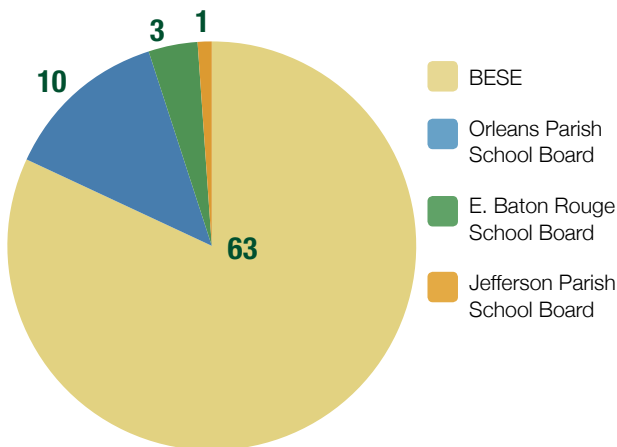


Charter Schools in Louisiana

What is a Charter School?

- Charter schools are public schools operated by a private non-profit or for profit organization under a 5-year contract (or “charter”) with either a local school board or the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).
- Charter schools are required to participate in the state accountability program and must meet certain achievement results in order to keep their charter.
- Charter schools are free from many of the rules and regulations that traditional public schools are subject to and have significant flexibility in the areas of hiring, budgeting, and instruction.
- Charter schools are subject to a 3-year review by their authorizer and a 5-year review to determine whether the charter will be renewed or revoked.

Number of Charter Schools by Authorizer



Charter School Governance

Charter School Authorizer

The authorizer is the entity that enters into a contract with the charter school operator. In Louisiana, only BESE and local school boards are able to authorize charter schools. Authorizers approve charters, monitor and hold schools accountable, and renew or end charters based on school performance.

Charter School Operator

The charter school operator is the organization that oversees the operation, finances, and administration of the charter school. It is generally led by a board which sets policy and hires a school leader to implement its policy and handle school operations.

Charter School Leader

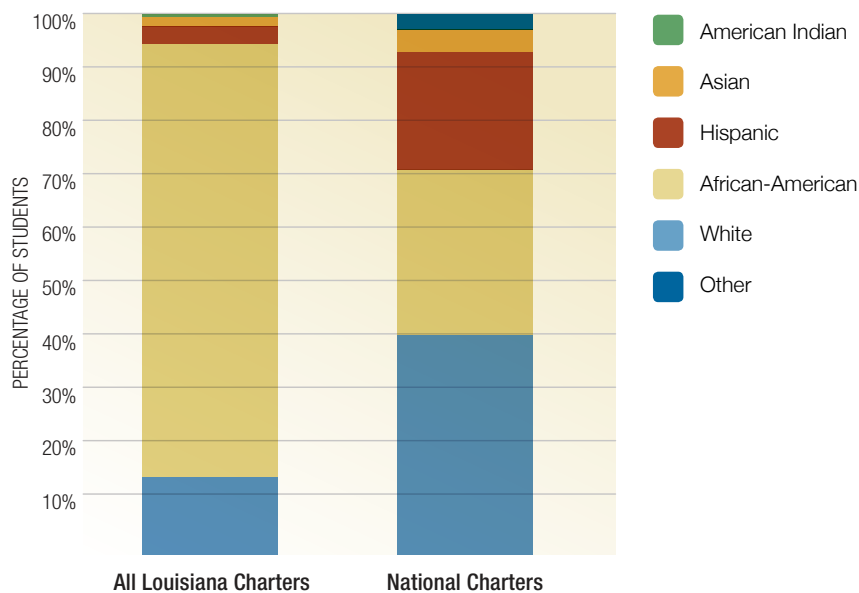
The charter school leader is hired by the school’s operator to oversee the daily operations of the school, including budgeting, personnel, and curriculum decisions. The school leader may or may not also fill the role of principal.

Charter School Student Demographics

Percentage of Students by Ethnicity

While nationally the ethnic background of students in charter schools mirrors somewhat the student population as a whole, Louisiana's charter school population does not. However, students in Louisiana charter schools have backgrounds similar to the large urban districts where most are located.

