



URBAN LEAGUE OF LOUISIANA

ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW ORLEANS

SECOND EDITION 2020

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a summary of a larger report that examines several key metrics through an equity lens and identifies biases and gaps in outcomes and access, it utilizes publicly available data, accessible from www.Louisianabelieves.com. All metrics represent the aggregate or sum of **all public schools in New Orleans** including OPSB charter schools (Type 1, Type 3, and Type 3B), as well as BESE-authorized Type 2 charter schools and independent schools authorized by the Louisiana Legislature. Data is disaggregated and analyzed by subgroups to identify disparities in academic outcomes. In 2019-20, the majority of schools (75 of 86 schools in New Orleans) were governed by OPSB and three were OPSB-contract schools. Seven public schools in New Orleans are BESE-authorized charter schools. One independent school authorized by the Louisiana Legislature is located in New Orleans. In the 2019-20 school year, there were 84 public schools in New Orleans serving 50,815 students. Type 3B schools (schools that were previously under the RSD but were placed under OPSB governance) enrolled 54 percent of students.

This report reflects a deep belief that every child deserves a high-quality education.




What is educational equity?

Educational equity is an ongoing process that removes historic barriers and creates a system of opportunity by which ALL students have the necessary resources to reach their full potential.

This report provides an update on the metrics we explored in 2017, in the areas of Student Outcomes, School Climate, and Access. Since the publication of Advancing Educational Equity in New Orleans Public Schools 2017, there have been significant changes in the public education landscape in New Orleans. As a result of Act 91, schools formerly under governance of the Recovery School District (RSD) have been placed under the Orleans Parish School Board. New Orleans is the first unified district with oversight responsibilities of a citywide system of charter schools. All public schools, with the exception of a handful of schools authorized by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) are governed by the locally-elected Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB). Our analysis finds that many of the inequities in quality and in access that were identified in 2017 continue to plague our education system today.

Unification has provided OPSB with the authority to hold all NOLA Public Schools accountable and provide appropriate support when needed. The district must continue to focus on recurring gaps – in outcomes and in access – to ensure that all students in New Orleans have the opportunity to reach their highest potential.

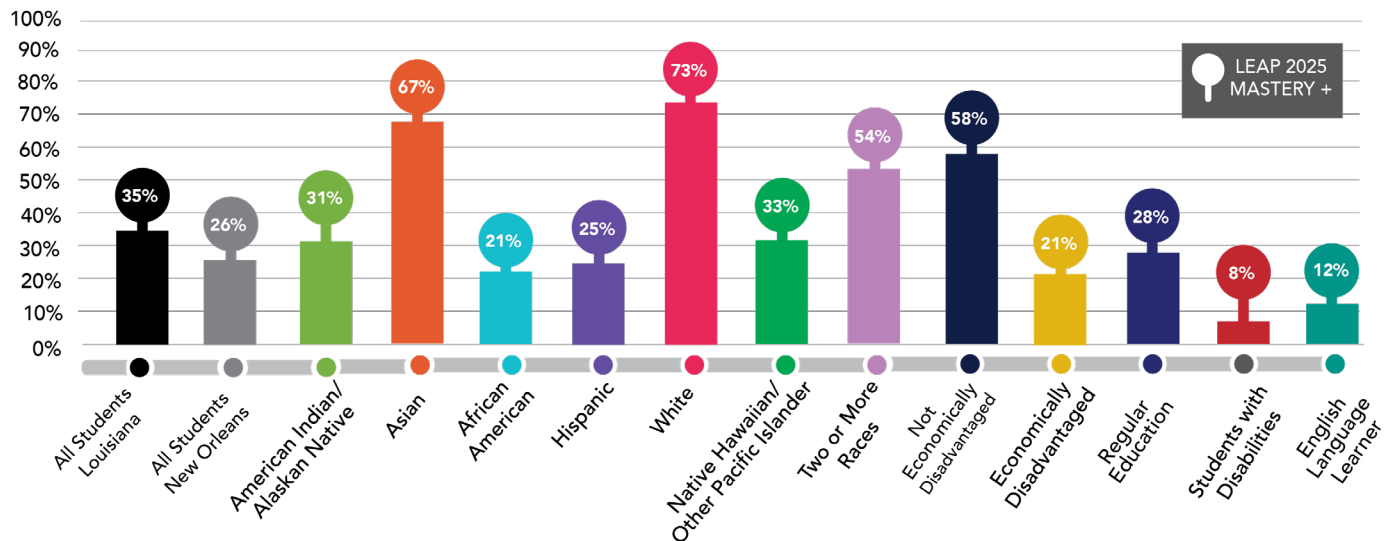


Since 1938, the Urban League of Louisiana (ULLA) has actively worked to assist underserved communities in securing economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. Educational equity is a central priority of ULLA. We believe educational equity is a vital prerequisite for the ability of communities to thrive.

Student Outcomes

Each year Louisiana public school students in grades three through high school take state tests through the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP). The five performance levels are: Advanced, Mastery, Basic, Approaching Basic, and Unsatisfactory. To assess academic outcomes we look at **LEAP 2025, 3rd grade reading, 8th grade math, High School ACT scores, graduation rates, and Advanced Placement.**

Percentage of Students Scoring Mastery or Above: Grades 3 through 8, All Subjects (2018-19)



HIGHLIGHTS: In 2019, there were achievement gaps in the percentages of students scoring Mastery or above:

- A **37 percentage point gap** between students classified as economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged.
- A **48 percentage point gap** between Hispanic students and white students.
- A **20 percentage point gap** between students with disabilities and regular education students.

