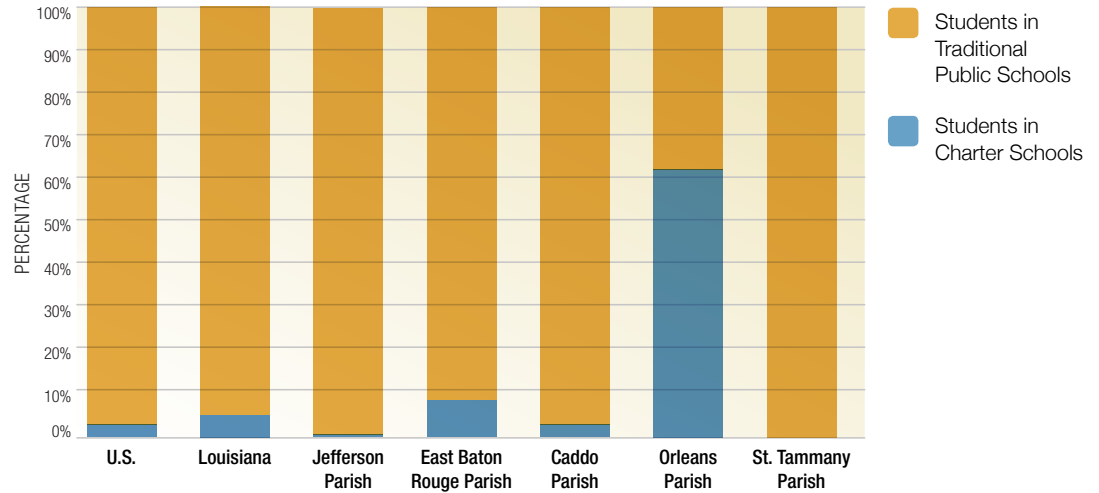
2009-2010 Student Enrollment

(for the United States, Louisiana, and the five largest local school districts)

Charter School Enrollment

Percentage of Public School Students Enrolled in Charter Schools Versus Traditional Public Schools

Nationally and statewide only a small percentage of public school students attend charter schools. However, Orleans Parish has the highest rate of charter attendance of any district in the nation at more than 61%.



Data on Louisiana students taken from the October 2009 state enrollment counts. National data from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools for the 2008-2009 school year. Data on Orleans Parish includes Orleans Parish School Board and Recovery School District district-run and charter schools as well as Board of Elementary and Secondary Education charter schools.

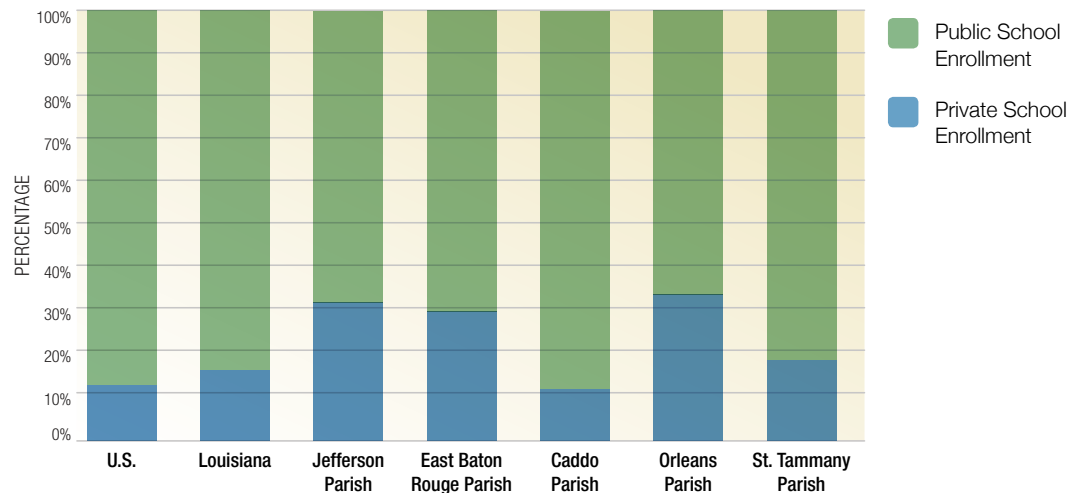
States with the Largest Proportion of Charter Schools

Arizona	21.0%	Wisconsin	9.7%	Colorado	8.4%
Florida	10.4%	Ohio	8.6%	Louisiana	4.4%

Private School Enrollment

Private School Enrollment as a Percentage of Total K-12 Enrollment

Nationwide, private school enrollment is approximately 11% of total PK-12 enrollment while in Louisiana it is more than 15%. In Jefferson and Orleans Parishes, nearly one-third of PK-12 students are enrolled in private schools.



Data on Louisiana students from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009. National data from the 2007-2008 school year from www.schooldatairect.org. Data on Orleans Parish includes Orleans Parish School Board and Recovery School District district-run and charter schools as well as Board of Elementary and Secondary Education charter schools.

Public Education Governance in Orleans Parish

2009-2010 Governance Structure

Total: 88 Schools & 38,000 Students

