



New Orleans by the Numbers: School Performance Scores, 2010-2011

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The Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University launched the NOLA by the Numbers series in October 2010. This series aims to provide journalists, policymakers, community leaders, and the public with a timely and comprehensive review of state-released school-level data on public schools in New Orleans. This briefing focuses on 2011 School Performance Scores and letter grades. It, and others released by the Cowen Institute in the past, can be found at <http://education.tulane.edu>.

Each year, the Louisiana Department of Education calculates a School Performance Score (SPS) for each PK-12 public school in the state. The SPS is used as a measure of absolute school performance and as a means of calculating the growth needed in order to make Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. It is based primarily on how well each student performs on the state's standardized tests (LEAP, iLEAP, and Graduation Exit Exam), as well as on dropout rates, attendance and cohort graduation rates. The scores range from 0.0 to either 236.4 or 266.7 depending on a school's grade configuration.

This year marks the first time the state has issued letter grades instead of performance labels as it has done in the past. Additionally, the state raised the bar to be deemed failing this year from an SPS below 60 to an SPS below 65. In the 2012-2013 school year, the bar will be raised again to an SPS below 75.

Fast Facts

- The average SPS for all public schools in Orleans Parish was **87.0**, which earns the city a D, compared to the state average of 93.9 or C letter grade.
- On average, public schools in New Orleans grew **7.7** points, or 9.7 percent, from 2010 to 2011, more than three times the state average of 2.2 points or 2.4 percent.
- **76** percent of public schools in New Orleans saw some growth from 2010, while 45 percent met their growth target.
- Of public schools in New Orleans that received an SPS in 2011, **28** percent received an F which is nearly three times the percentage of all schools in Louisiana that received an F.
- **37** percent of public school students in New Orleans attended a school receiving an A, B or C in 2011 compared to 23 percent in 2010 and 19 percent in 2009.



Baseline School Performance Scores are calculated using two years of data, while a Growth SPS is based on just one year of test scores. Because two years of data are used to calculate the Baseline SPS, significant growth or decline in any given year—on any of the metrics used to calculate the SPS—is balanced somewhat by the prior year’s performance. This provides a more accurate estimate of a school’s performance over time and to account for dramatic increases or declines over one year.

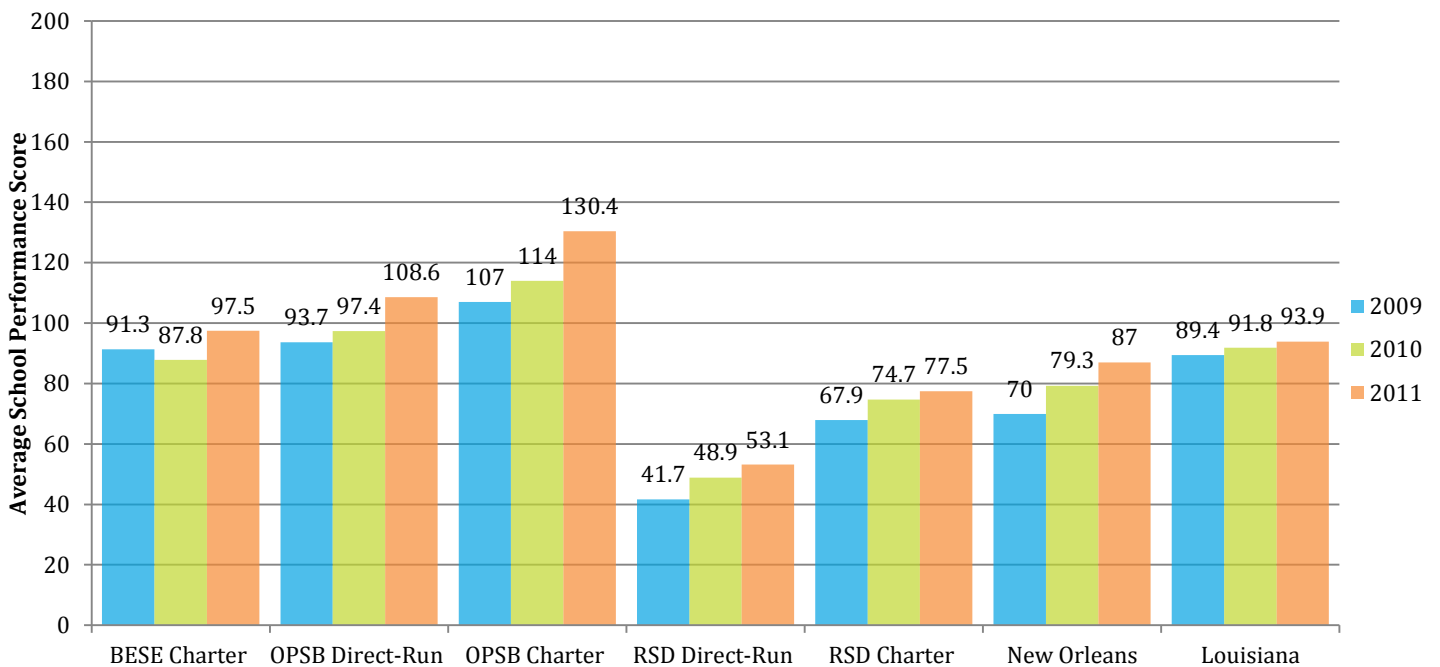
Almost all PK-12 public schools with at least two years of testing data receive a Baseline SPS. However, there are some exceptions: schools recently converted to a charter school; schools changed charter school operators; schools that did not serve grades which are administered the state’s standardized tests; and, schools that were closed as of the 2011-2012 school year. Thus, for the 2010-2011 school year, 75 of New Orleans’ 88 public schools received a School Performance Score. Fifteen schools received an SPS for the first time this year.