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

refers to the persistent disparities in academic performance measures between various subgroups (such as race/ ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, etc.).

3rd Grade Reading and 8th Grade Math

Third Grade Reading: An Educational Milestone - Reading at grade level (Mastery level or above) by the end of third grade is a significant turning point in a child's educational trajectory. During the first three years of elementary school, students learn to read. Beginning in fourth grade, emphasis focuses on reading to learn. Many subjects require literacy in order to progress; students use their reading skills to gain information, think critically, and solve problems.



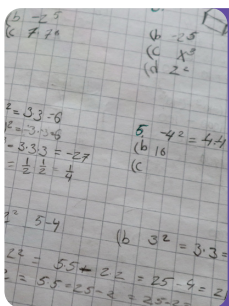
Economically disadvantaged students and African-American students are underrepresented in schools where the majority of third graders scored Mastery or above in English language arts.

In 2019, NOLA-PS public schools reported 33 percent of third graders scored Mastery or above on the LEAP 2025 English language arts (ELA) assessment (the 2019 statewide average was 46 percent), compared to 31 percent in 2017 (the 2017 statewide average was 44 percent). Since 2017, there has been a 2 percentage point increase in the overall percentage of third graders scoring Mastery or above in ELA. While some subgroups reported an increase in the percentage scoring Mastery or above, others reported a decrease.

Eighth Grade Math: A Strong Predictor of Post-Secondary Success - According to research, "the level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate than anything that happens academically in high school."* This is particularly true for eighth grade math. Even more than student demographics and gender, math performance has been found to be a better predictor of post-secondary success.

In 2019, of schools reporting eighth grade LEAP 2025 scores, only two schools reported 80 percent or more of their eighth graders scoring Mastery or above. More than half of the public schools with eighth grade test-takers reported less than 20 percent of students scoring Mastery or above in math.

8th grade math
+ Student mastery
Post-secondary SUCCESS!



The achievement gaps in 8th grade math performance between White and Hispanic students decreased from 53 percentage points in 2017 to 46 percentage points in 2019. There was no progress made in reducing the achievement gap between White and African American (remained at 52 percentage points). The achievement gap by socioeconomic status increased from 27 percentage points in 2017 to 31 percentage points in 2019.

*"The Forgotten Middle." ACT. 2008.

High School

ACT: A Gateway to Opportunities - In addition to gauging school performance and students' academic readiness for college or careers, ACT scores (which can range from 1-36) are often used to determine students' eligibility for dual enrollment courses. Each course has a specific set of prerequisites that must be met, including a minimum ACT score. Low ACT composite scores prevent students from accessing dual enrollment courses. Colleges and universities often use ACT composite scores as a factor for admissions decision-making. In addition, scholarships and federal grants use ACT scores when considering awards for financial assistance. ACT composite scores are used to determine eligibility for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a state scholarship for Louisiana residents.



For many Orleans Parish public school high school seniors, post-secondary opportunities are limited due to low ACT scores. For example, the average composite scores for African American students (16.9) and economically disadvantaged students (16.7) are well below the ACT minimum for admissions to many four-year colleges.

Average ACT Composite Scores by Subgroup, Class of 2019

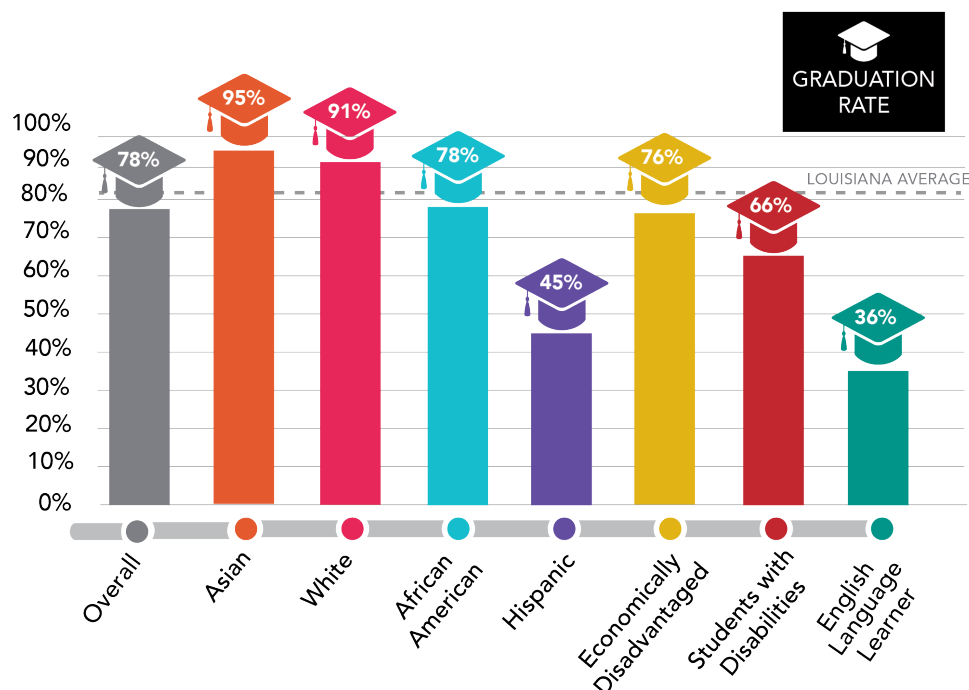
	Average Composite Score
African American	16.9
Economically Disadvantaged	16.7
Students with Disabilities	14.4
All Students	18.0

HIGHLIGHT:

Gaps in ACT composite scores between African American students and White students grew from 10.7 points in 2017 to 11.0 points in 2019.