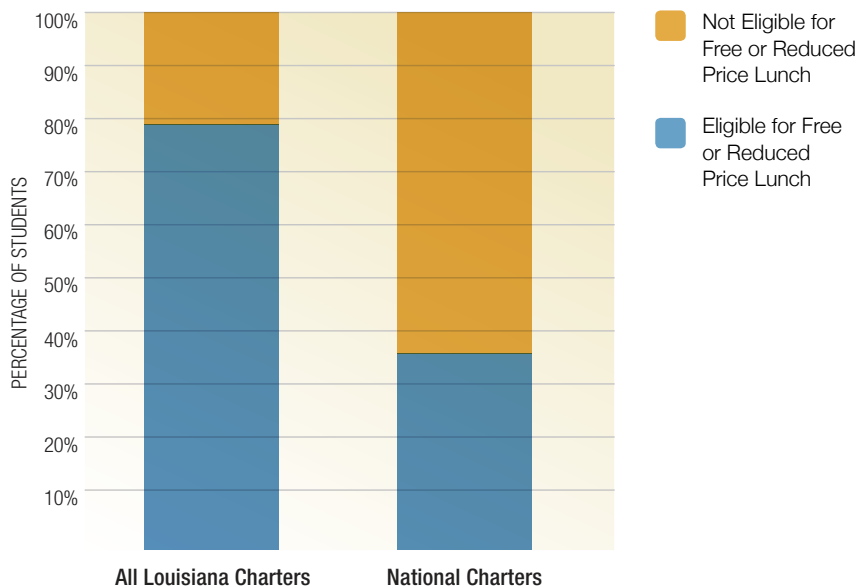
Data on Louisiana students taken from the October 2009 state enrollment counts. National data from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2008-2009.



Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch

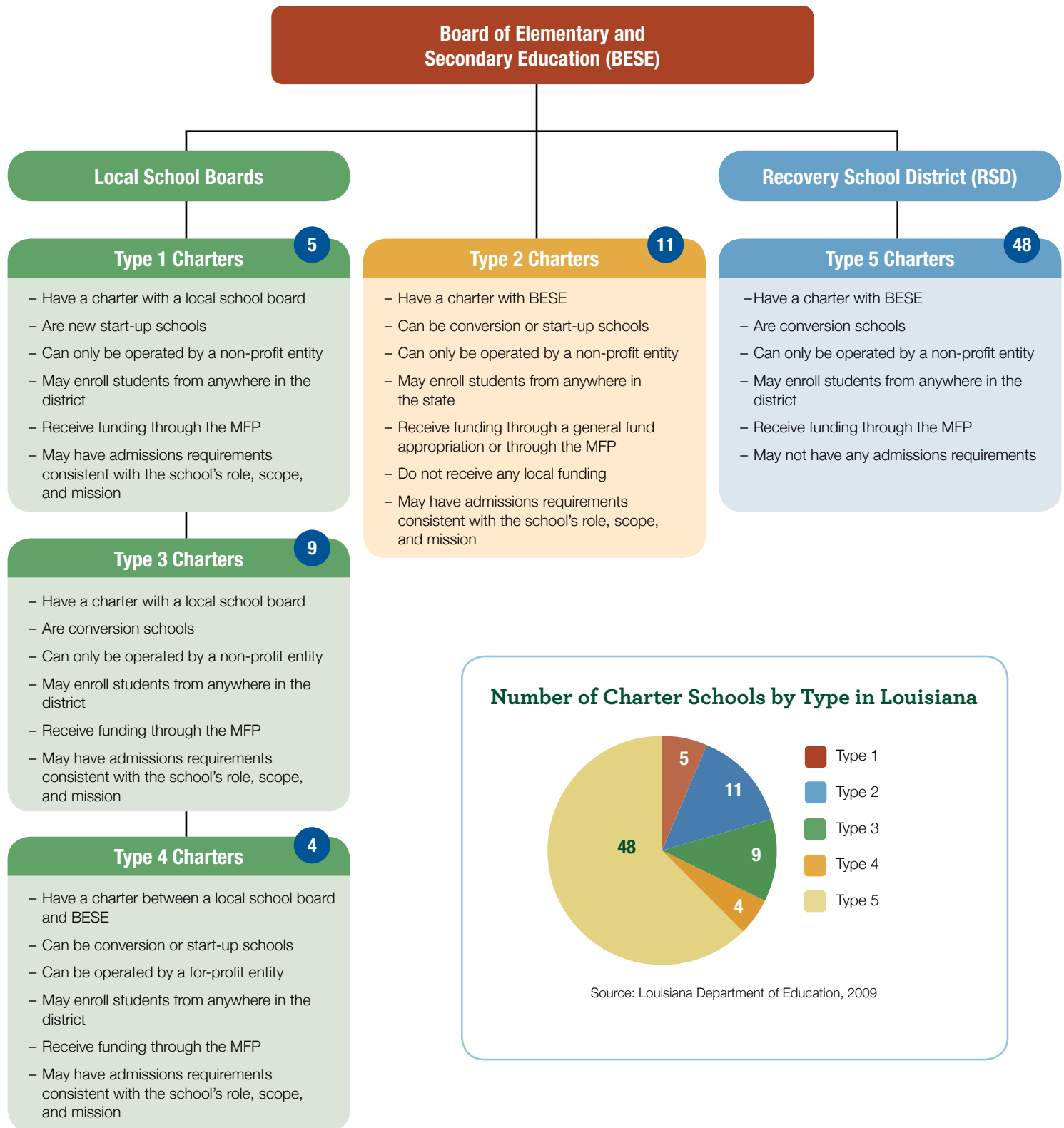
Nationwide and in Louisiana, students in charter schools are eligible for free and reduced lunch at a rate slightly higher than the general student population in non-charter schools.

