

**The Facts
About
Public Schools in
Orleans Parish**

Let's Get Our Facts Straight*

Myth 1: New Orleans schools weren't doing that bad before the storm (or state action was unjustified).

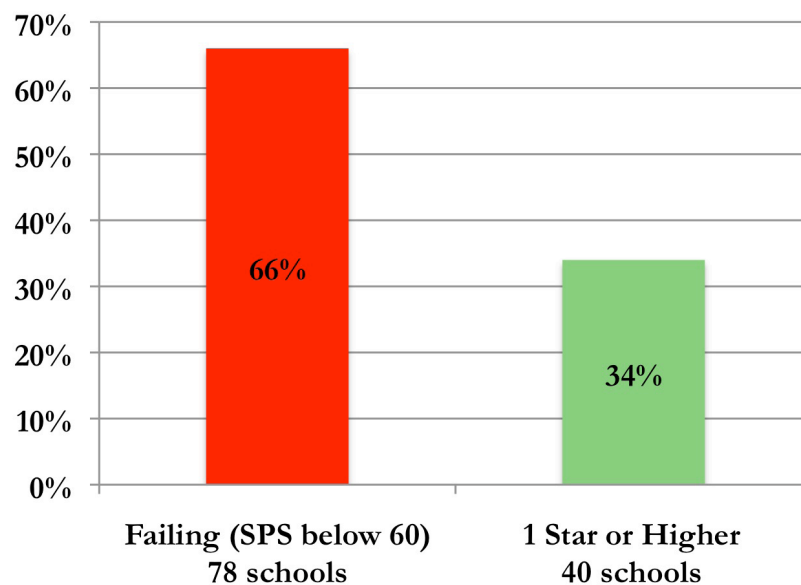
Fact: New Orleans battled it out with St. Helena Parish for the lowest performing district in one of the lowest performing states in the country.

New Orleans was a district in Academic Crisis - defined by state law as a district with:

- At least 30 failing schools (schools with an SPS below 60) - New Orleans had 78.
- Or at least 50% of students attending a failing school - New Orleans had 62%.

The children of New Orleans were not being served by the Orleans Parish School Board in August 2005.

**In 2004-05, 66% of New Orleans public schools were failing
(School Performance Score (SPS) below 60)**



* View sources for graphs and data at www.educatenow.net

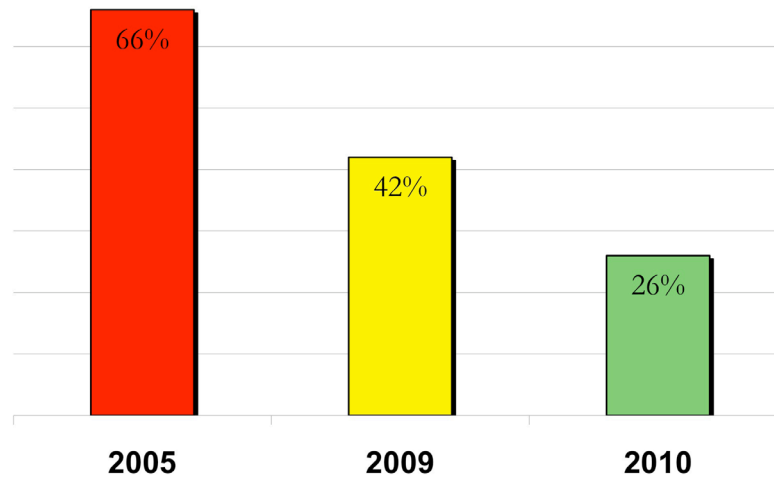
Myth 2: Schools aren't doing that much better since the storm.

Fact: Schools are doing significantly better.

The percentage of failing schools (an SPS below 60) has declined from 66% to 26%.

- In 2005, 78 of 118 schools that received an SPS were failing (66%).
- In 2010, 18 of 68 schools that received an SPS are still failing (26%).