Graduation Rates: Diplomas and Credentials - Louisiana uses a four-year cohort graduation rate as a measure of high school performance. Students who graduate within four years after beginning ninth grade are included in the cohort rate.* There are two types of graduation pathways: University Pathway and Jump Start Career Pathway. Graduation requirements differ based on the diploma track.

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates (2018)

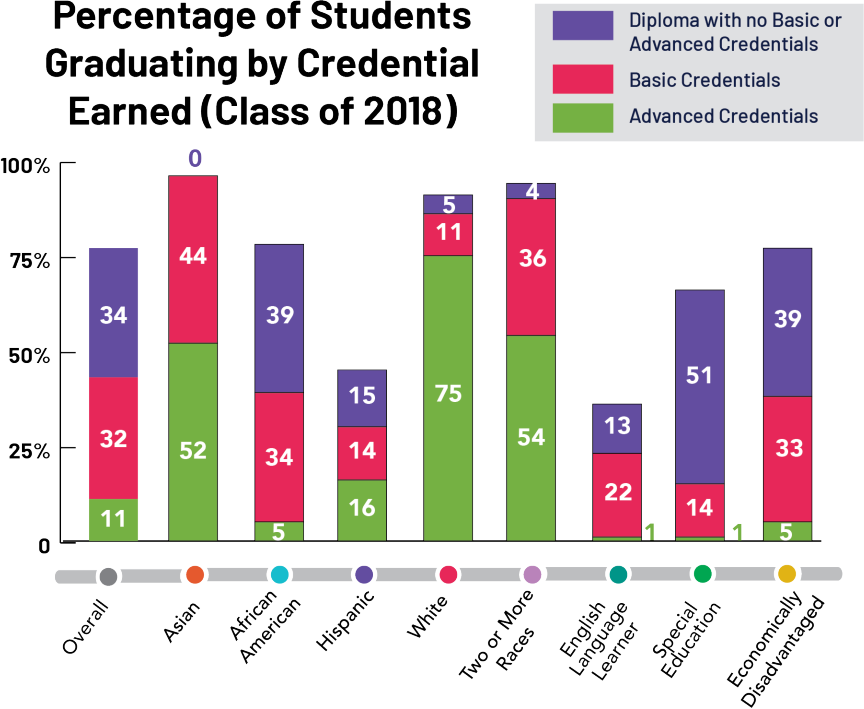


* Exceptions are made for students with disabilities.

In 2018, the state reported a cohort graduation rate of 81.4 percent; Orleans Parish public schools reported a rate of 77.8 percent. Since 2016, there have been improvements in the graduation rates, for all students and for many subgroups of students. Graduation rates for Asian, African American, White, and Multi-Race students have increased. Graduation rates for economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities also increased. Despite the increases, African American students and economically disadvantaged students are less likely to graduate on time than their White and Asian peers. Public school graduates can earn Basic or Advanced credentials along with their diploma. Significant achievement gaps exist; 75 percent of White students earned a diploma with an Advanced credential, compared to 5 percent for African American students and 16 percent for Hispanic students. Economically disadvantaged students were also less likely to earn a diploma with Advanced credentials (5 percent).



Percentage of Students Graduating by Credential Earned (Class of 2018)



Percentage of Class of 2018 Who Did Not Graduate with Cohort by Subgroup

Total Population	22%
Economically Disadvantaged	24%
African American	22%
Asian	5%
Hispanic	55%
White	9%
Multi-Race	7%
English Language Learners	64%
Students with Disabilities	34%

Source: Louisiana Department of Education. 2018 State, School, System and School Cohort Credential Rates by Ethnicity.

HIGHLIGHT:

Of the class of 2018, 75% of White students earned a diploma with an Advanced credential, compared to 5% for African American students and 16% for Hispanic students. Economically disadvantaged students were also less likely to earn a diploma with Advanced credentials (5%).

Advanced Placement: A Head Start for Post-Secondary Success - The Advanced Placement (AP) is a program offered by the College Board and gives students the opportunity to take rigorous, college-level courses and earn college credit and placement while in high school. Students who complete AP courses are better prepared for college work, have higher college persistence rates, and are more likely to graduate college in four or five years.

In 2018-19, 2,150 (18 percent) of high school students took at least one AP test; 41 percent of test takers earned a 3 or more on at least one test taken and may be eligible for college credit or advanced placement in college courses. The statewide pass rate was 35 percent. Economically disadvantaged students were underrepresented in AP courses: 77 percent of high school students were economically disadvantaged but about 10 percent of AP test-takers were economically disadvantaged. African-American students were underrepresented in AP courses: 78 percent of high school students were African American, but about 11 percent of AP test takers were African American.