Data on Louisiana students taken from the October 2009 state enrollment counts. National data from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2008-2009.

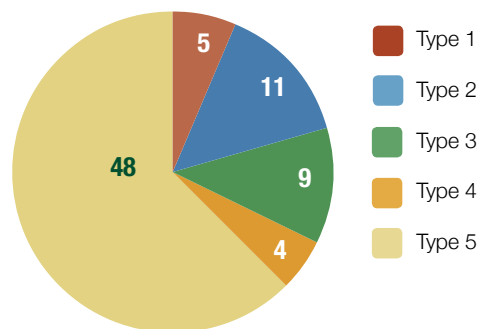


Charter School Types

Number of Schools

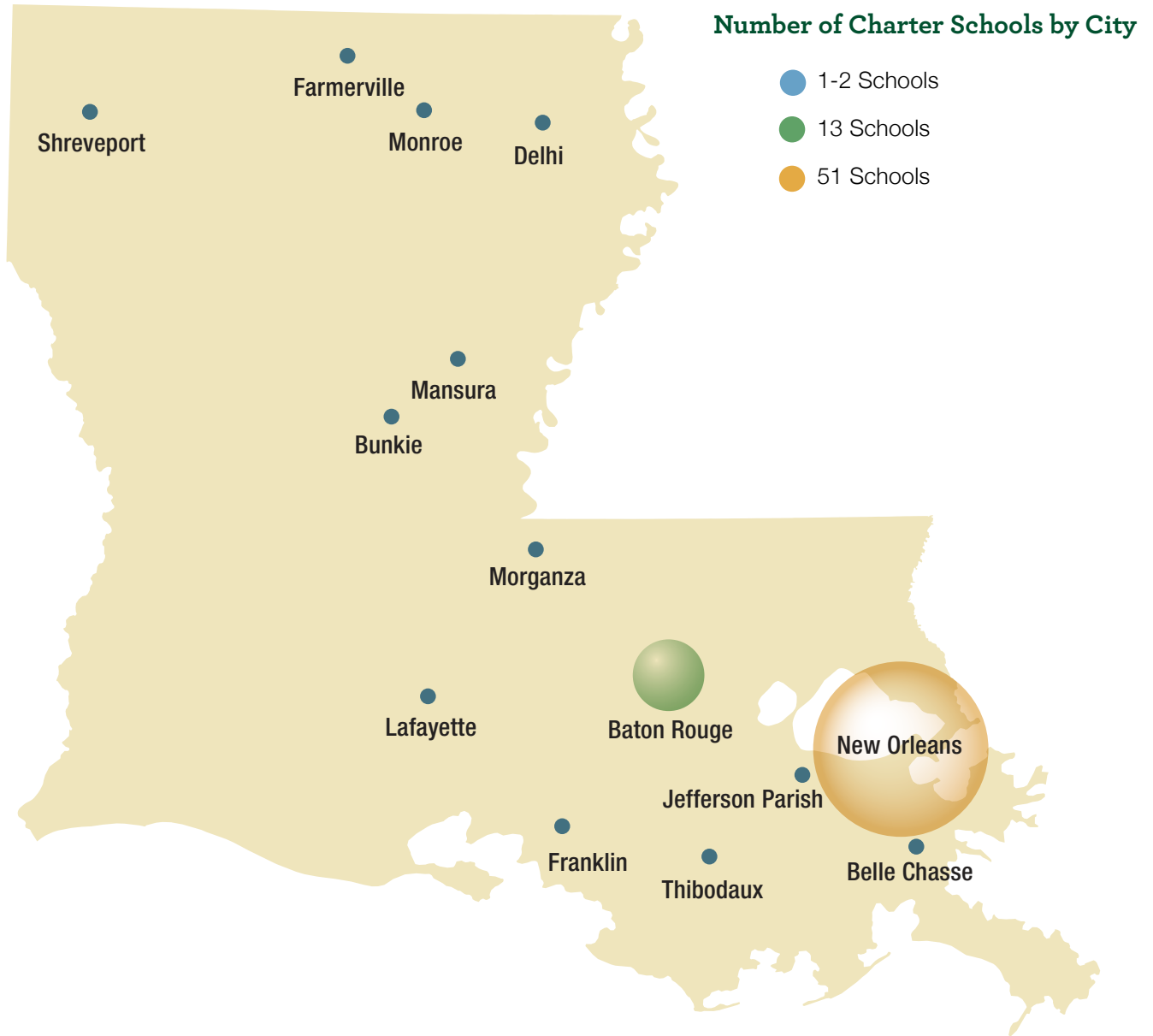


Number of Charter Schools by Type in Louisiana



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2009