School Performance Scores in New Orleans

The average SPS for all schools in Orleans Parish was 87.0. This number, however, is different from the District Performance Score (DPS), which is a roll-up of all individual student test scores, as well as dropout and attendance data. In contrast, the average SPS is calculated as a weighted average, based on October 1st student counts, of each individual school’s SPS. At the time of this writing, the Louisiana Department of Education had not yet calculated the DPS for all New Orleans schools. Regardless of what the DPS is finally calculated to be, it will be a marked improvement over the last pre-Katrina DPS of 56.9 for the 2004-2005 school year. The most recent DPS calculated for all New Orleans schools was 70.6 in 2008-2009.

Each type of school operator in New Orleans showed improvement from 2010 in its average SPS with growth ranging from 2.8 points for Recovery School District (RSD) charters to 16.4 points for Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) charters. Growth or decline for individual schools ranged from -15.0 to 27.6 points. This is a significantly larger spread than from 2009 to 2010, when growth or decline ranged from -3.6 to 16.6, though the median remained the same (4.9). On average, schools in New Orleans grew 7.7 points, or 9.7 percent, from 2010 to 2011, more than three times the state average of 2.2 points or 2.4 percent. Sixty percent of all schools in New Orleans saw growth from 2010, while 20 percent declined and 20 percent received an SPS for the first time in 2011.

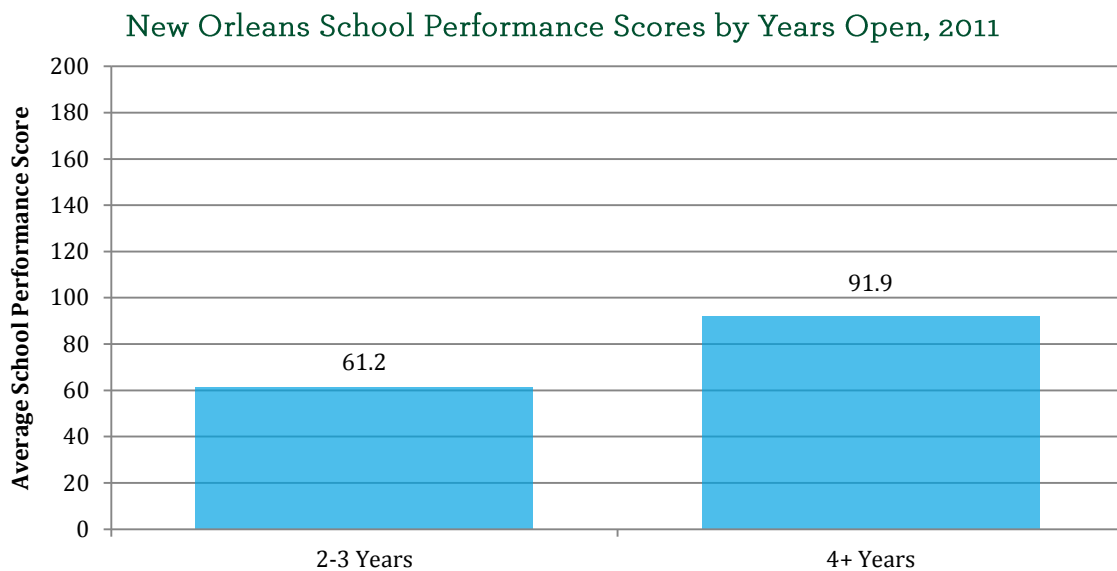
New Orleans School Performance Scores by School Type, 2009-2011



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2009, 2010, 2011

Some high schools in New Orleans saw a larger than usual increase in SPS this year due to the way in which the Cohort Graduation Rate is calculated into the SPS. The Cohort Graduation Rate is the percentage of students who begin 9th grade and graduate within four years. Not all high schools in New Orleans received a Cohort Graduation Rate because they either had too small of a graduating class last year or have not yet had a graduating class. Beginning in 2011, Louisiana’s accountability system uses a formula for high school SPSs that rewards schools for having a Cohort Graduation Rate at or above the state’s graduation rate target, which was 65 percent in 2011 and will increase by five points each year until 2014. Of high schools that have received an SPS for two or more years, those that had a graduating class of more than 40 students in 2011 grew 16.5 points from 2010 compared with an increase of just 0.8 points at schools without a graduating class or with a graduating class of fewer than 40 students.