School Climate

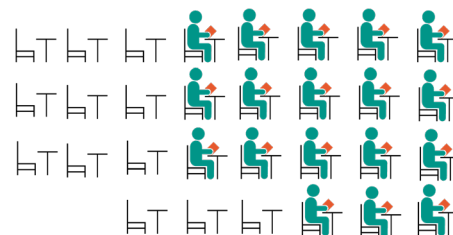
A positive school climate is vital for learning. It contributes to academic achievement, improves outcomes for youth, especially economically disadvantaged and minority students, and influences teacher effectiveness. Research shows that a positive school climate has more influence on school success (high academic achievement and graduation rates) than increased resources and can negate the impact associated with high-poverty rates.

Student Attendance – Students cannot succeed if they are not in school and learning in a positive environment. In Louisiana, students are required to attend school from the age of seven to 18 years, or until they graduate. In order to earn credit and progress to the next grade, students must attend 167 (of the minimum 177*) days.

Truancy: Students who miss more than 10 percent of the school year are considered truant. Truancy has significant consequences for youth, from falling behind academically, dropping out, and incarceration. During the 2017-18 school year, 47.8 percent of public school students statewide were considered truant. For New Orleans public schools, at least 16,119 students missed 10 percent or more school days during the 2017-18 school year. This is up from 2016-17: 10,801 students were considered truant. Days missed due to disciplinary incidents are included as an absence. Data was not available for 20 schools in New Orleans in 2017-18.

*Districts and schools can include more than 177 instructional days in their calendar; 177 days is the state minimum.

Impact of Truancy:



Of a classroom of 30 students, 12 desks are empty at least 10 percent or more days during the school year

Student Discipline – Students serving suspensions or who are expelled miss valuable instructional days. The Louisiana Department of Education reports the numbers and percentage of students who serve in-school or out-of-school suspensions, in-school or out-of-school expulsions, or serve suspensions or expulsions in an alternative site.

Percentage of Students by Disciplinary Action 2018 - 2019

	New Orleans	Louisiana
In-School Suspensions	2.5%	9.9%
Out-of-School Suspensions	9.5%	7.8%
In-School Expulsions	0.05%	0.7%
Out-of-School Expulsions	0.1%	0.0%
Alternative Site Suspensions	0.0%	1.4%
Alternative Site Expulsions	0.04%	0.6%

HIGHLIGHTS:

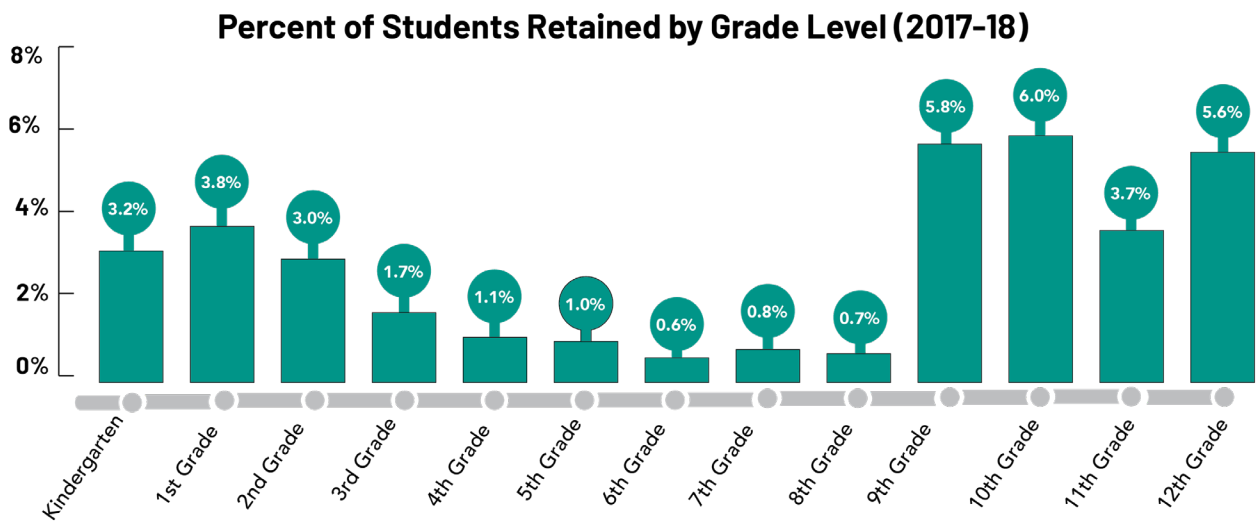
- 96.2 percent of students who received an in-school expulsion were African American
- 100 percent of students with an out-of-school expulsion were African American.
- 93.1 percent of students with an out-of-school expulsion were economically disadvantaged.



School Level Discipline Rates:

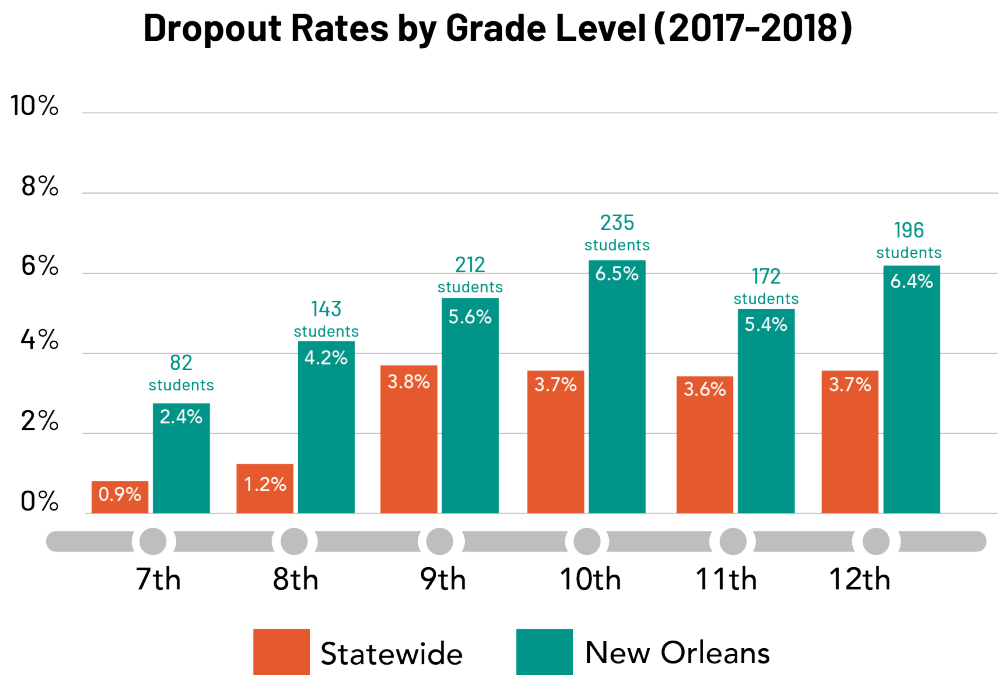
Twelve elementary/middle schools reported at least one in-school expulsion, and 8 schools reported at least one out-of-school expulsions. One combination school reported an in-school expulsion (1 student). Six high schools reported at least one in-school expulsion and 7 schools reported at least one out-of-school expulsions.

Grade Retention Rates - Students are held back a grade level when they don't meet the requirements for promotion, have not mastered the skills needed to be successful in the next grade level, or have excessive absences. Developmental immaturity or emotional immaturity may also be reasons for students to repeat a grade, particularly in the early grade levels.



HIGHLIGHT: The grade level where students are most likely to repeat is ninth grade. This causes what is often referred to as the “ninth grade bulge” since students tend to bottleneck in ninth grade, making enrollment unusually higher than the other grades. In 2017-18, 5.8 percent of ninth graders, 6.0 percent of tenth, and 5.6 percent of twelfth graders were retained. These data align with the high number of dropouts in 9th and 10th grades in 2018.

Dropout Rates - Students enrolled in New Orleans schools are more likely to dropout than their peers across the state. During the 2017-18 school year, 1,040 students (5.1 percent) grades 7 through 12 dropped out of school: 225 (3 percent) middle school students (grades 7 and 8) and 815 (6 percent) high school students (grades 9 through 12). The figure below shows dropout rates by grade level in New Orleans and statewide.



Two high schools reported a dropout rate of greater than 10 percent. Together, these schools enrolled 514 students in October 2017: 90 percent economically disadvantaged students, 77 percent African American students, no Asian students, 20 percent Hispanic students, and 2 percent White students. One of these schools closed at the end of the 2018-19 school year.



Access

School Choice - Through OneApp, parents can apply to as many as 12 of the schools participating in OneApp; 92 percent of public schools in New Orleans participate in the OneApp process, enrolling 84 percent of New Orleans' public school students. (Via <https://enrollnola.org/about/enrollnola-oneapp/>). During the 2019-20 OneApp main round application, 12,790 OneApp applications were submitted for placement in grades PreK4 to 12. Seventy-five percent of eligible applicants were matched to a school listed on their application; 68 percent were matched to one of their top three listed schools. For students applying for kindergarten or ninth grade, 82 percent were assigned to one of their top three schools.

2018 School Performance Scores: Letter Grades - The Louisiana Department of Education determines School Performance Scores (SPS) and assigns letter grades based on a variety of indicators and student assessments.

2019 Letter Grades (based on SPS) - Elementary and Middle Schools*

2019	# of Schools with an SPS	Number of Students (9-12)	Economically Disadvantaged	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Multiple Race	English Language Learner
A Schools	4	2,690	44.6%	37.1%	4.7%	11.8%	41.3%	4.7%	4.1%
B Schools	5	4,559	56.1%	47.4%	1.3%	14.5%	30.9%	5.3%	3.0%
C Schools	15	10,581	87.9%	82.1%	0.4%	11.1%	4.7%	1.4%	8.2%
D Schools	19	11,212	92.8%	84.4%	1.5%	11.5%	1.6%	0.9%	9.8%
F Schools	7	3,755	96.4%	90.1%	0.1%	9.3%	0.3%	0.1%	8.0%
All Schools			81.5%	74.4%	1.4%	11.4%	10.6%	2.0%	7.5%

*Six schools with enrollment data in October 2019 did not have a 2019 SPS

2019 Letter Grades (based on SPS) - High Schools

2019	# of Schools with an SPS	Number of Students (K-8)	Economically Disadvantaged	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Multiple Race	English Language Learner
A Schools	6	4,761	51.7%	51.1%	4.7%	10.1%	29.8%	3.8%	2.8%
B Schools	6	3,305	84.0%	89.1%	1.2%	5.4%	1.8%	1.0%	3.8%
C Schools	8	4,356	85.1%	76.9%	1.5%	13.5%	6.6%	1.3%	9.3%
D Schools	3	1,117	91.1%	95.9%	0.1%	3.4%	0.2%	0.3%	1.8%
F Schools	1	258	92.5%	59.3%	0.0%	36.0%	4.3%	0.0%	36.0%
All Schools			72.1%	68.9%	2.3%	10.2%	15.6%	2.4%	5.3%

Economically disadvantaged students and African American students are underrepresented in schools with higher ratings and over-represented in lower rated and failing schools.