Location of Louisiana Charter Schools



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2009

Public School Facilities in Louisiana

Basic Facts About Louisiana Public School Facilities

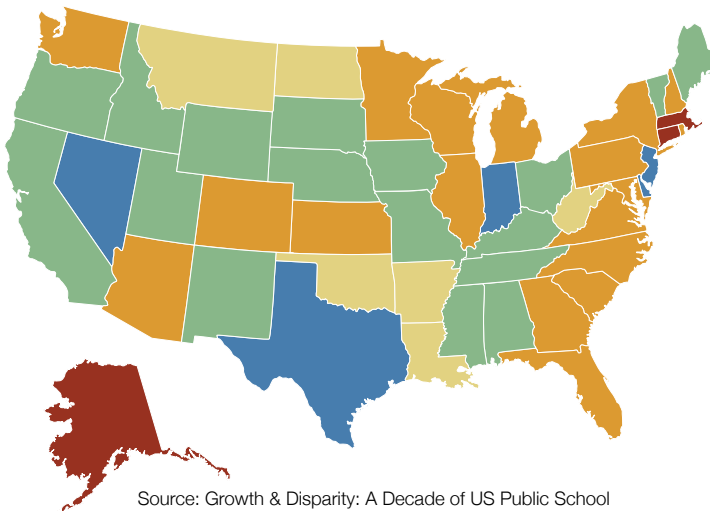
- Number of Public Schools in Louisiana: 1,445
- State Funding Allocated for Facilities: \$0
- Total State Public School Enrollment: 696,444
- Assessment of Louisiana School Facilities Needs: none