In general, schools that have been open for more years received higher performance scores than new schools or schools that recently changed operators. Since schools do not receive a Baseline SPS until their second year of operation, those schools that have received an SPS for three or more years have been open under the same operator for at least four years. Schools that have received an SPS for three or more years had an average SPS in 2011 that is more than 50 percent greater than the average SPS of schools that received an SPS for the first or second time this year.

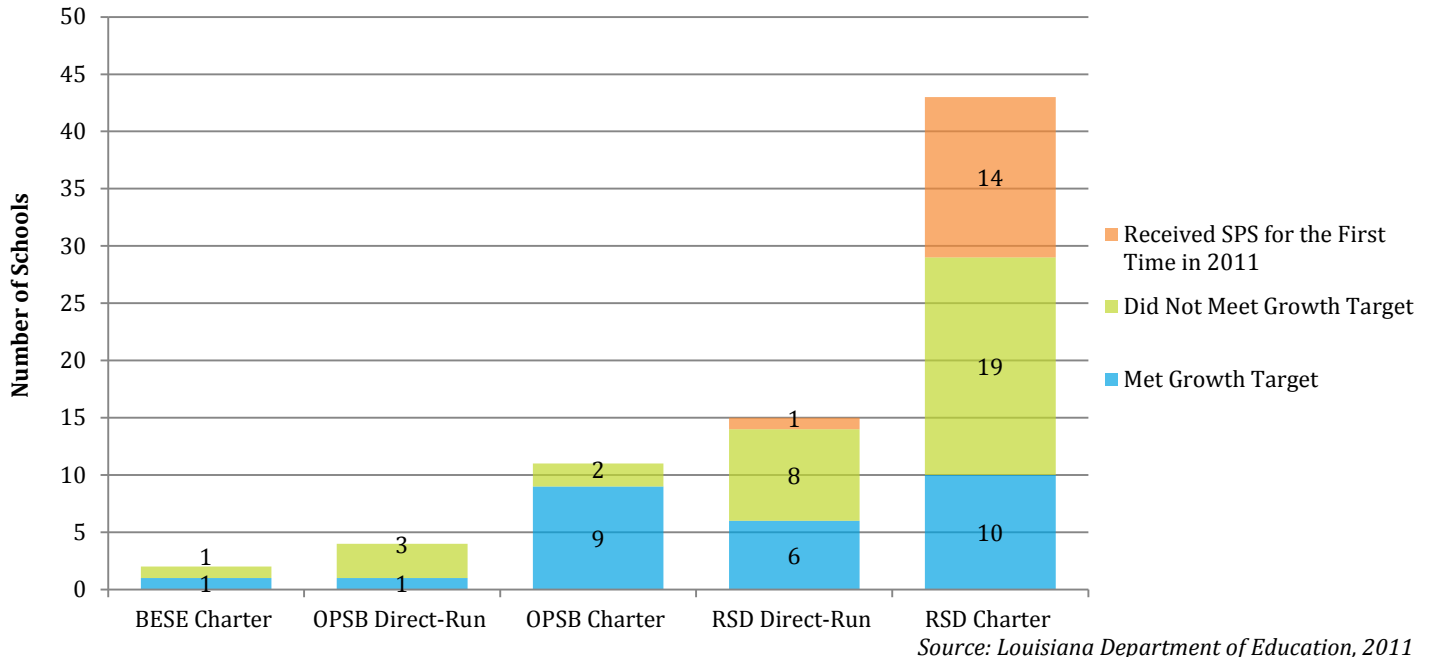


Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2011

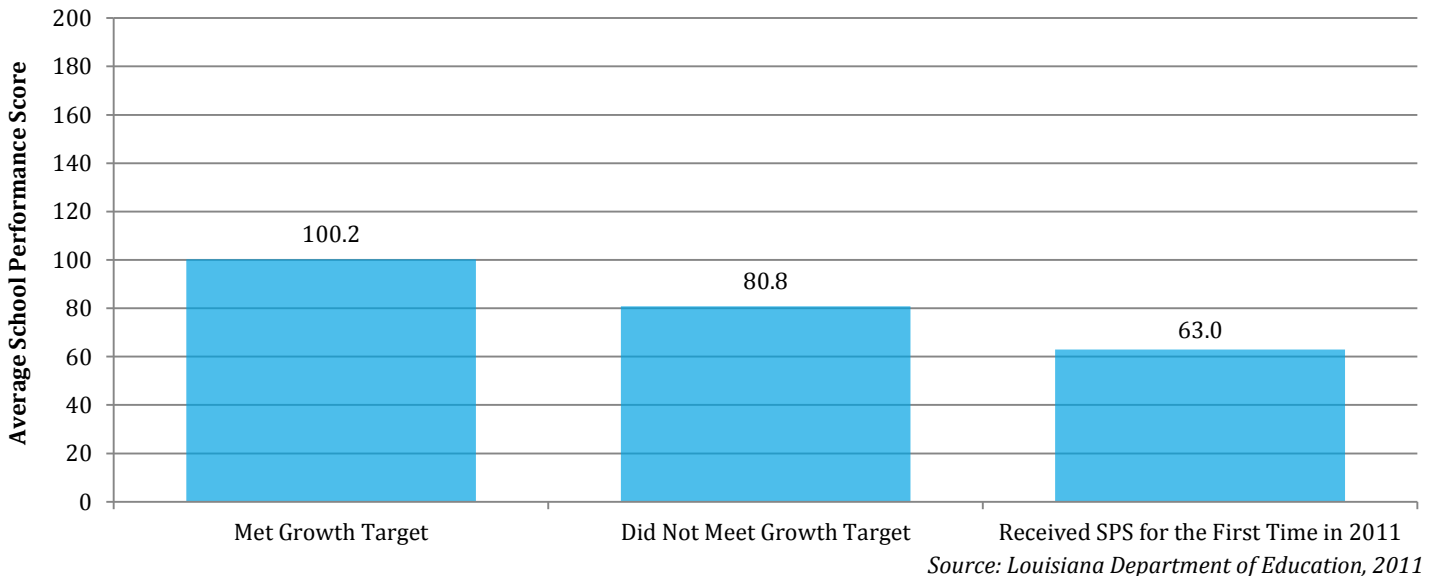
Each year, schools receive a Growth SPS which is based on just one year of test scores. This score is compared to the previous year’s Baseline SPS (which is based on two years of test scores) to determine the school’s growth. Growth SPS and scores for student subgroups are used to determine whether or not a school makes its Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind. Of schools in New Orleans that have received an SPS for two or more years in a row, nearly half met their growth target. The percent of schools meeting their growth target varied significantly by school type. At the high end, 82 percent of OPSB charter schools met their growth target, while just one-quarter of OPSB direct-run schools did. Forty-three percent of RSD charter schools, 34 percent of RSD direct-run schools, and 50 percent (one of two) BESE charter schools met their growth target. Many RSD direct-run and charter schools received an SPS for the first time in 2011 and therefore could not demonstrate growth.

Higher performing schools were also more likely to meet their growth target. Nearly three-quarters of schools with an SPS above the state average of 93.9 met their growth target, compared to less than a third of schools that received an SPS below the state average. Looking from another angle, schools that met their growth target had an average SPS of 100.2, while schools that did not meet their growth target had an average SPS of 80.8. Schools that received an SPS for the first time in 2011 had an average SPS of 63.0.