Selective Admissions - Schools with selective admissions or restrictive eligibility requirements deny many families with access to high quality schools. These policies disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged students and African American and Hispanic students. Schools that do not participate in the OneApp enrollment process accept applications and make enrollment decisions at the school-level. Selective admissions and restrictive eligibility policies impact school-level demographics.

School-level Demographics by Admissions/Eligibility Requirements

October 2019 Enrollment	% Economically Disadvantaged	% African American	% Asian	% Hispanic	% White	% Multi-Race	% English Language Learner
Schools with Academic Entrance Requirements	44%	36%	8%	12%	39%	5%	3%
Schools with Restrictive Eligibility Requirements	48%	38%	2%	12%	41%	7%	4%
Compared to All Schools /All Grade Levels *	81%	76%	2%	11%	9%	2%	7%

*Does not include alternative schools

Economically disadvantaged students and African American students are underrepresented in schools with selective admissions and restrictive eligibility policies.



Teacher Quality - The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) implemented an evaluation and development system called COMPASS to assess the quality and effectiveness of instructional and administrative positions. The COMPASS evaluation consists of two components, student growth, which measures the academic gains students make during the school year, and professional practice - which is measured by classroom observations and other qualitative evaluation techniques. Teachers and school leaders are evaluated annually and receive a COMPASS rating. The LDOE provides school-level data on the percentage of teaching staff at each level of teacher effectiveness: Highly Effective; Effective: Proficient; Effective: Emerging; and Ineffective. Schools with less than 10 teachers do not receive a rating.



In New Orleans, teacher effectiveness ratings for 46 schools were reported for the 2017-18 and enrolled students during the 2019-20 school year. These schools enrolled 31,818 students during the 2019-20 school year. Teacher quality ratings at the school-level ranged from a high of 77.4 percent (teachers rated Highly Effective) to a low of less than 1 percent.

Teacher Quality Quintiles

School-level Percentage of Teachers Rated Highly Effective	Number of Schools (2017-18)	Economically Disadvantaged	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Multi-Race	ELL
100-80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
79.9-60	2	57%	32%	11%	20%	31%	5%	7%
59.9-40	7	71%	65%	3%	7%	21%	4%	4%
39.9-20	10	83%	79%	2%	10%	6%	2%	9%
19.9-0	27	88%	84%	1%	11%	3%	1%	8%
ALL students		82%	77%	2%	11%	8%	2%	8%

Economically disadvantaged and African American students were overrepresented in schools where fewer teachers were rated “Highly Effective.”



There were 27 schools where fewer than 20 percent of teachers were rated Highly Effective. Of students enrolled in these two schools:

- 88 percent were economically disadvantaged (compared to 82 percent total for schools with teacher effectiveness ratings);
- 84 percent were African American (compared to 77 percent total).

White students were underrepresented; 3 percent were White (compared to 8 total). Hispanic and Asian populations in these schools reflect the total; 11 percent were Hispanic (compared to 11 percent total) and 1 percent were Asian (compared to 2 percent total).

Has the number of Inexperienced, Out-of-Field, or Emergency Credentialed teachers changed since 2016-17?

Inexperienced Teachers:

2016-17: 68 teachers
2018-19: 314 teachers

Out-of-Field Teachers:

2016-17: 1,289 teachers
2018-19: 1,646 teachers

Teachers on Emergency/Provisional Credential:

2016-17: 13 teachers
2018-19: 9 teachers



Conclusion:

From Hope to Action

Inequities in quality and access exist in public education in New Orleans but the Urban League of Louisiana strongly believes that an equitable system is possible. Economically disadvantaged students and students of color (African American and Hispanic)



- are **systemically excluded** from rigorous, high-quality curricula and instruction.
- are **underrepresented** in the highest performing schools and in rigorous, college-level courses that would level the academic playing field and place them on track to succeed in school and in life.
- are faced with **systemic disadvantages** leading to underperformance on standardized state assessments (LEAP 2025) and national (ACT) assessments.
- attend an elementary school where the majority of 3rd graders are not reading at grade level and are not prepared to advance to the 4th grade.
- attend a middle school where 8th graders are not prepared to succeed in high school, especially in math.

The first step in addressing these inequities is **recognizing that they exist and the effects they have on our youth and therefore the greater community.**

The data and analysis in this report look at important metrics to inform an honest evaluation of public education and its ability to provide equity, access, and excellence to the students and families of New Orleans and empower the community to demand better for all students. The data is intended to provide all stakeholders with information to begin asking why inequities exist and identify how to systematically address them. While there is significant work to be done, the Urban League of Louisiana believes that the issues revealed in this report can be addressed through determination and dedicated action.

In the following section, we will share some of the steps that NOLA-PS has taken to address many of the inequities we identified in our Advancing Educational Equity, 2017 report and then provide our recommendations for moving forward.