Facilities Construction Expenditures Per Student

Construction Expenditures per Student

- Less than \$4,000
- \$4,000 - \$5,999
- \$6,000 - \$7,999
- \$8,000 - \$9,999
- \$10,000 and more

National Average
\$6,519
per student
(1995 - 2004)



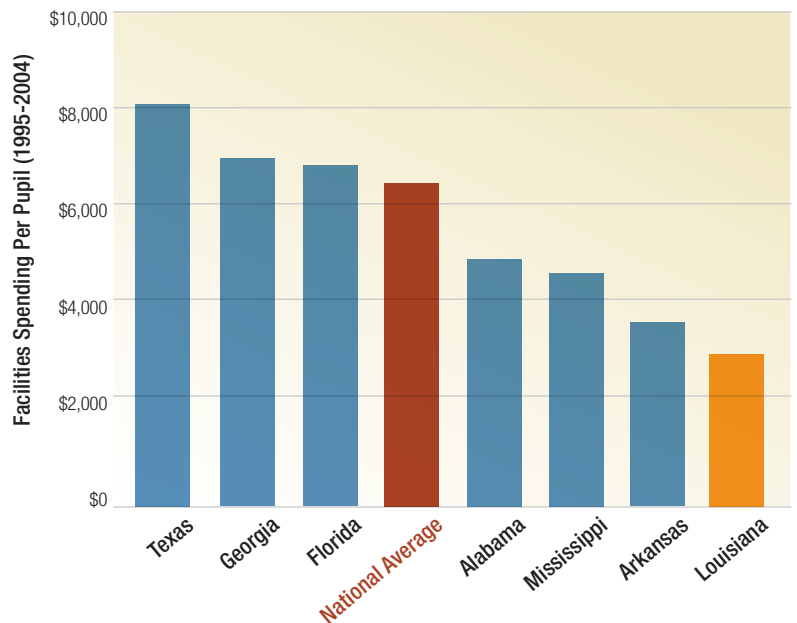
Source: Growth & Disparity: A Decade of US Public School Construction, Building Educational Success Together (BEST-2006)

- Louisiana ranks among the states putting the least amount of funding into school facilities. In fact, Louisiana is one of only seven states that does not dedicate state funding for public school facility maintenance, repair, or construction.
- On average, 88 percent of schools in Louisiana report a need to upgrade or repair on-site buildings to good overall condition.
- Thirty-nine percent of schools have at least one inadequate building and 50 percent of schools have at least one inadequate feature, e.g., roof, plumbing, HVAC.

Source: Government Accountability Office – School Facilities: State Profiles (2005)

- **Facilities spending in Louisiana was only 46% of the national average, and trailed that of all other states in the region.**
- Inadequate spending on school facilities prior to Hurricane Katrina left the entire Gulf region with crumbling facilities, but most significantly Louisiana, with its lowest-in-the-region spending per student.
- Funds provided by FEMA to hurricane impacted areas were only sufficient to bring schools up to pre-disaster levels, which is inadequate for Louisiana schools that were entirely substandard before Katrina.

Source: Growth & Disparity: A Decade of US Public School Construction, Building Educational Success Together (BEST-2006)

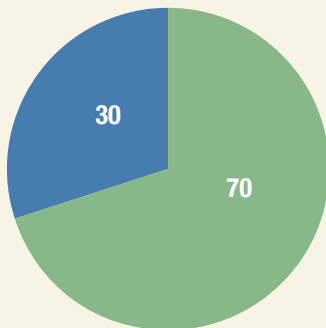


Why are School Facilities Important?

Our facilities are an important investment because our children and teachers spend most of their day inside these buildings. Many research studies have shown that school facilities affect the outcome of student performance.