New Orleans Growth Targets by School Type, 2011



New Orleans School Performance Scores by Growth Target, 2011



Letter Grades in New Orleans

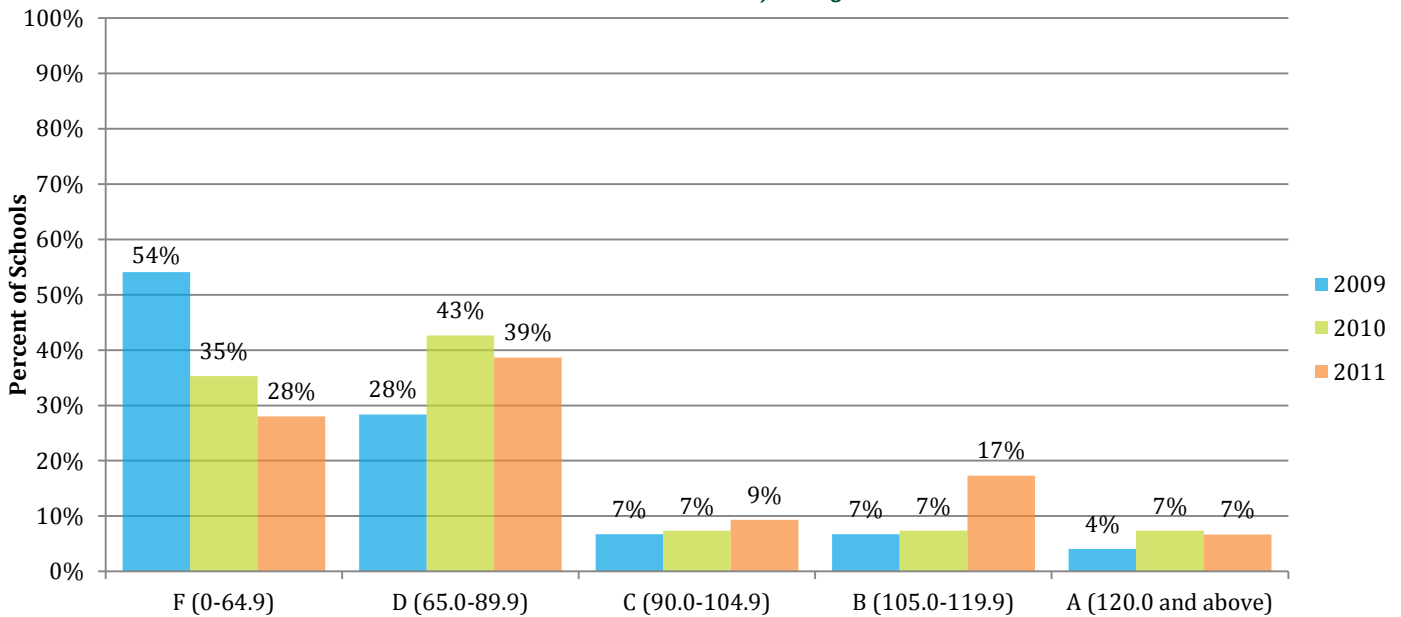
The 2011 School Performance Scores mark the first time the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) has issued letter grades. In the 2010 legislative session, the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 718, which provided for the LDE to assign letter grades from A to F to schools and school districts based on their performance scores. Schools that met their growth target received a "+" in addition to their letter grade, while schools that declined in SPS received a "-." Additionally, the state raised the bar to be deemed failing this year from an SPS below 60 to an SPS below 65. Schools with an SPS below 65 were deemed failing and received an F. In the 2012-2013 school year, the bar will be raised again to an SPS below 75. The following table shows the letter grade scale for the 2010-2011 school year.

Letter Grade	School Performance Score (SPS) Range	Approximate % Students Below Basic
A	120.0 or above	0 – 12%
B	105.0 – 119.9	13 – 24%
C	90.0 – 104.9	25 – 36%
D	65.0 – 89.9	37 – 61%
F	0 – 64.9	62 – 100%

The average SPS for all public schools in New Orleans of 87.0 earns the city a D. More than a quarter of schools in New Orleans that received an SPS in 2011 were deemed failing. Using the same letter grade scale for the purposes of comparison with previous years, this is nearly half the percentage of schools that were failing 2009 (54 percent of schools with an SPS below 65) and a decrease of 25 percent since last year (35 percent of schools with an SPS below 65). New schools were more likely to be failing. Of the 21 schools receiving an F in 2011, 10 of them are schools receiving an SPS for the first time this year because they are brand new, changed operators, or had grades taking state exams for the first time this year. All 15 schools receiving an SPS for the first time in 2011 received either a D or F.

In addition to the decrease in the percentage of failing schools, a larger percentage of schools earned As, Bs or Cs in 2011 than in previous years if the same scale is applied. This year, one-third of public schools in New Orleans earned an A, B or C based on their SPS compared to 18 percent in 2009 and 17 percent last year.