Acknowledging that our most vulnerable youth require additional supports and resources to succeed, NOLA-PS has pushed to support the success of all students evidenced by the steps below:

Policy - In May of 2018, the Charter School Accountability Framework (“CSAF”) was modified by NOLA-PS by increasing requirements to attain a maximum contract with the District by highlighting how well schools serve all students. In order for schools to attain a ten year maximum charter extension, in addition to academic outcomes, schools must also show that for three of the four years prior to renewal they receive a Progress Index of 100 or higher for economically disadvantaged students and a re-enrollment rate of 90% or higher for economically disadvantaged students.

In the spring of 2019, OPSB approved funding increases to its equity-based Differentiated Funding Formula, to help direct more dollars to specific students in need of additional services such as English Language Learners and by adding a new designation and set of weights for students who had been previously incarcerated or previously expelled from school. And, OPSB increased funding for gifted and talented students as well.

In the spring of 2019, OPSB also approved the reallocation of a portion of dollars from the Citywide Exceptional Needs Fund (“CENF”) to support the development and expansion of high-quality programming for students with significant cognitive and behavioral health needs. These actions are anticipated to result in the expansion of seats for students starting in the 2020-2021 academic school year. And, these programs were selected through a detailed process during the 2019-2020 school year to ensure they met a specific quality threshold for families.

Programming - In 2018, NOLA-PS invested in expanding its Child Search services, which provide free special education evaluation and identification services for all children in Orleans Parish ages 3-5. This expansion aligns with the increased investments being made by the City of New Orleans in its' funding of the City Seats Program for infants and toddlers being administered by Agenda for Children.

In 2018, NOLA-PS began hosting the annual Transitions Fair, which serves as a pathway to connect students and families with resources and opportunities to assist students with special needs transitioning into adult, independent living after their high school careers conclude.

In the fall of 2019, NOLA-PS began funding The Bridge, a therapeutic and restorative-centered expulsion program for middle school students. The Bridge is scheduled to expand to serve additional middle school students seeking an alternative, restorative-focused program for learning and supports.

NOLA-PS supported the expansion of the Center for Resilience through funding and advocacy over the past several years to ensure K-8 students with significant behavioral health needs have a setting in which to thrive, as well as the extension of these services in 2019-2020 academic year to high school students.

Authorizing - In 2018, NOLA-PS approved the expansion of two high-quality schools, Audubon and Hynes, to increase the number of high-quality options for families citywide and to provide access to more high-performing operators. This illustrates that increasing the number of seats at high-performing schools remains a priority for NOLA-PS.

We applaud and support the above steps, and others, taken by OPSB and NOLA-PS leadership and staff since 2017. And, although NOLA-PS has made gains and progress in supporting students and their families, providing resources to schools based on student needs, and piloting or expanding innovative programming and initiatives, the data show that despite these efforts, inequities continue to exist and impede the overall performance of the District; especially for our special education, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged student population.

Improving Education Excellence - Our Recommendations

1 OPSB Must Expand Equitable Access to High Quality Schools and Teachers

As a 100 percent charter school district, all students have the opportunity to attend the school of their choice - which in theory, should all be high-quality options. Yet the demand for high quality seats exceeds the supply. OPSB should re-examine policies and practices that limit or restrict access to high quality schools or highly effective teachers, resulting in gaps in academic achievement, particularly for economically disadvantaged students and African American students.

The data show that when it comes to the distribution of the best teachers, economically disadvantaged students and African American students do not receive equitable access. We applaud OPSB's efforts to make attracting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers a priority. We encourage OPSB and charter management organization leadership to work to recruit a more committed and diverse workforce by establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with Historically Black Universities and Colleges (HBCU). Without a doubt, inequitable distribution of highly effective teachers is a complex problem and will require honest conversations with a broad range of stakeholders.



Adoption of the Charter School Accountability Framework outlines the district's strategic plan to support struggling schools, as well as guide charter school renewal, extension, and revocation decisions. We urge OPSB to make the tough decisions leading to equity and academic excellence, while ensuring that students and their families are not unintentionally burdened by these interventions, which will require continuous review of data with an equity lens.

Specifically, we recommend that OPSB and NOLA-PS:

- Develop an aggressive plan to grow and support new leadership
 - OPSB must lead efforts to implement innovative and creative initiatives, such as a leadership residency program, to identify second tier leadership at high quality schools and provide an intensive training and mentoring residency that prepares a culturally competent leadership pipeline to transform struggling schools
- Continue to work with partners, particularly HBCUs to develop, recruit, and retain highly effective teachers
 - In 2016, NSNO, Xavier University and partners launched the Norman C. Francis Teacher Residency program, the first teacher residency program between a HBCU and CMOs in the country. In January 2020, OPSB approved the use of almost \$7 million over the next three years for teacher preparation and development. OPSB should continue to partner with HBCU's in these efforts and to support local Grow Your Own (GYO) programs to achieve equity, excellence, and diversity in the new teacher pipeline.
- Apply rigorous accountability measures while maintaining respect of and sensitivity to our community
 - OPSB must hold all schools accountable to high standards and take appropriate actions when schools fail to meet expectations. OPSB should work closely with parents and communities when making tough decisions regarding school closures.

2 OPSB Must Coordinate Community Efforts for Educational Equity and Excellence

We know that improving our public education system in New Orleans cannot be done only by OPSB and NOLA-PS. However, we believe that the effort must be coordinated, aligned, and lead by OPSB, and implemented strategically by NOLA-PS. And, the untapped resources of nonprofits and service providers must be leveraged to benefit students and families.