- **Teacher Retention:** Poor building conditions greatly increase the likelihood that teachers will leave their school – a troubling fact given the need for more and better teachers in most disadvantaged schools (Buckley et. al 2004);
- **Absenteeism:** Overcrowded schools lead to higher absenteeism for both students and teachers and have detrimental effects on children’s ability to learn and perform well (PolicyLink 2005);
- **Cognitive Abilities:** Cognitive requirements for learning – motivation, energy, attention, hearing, and seeing – are affected by the physical surroundings where they take place (Schneider 2002);
- **Classroom Environment:** The amount of natural light, the indoor air quality, the temperature, and the cleanliness of schools and classrooms all impact student learning (Earthman 2004).

Does the MFP Provide Funding for Facilities?



There is NO capital funding built into the MFP.

70% of MFP funding is required to be used for instructional purposes

30% of the MFP is used for all other expenses, including utilities, employee and retiree benefits, and student transportation

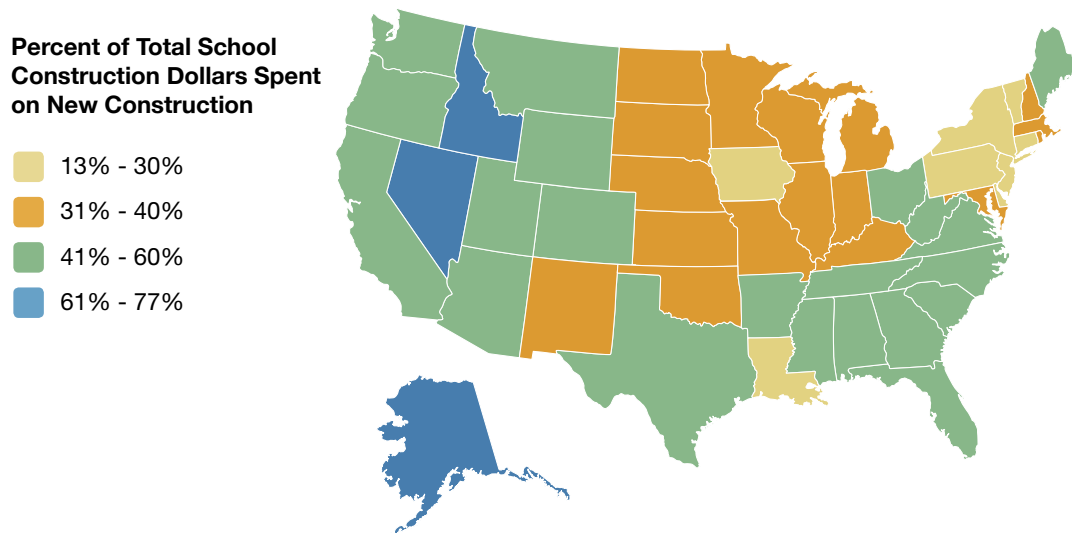
- The primary source of school funding is the MFP.
- The MFP formula does not dedicate funds to capital repair and maintenance.
- School districts must use the MFP to cover instructional expenses first. Then they must cover critical expenses—such as utility bills and employee benefits—next. This leaves little, if any, money for facilities.
- From 2002-2003 to 2007-2008, the average cost of benefits and electricity for Louisiana school districts increased by 65%. The MFP increased by only 27% during that same time period.

Public School Construction

New Construction Across the United States

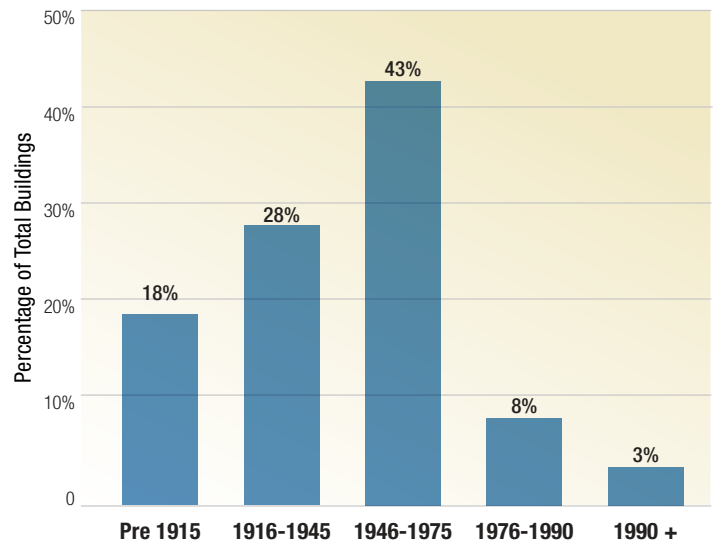
The map below represents the percentage of total public school facilities funds spent on new public school construction in the United States. Louisiana is one of eight states that spend only 13-30% of these funds on new construction. The rest of the country spends anywhere from 31-77%.