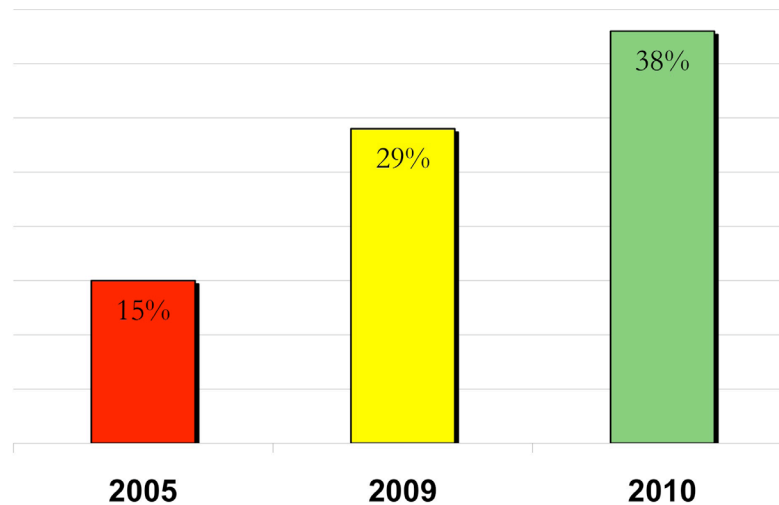
**Percent of Failing Schools (SPS below 60)
OPSB and RSD Schools Combined**



The percentage of schools rated 2 stars or higher (an SPS of 80 or above) has more than doubled since 2005.

- In 2005, 17 of 117 schools that received an SPS were rated 2 stars or higher (15%).
- In 2010, 26 of 68 schools that received an SPS were rated 2 stars or higher (38%).

**Percent of Schools 2 Stars or Higher (SPS 80 or above)
OPSB and RSD Schools Combined**

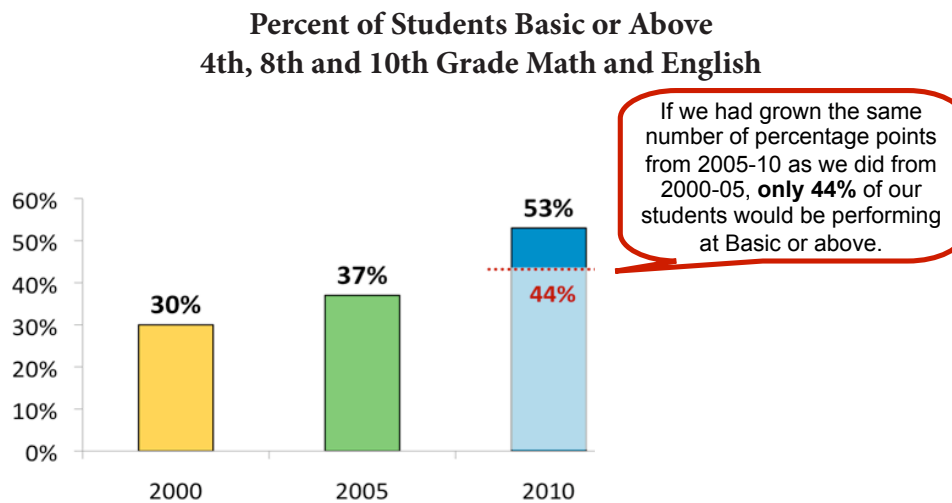


Myth 3: Student test scores were improving before the storm at the same rate they are now.

Fact: Since the state takeover, student improvement has more than doubled!

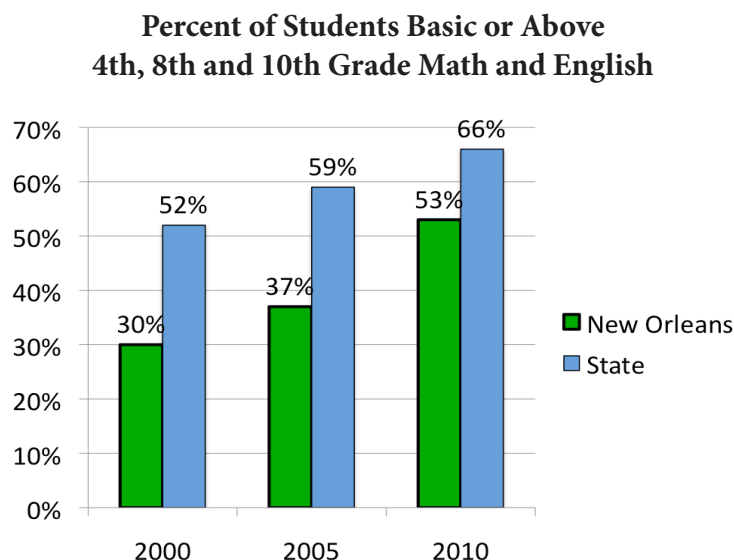
Educate Now! compared the percent of students scoring Basic or above in math and English on the 4th and 8th grade LEAP and the 10th grade GEE tests for 2005 and 2010*. (For other grades the state changed the tests, so we can't compare pre- and post-storm numbers.)