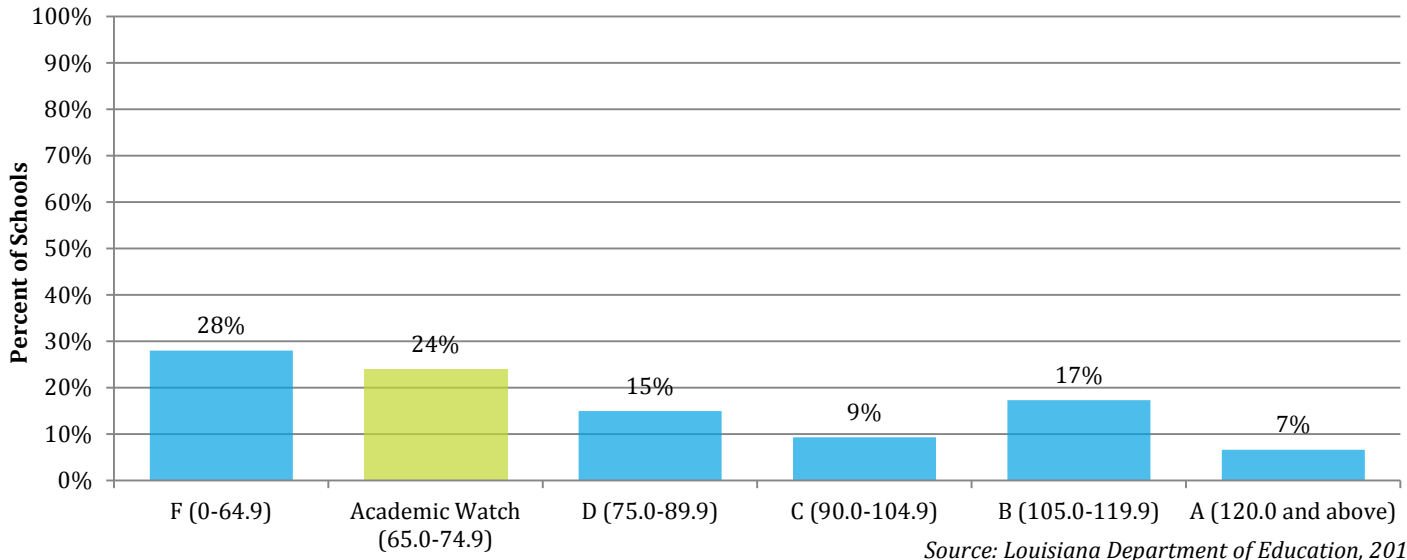
New Orleans Letter Grades, 2009-2011



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2009, 2010, 2011

Last year, the state created the label “Academic Watch” to identify schools that were not deemed failing that year but had an SPS below 75, meaning they were at risk of receiving an F when the bar is raised in 2011-2013. The Academic Watch label was not used this year, though the bar to receive a failing grade will be raised again in 2012. In 2011, 18 schools, or 28 percent of all schools receiving an SPS, had an SPS between 65.0 and 74.9. These schools could be given the label Academic Watch because they will have to show significant growth in order to not be labeled failing when the bar is raised next year. Had the the bar been 75 this year, more than half of schools in New Orleans would have received an F.

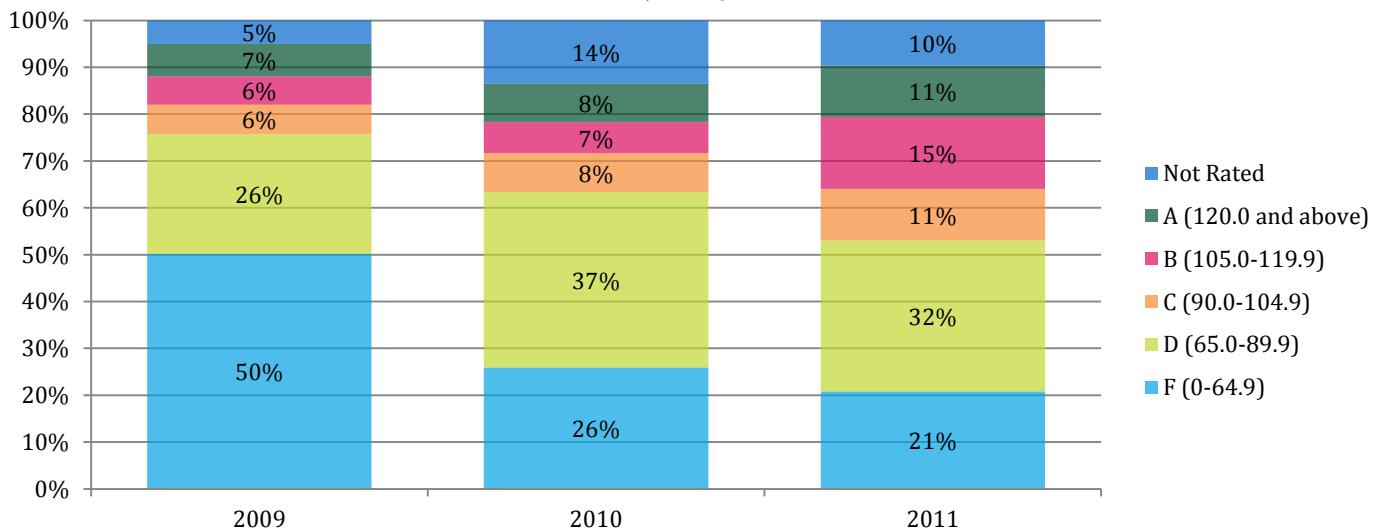
New Orleans Schools in Academic Watch, 2011



Applying the 2011 letter grade scale to previous years illustrates that New Orleans has also seen a decrease in the percentage of students attending failing public schools. Based on October 1st student counts, of all students attending public schools in New Orleans in the 2010-2011 school year, 21 percent of students attended schools failing schools. This represents an improvement of 5 percentage points from the percentage of students that attended failing schools in 2010. It is less than half the percentage of students that attended failing schools in 2008. Additionally, the percentage of all public school students attending the highest performing public schools with an SPS of 120 or higher improved from 7 percent in 2009 to 11 percent in 2011.