Source: Growth & Disparity: A Decade of US Public School Construction, Building Educational Success Together (BEST-2006)



- New Orleans offers a good example of the low percentage of recent school construction in Louisiana. The majority of New Orleans school facilities are 30+ years old. In fact, only 3% of schools were built in the last 18 years. The poor state of facilities in Orleans Parish is not just the result of Hurricane Katrina, but is due to the age of the facilities and a statewide lack of funding to keep them in a suitable state of repair.
- Based on these facts, the Recovery School District developed a School Facilities Master Plan to completely overhaul the school facilities in Orleans Parish. The Master Plan was approved in late 2008 by both the Orleans Parish School Board and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- The Master Plan proposes six phases of construction and renovation of schools with a combined cost of \$1.8 billion. A total of \$675 million for Phase I construction is secured by insurance proceeds, FEMA funds, and Community Development Block Grants. **Only funding for Phase I has been secured.**
- The Master Plan will address years of deferred maintenance and rebuild schools that are too old or damaged for repair. **The only reason funding is available to execute new construction in New Orleans is because of the federal funds given as a result of the storm.** Otherwise, New Orleans public school buildings would be on par with or worse than the rest of the state.

New Orleans Public School Facilities Breakdown by Year of Construction



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2006

Note: This graph does not include the five new schools that have been built in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina.

Louisiana Facilities Needs: \$ Per Pupil

Estimated Amount of Facilities Needs on a Per Pupil Basis

A December 2008 study by the American Federation of Teachers identified the school infrastructure funding needs of states across the nation. Because some states lack statewide facilities assessments they were matched with similar states that do have a usable assessment. **Louisiana is matched with South Carolina because Louisiana does not have a statewide facilities assessment.**

Based on this study, Louisiana needs the second highest amount (\$10,070) of estimated funding per pupil for facilities in the nation after Hawaii (\$18,373).

Source: Growth & Disparity: A Decade of US Public School Construction, Building Educational Success Together (BEST-2006)

States	Per Pupil Need
Hawaii	\$18,373
Louisiana, South Carolina	\$10,070
Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska	\$9,726
North Carolina, Virginia	\$7,086
Alabama, Mississippi	\$6,943
Alaska	\$5,834
Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin	\$5,065
West Virginia, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming	\$4,257
California	\$3,943
Tennessee, Indiana, Oklahoma	\$3,807
Georgia, Florida	\$3,365
Texas	\$2,855

Source: Building Minds, Minding Buildings: School Infrastructure Funding Need, American Federation of Teachers (2008)

Inadequate Facilities

In 1996, the Government Accountability Office reported that schools with the greatest number of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch also reported the most inadequate buildings. **Schools with 70% or more of their students qualifying for free or reduced lunch reported that 41% of their buildings were inadequate.** Schools with fewer than 20% of their students qualifying for free or reduced lunch reported only 25.1% of their buildings as inadequate.



What is an Inadequate School Building?

Bernard Terrace Elementary School and Istrouma High School, both in Baton Rouge, are inadequate school facilities. Eighty-four percent of Bernard Terrace students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Eighty-five percent of Istrouma students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Their buildings are in severe disrepair. They have out-of-date portables, overcrowded classrooms, flooding problems, cracked paint, and athletic and cafeteria facilities that are unable to serve the population.





Scott S. Cowen Institute
for Public Education Initiatives

200 Broadway Street, Suite 108
New Orleans, LA 70118
504.274.3690
<http://education.tulane.edu>