- From 2000 to 2005, the percent of students scoring Basic or above increased from 30% to 37%, a gain of 7 points.
- From 2005 to 2010, the percent of students scoring Basic or above increased from 37% to 53%, a gain of 16 points!
- If we had grown the same number of percentage points from 2005-10 as we did from 2000-05, we would have gone from 37% of students Basic or above to only 44%. Instead, we now have 53% of our students performing at Basic or above.



Fact: New Orleans has improved much faster than the state and has narrowed the performance gap between the city and the state from 22 points to 13 points.

- From 2000-2005, New Orleans' improvement was the same as the state: 7 points.
- From 2005-2010, New Orleans grew 9 points more than the state: 16 points versus 7 points.



*The new GEE was first administered in 2001, so the 2001 GEE scores are included with LEAP scores under the heading "2000."

Myth 4: If a school kept its name, it must be the same.

Fact: For many schools, only the name is the same.

Comparing the performance of individual New Orleans public schools with the same name pre- and post-Katrina is not a valid analysis.

Schools with the same name may:

- be in a different location
- have different grade configurations
- no longer serve the surrounding neighborhood
- have different admission requirements

BESE policy recognizes that individual school populations may change.

In 1999, when Louisiana adopted school accountability, BESE realized that when a school’s student population changed by more than 50%, comparing School Performance Scores was no longer valid, and **it put in place policies for reconfigured schools.**

As a result, after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, BESE allowed all schools in Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard, Calcasieu (Lake Charles) and parts of St. Tammany Parishes to start over with new accountability base lines.

Comparing apples to bananas:

Compare pre- and post-Katrina performance of Abramson, currently an RSD charter school. Which post-Katrina school serves as the most appropriate comparison for pre-Katrina Abramson?

Abramson School & Abramson Students Pre- and Post-Katrina

School	Location	Student Body	SPS
Pre-Katrina (2004-05)			
Abramson High School	Abramson Campus	Grades 9-12 1,541 students	31
Post-Katrina (2010)			
Abramson	Abramson Campus Modulars	Grades K-12 595 students <150 students in 9-12	78
New Orleans Charter Science and Math Academy (NEW)	Abramson Campus Modulars	Grades 9-11 220 students	89.2
Miller McCoy Academy (NEW)	Former Livingston Campus (just blocks from Abramson)	Grades 6-11 530 students	69.5

Annotations: A bracket groups Abramson High School and Abramson with the text "Same name; different grades". Another bracket groups New Orleans Charter Science and Math Academy (NEW) and Miller McCoy Academy (NEW) with the text "Different name; same grades".

The answer is, “none of the above.” We have no way of knowing which of these three schools, or if any of these three schools, are enrolling the students who would have gone to the old Abramson High School.

The same holds true for Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) schools. Let’s look at two OPSB operated high schools: McMMain and McDonogh 35.

These two OPSB direct-run high schools have the same name, are in the same buildings, and continue to draw students from across the city just as they did before Katrina. There is one important difference, however. Each school lowered its admission requirements when it reopened in 2006.

McMMain & McDonogh 35 School Performance Pre- and Post-Katrina

School	2005 SPS (Pre-Katrina)	2010 SPS	Change in SPS
McMMain High School	121.3	88.9	-32.4
McDonogh 35	115.8	83.9	-31.9

It would be unfair to use the drop in SPS at these schools as evidence of failure of the OPSB. It is equally counterproductive to compare individual schools pre- and post-Katrina to evaluate the performance of the RSD.

Myth 5: RSD Charters are not enrolling students with disabilities.

Fact: RSD charters are serving students with disabilities and working to improve these services.

- As of February 2010, special needs children comprised approximately 9.2% of the overall student population in RSD and OPSB schools.
- The RSD charters had 14,129 students and enrolled 1,228 students with disabilities (8.7%).
- If they were serving their proportionate share of these students (9.2%), they should have enrolled at least 1,304 special needs children. They were under enrolled by 76 students.

Charter schools are taking the initiative to find better ways to serve students with disabilities.

- The LA Special Education Cooperative was started by charter schools with a shared interest in building strong programs for students with disabilities. Participating charter schools pay membership dues.



www.educatenow.net