Each year there is a percentage of students who attended a school that did not receive an SPS. If students at schools that did not receive an SPS in 2011 are excluded from the calculation, a slightly higher percentage of students (23 percent) attended a failing school. Whether or not students attending schools that did not receive an SPS are included in the calculation, the percentage of students attending failing schools has decreased since 2009.

Percentage of Students Attending Public Schools in New Orleans by Letter Grade, 2009-2011



Conclusion

The 2011 School Performance Scores and Letter Grades reveal that public schools in New Orleans have continued their post-Katrina trajectory, improving steadily each year. Applying this year's letter grade scale to previous years of performance scores, a decreasing percentage of schools are failing and an increasing percentage of schools are performing at the highest level. While all school types demonstrated some growth, the size of that growth varied significantly. Growth also varied by absolute performance. Schools that met their growth target tended to be higher performing schools than those that did not. Overall, public schools in New Orleans grew nearly 10 percent from 2010, more than three times the state's growth.

Despite the steady improvement demonstrated by New Orleans schools, nearly a quarter of schools will have to show dramatic growth in order to avoid receiving an F when the bar is raised again in 2011-2012 to an SPS of 75. Additionally, there continues to be a significant disparity among school types as the already high-performing schools under the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) improve at a faster rate than those under the Recovery School District (RSD).



The Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University is an action oriented think tank that informs and advances research-based policy, legislative, and programmatic solutions to eliminate the challenges impeding the success of K-12 education in New Orleans and beyond.

Applied Research at the Cowen Institute

We serve as an objective voice to education leaders, policymakers, the media, and the public about what is taking place in public education in New Orleans—particularly in the areas of accountability, finance, facilities, and governance—by disseminating relevant data and research. This publication, and others released in the past, can be found at <http://education.tulane.edu>.

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Appendix

School	2009 Baseline SPS	2010 Baseline SPS	2011 Baseline SPS	Point Change from 2010 to 2011	Met 2011 Growth Target*	2011 Letter Grade*
International School of Louisiana	102.7	103.0	110.8	7.8	Yes	B+
Milestone SABIS Academy of New Orleans	74.2	76.3	79.3	3.0	No	D
BESE Charter Average	91.3	87.8	97.5	5.4		C
Alice Harte Elementary Charter School	88.9	94.1	101.0	6.9	Yes	C+
Audubon Charter School	109.8	114.1	120.4	6.3	Yes	A+
Benjamin Franklin High School	167.5	169.8	186.2	16.4	No	A
Edna Karr Secondary School	82.9	87.6	115.0	27.4	Yes	B+
Edward Hynes Charter School	107.2	112.1	117.2	5.1	Yes	B+
Einstein Charter School	85.3	89.1	96.1	7.0	Yes	C+
Lake Forest Elementary Charter School	129.0	140.4	147.8	7.4	Yes	A+
Lusher Charter School	139.4	146.2	155.4	9.2	Yes	A+
New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics HS	76.7	81.0	106.4	25.4	Yes	B+
Robert Russa Moton Charter School	97.6	114.2	111.6	-2.6	No	B-
Warren Easton Senior High School	84.0	92.6	120.2	27.6	Yes	A+
OPSB Charter Average	107.0	114.0	130.4	12.4		A
Benjamin Franklin Elem. Math and Science	109.1	114.4	111.5	-2.9	No	B-
Eleanor McMain Secondary School	84.8	88.9	108.0	19.1	Yes	B+
Mary Bethune Elementary Literature/Technology	117.6	123.7	118.7	-5.0	No	B-
McDonogh #35 Senior High School	82.5	83.9	103.2	19.3	No	C
OPSB Direct-Run Average	93.7	97.4	108.6	7.6		B
Abramson Science & Technology Charter School	66.3	78.0	78.1	0.1	No	D
Akili Academy of New Orleans			106.6		N/A	B
Algiers Technology Academy	49.9	55.0	76.1	21.1	Yes	D+
Andrew H. Wilson Charter School	62.3	59.0	70.1	11.1	Yes	D+
Arise Academy			67.1		N/A	D
Arthur Ashe Charter School	67.2	83.8	81.6	-2.2	No	D-
Batiste Cultural Arts Academy at Live Oak Elem			60.8		N/A	F
Benjamin E. Mays Preparatory School			51.3		N/A	F
Crocker Arts and Technology School		67.2	65.2	-2.0	No	D-
Dr. M.L.K. Charter School for Science & Tech.	91.4	90.1	94.2	4.1	Yes	C+
Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School	70.5	80.0	84.9	4.9	No	D
E. P. Harney Spirit of Excellence Academy			66.7		N/A	D
Esperanza Charter School			62.1		N/A	F
Gentilly Terrace School			65.3		N/A	D
James M. Singleton Charter School	58.8	70.1	73.0	2.9	No	D-
John Dibert Community School			64.7		N/A	F
KIPP Believe College Prep (Phillips)	97.2	106.5	111.6	5.1	Yes	B+
KIPP Central City Academy	75.8	85.2	107.5	22.3	Yes	B+
KIPP Central City Primary	114.6	120.6	105.6	-15.0	No	B-
KIPP McDonogh 15 School for the Creative Arts	88.9	87.7	91.7	4.0	No	C
KIPP New Orleans Leadership Academy			74.9		N/A	D
Lafayette Academy of New Orleans	63.9	77.3	88.5	11.2	Yes	D+
Lagniappe Academies of New Orleans			57.4		N/A	F
Langston Hughes Academy Charter School	64.7	74.0	85.1	11.1	Yes	D+
Martin Behrman Elementary School	95.3	99.3	107.5	8.2	Yes	B+
McDonogh #28 City Park Academy	56.6	70.5	71.4	0.9	No	D-