Specifically, we recommend that OPSB:

- Facilitate and direct community nonprofit/service providers in efforts to improve educational equity and excellence
 - The New Orleans community is fortunate to have a wealth of community organizations dedicated to supporting success for our students and schools. OPSB should support organized and focused collaborations to secure funding, serve as accountability partners, and provide a targeted school improvement approach to systematically address educational inequities.
- Conduct a gap analysis to identify gaps between the needs of our students and the various services provided by our nonprofit and community organizations
 - While there have been some related efforts to do this, educational inequities are reflective of our schools' inability to serve all students well. OPSB should work with school leadership to conduct in-depth analyses of school-level practices, as well as research the root cause of the core challenges facing school leaders to improve their individual charter or charter network performance.
- Continue to pursue partnerships, strategic alliances, and collaborations
 - OPSB and NOLA-PS should continue to solidify effective partnerships to expand counseling services for our youth, to provide professional development to school-level staff, and to offer youth development programs.

3 NOLA-PS Must Increase Transparency

The data and analyses in this report provide a look at important metrics to inform an honest evaluation of public education and its ability to provide equity, access, and excellence to the students and families of New Orleans. A commitment to reflection, data review, and honest dialogue will be critical to moving forward.

Specifically, we recommend that NOLA-PS:

- Provide analysis of district- and school-level performance through an equity lens.
 - Working with the community, NOLA-PS must identify key indicators of educational success (metrics that are meaningful, measurable, and consistent) and provide timely updates of progress made toward closing achievement and opportunity gaps. Data should be disaggregated regularly to identify any disparities among various subgroups.

- Embrace the facts as they exist regarding the systemic inequities that have historically and continuously plagued our school system so that a community-based plan can be developed and executed by NOLA-PS.
 - In order to initiate and sustain meaningful and lasting change, NOLA-PS must conduct an honest and transparent analysis of the systemic inequities embedded in Board, district, and school-level policies and practices.

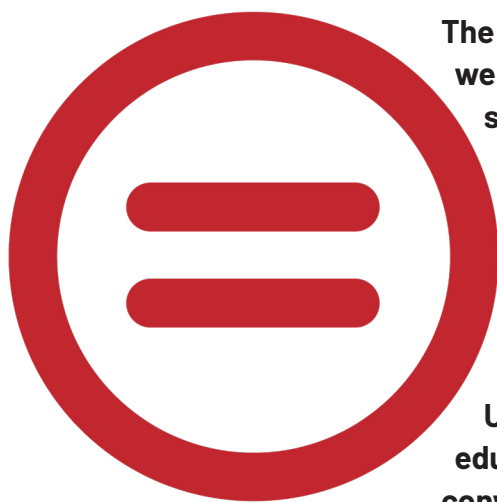
4. OPSB Must Continue to be Strong and Bold Leaders

Closing consistently under-performing schools is likely the toughest decision OPSB has to make as an elected body. Finding money to support special populations of students during normal times, let alone during the time of a global health pandemic is no small feat as well. But, with the unification of schools, OPSB has the opportunity and the imperative to improve access and eliminate the educational inequities that exist for New Orleans students and families. And, although societal issues such as generational poverty, a low-wage economy based on leisure activities and tourism, and health disparities that clash with consistent student attendance may impact the performance of the District indirectly, OPSB, through NOLA-PS, must continue to lead and position the District by identifying, promulgating, and strictly enforcing policies and practices that eradicate performance and equity gaps for students.

OPSB must consistently provide strong and bold leadership to guide the future of the system of public schools in New Orleans. Although the elected Board has a unique role - providing oversight and implementing accountability but not directly operating schools - NOLA-PS has the authority and responsibility to implement measures that move the system toward successfully ensuring all students have the opportunity to attend a high-quality school, have access to highly effective teachers, and have the resources to succeed in rigorous courses that will prepare them for college and careers.

Specifically, we recommend that OPSB:

- Build Board for the future of NOLA-PS
 - OPSB must continue to work collaboratively to create a culture and environment that fosters true innovation and creativity to continue the gains that have been made and address areas where inequities continue to exist.
- Transition the role of the Board from myopic “regulators” to active ambassadors who garner the interests and attention of funders, new operators, and new educators to the District.
- Hold the Superintendent and NOLA-PS staff accountable for reducing the existing achievement and opportunity gaps
 - OPSB must require the Superintendent to create a detailed plan that gives specific strategies and tactics, as well as partnerships and collaborations, likely to lead to demonstrable gains in a specific time frame.
 - OPSB should conduct quarterly public meetings that include parents, students, and educators, to gauge whether the progress of the strategic plan is on schedule and whether modification is needed in any aspect.
 - Encourage innovation and “thinking outside the box” to address gaps, including seeking partnerships with business and industry, policy think tanks, community colleges, and others.



The Urban League of Louisiana makes these recommendations because we believe them to be achievable and because we are here to help see them through. We strongly believe that all students can meet/exceed academic expectations when given appropriate support and resources. And, we believe that the community supports through nonprofits and service providers can carry some of the load when given a vision and a plan. In order to achieve this, OPSB must continue to provide bold and unwavering leadership.

ULLA will remain steadfast in our efforts to identify and analyze educational inequities. We will continue to engage our community, convene partners, and serve as a catalyst for change.