School	2009 Baseline SPS	2010 Baseline SPS	2011 Baseline SPS	Point Change from 2010 to 2011	Met 2011 Growth Target*	2011 Letter Grade*
McDonogh #32 Elementary School	55.4	60.0	62.1	2.1	No	F
McDonogh #42 Elementary Charter School	62.0	65.3	62.6	-2.7	No	F-
Miller-McCoy Academy	67.5	69.5	71.2	1.7	No	D
Nelson Elementary School	63.7	65.2	69.5	4.3	No	D
New Orleans Charter Science and Math Academy	73.6	89.2	96.4	7.2	No	C
NOLA College Prep Charter School	67.1	73.4	67.6	-5.8	No	D-
O.P. Walker Senior High School	56.3	68.4	95.5	27.1	Yes	C+
P. A. Capdau School	66.4	71.2	70.3	-0.9	No	D-
Pride College Preparatory Academy			64.4		N/A	F
Samuel J. Green Charter School	66.5	73.6	77.3	3.7	No	D
SciTech Academy at Laurel Elementary			60.6		N/A	F
Sojourner Truth Academy		53.5	48.7	-4.8	No	F-
Sophie B. Wright Inst.of Academic Excellence	79.5	83.0	86.1	3.1	No	D
Success Preparatory Academy			54.2		N/A	F
The Intercultural Charter School	65.8	66.7	71.7	5.0	No	D
Thurgood Marshall Early College High School			70.1		N/A	D
William J. Fischer Elementary School	61.0	62.9	72.4	9.5	Yes	D+
RSD Charter Average	67.9	74.7	77.5	4.6		D
A.P. Tureaud Elementary School	72.4	76.3	77.9	1.6	No	D
Benjamin Banneker Elementary School	58.9	60.9	66.5	5.6	Yes	D+
Dr. Charles Richard Drew Elementary School	40.7	46.5	50.1	3.6	No	F
G.W. Carver High School	28.8	31.9	44.8	12.9	Yes	F+
H.C. Schaumburg Elementary School	61.7	70.6	69.8	-0.8	No	D-
James Weldon Johnson School	51.8	58.6	67.0	8.4	Yes	D+
John McDonogh Senior High School	21.6	32.2	41.8	9.6	Yes	F+
Joseph A. Craig School	48.7	45.2	48.3	3.1	No	F
L. B. Landry High School			46.7		N/A	F
Mary D. Coghill Elementary School	53.3	65.5	75.0	9.5	Yes	D+
Murray Henderson Elementary School	62.3	63.4	57.1	-6.3	No	F-
Paul B. Habans Elementary School	59.2	62.4	62.1	-0.3	No	F-
Sarah Towles Reed Senior High School	33.3	34.9	33.7	-1.2	No	F
Schwarz Alternative School	12.3		6.2		No	F-
Walter L. Cohen High School	20.4	28.2	28.8	0.6	Yes	F+
RSD Direct-Run Average	41.7	48.9	53.1	3.6		F
New Orleans Average	70.0	79.3	87.0	7.7		D
Louisiana Average	81.4	91.8	93.9	2.2		C

*Schools that meet their 2011 Growth Targets are awarded a plus (+) sign following their letter grade. Schools with performance scores that decline by .1 point or more have a minus (-) sign following their letter grade.