



# New Orleans Public Schools

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# New Orleans Public Schools: *Pre-Katrina*

- **Academically bankrupt**
  - Worst performing in state
  - 64% of Schools failing
  - Valedictorian of Fortier failed exit exam 6 times
- **FBI opened office to investigate rampant corruption**
- **District could not account for, nor manage finances**

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# Context of State Action

- **Other State/Mayoral takeovers - took over failing districts**
  - Not transformational change
    - Inherit culture; people; contracts
  - Minimal results 5-10 years later, reform around the edges
- **LA took over failed schools** (tied into School Accountability)
  - Recovery School District in place Pre-Katrina
    - Recovery from Academic Failure
    - Not New Orleans specific
    - Fresh Start: buildings, students and money for students served
- **Transformational...challenging...cutting/bleeding edge**

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# New Orleans Public Schools

- **State took over all but 17 schools**
  - Any school below the state average
  - Orleans retained high performing, mostly selective admission schools
- **Pre-Katrina: 65,000 students**
  - 2006-07: 26,000 students
  - 2007-08: 32,000 students
  - 2008-09: 36,000 students

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# “Portfolio of Governance”

Orleans Parish  
School Board  
(OPSB)

BESE and The  
Recovery School  
District (RSD)

Operate  
Schools

Grant  
Charters

Operate  
Schools

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# Landscape Today

## ■ 85 Schools

### □ RSD

- 33 RSD operated (run by Paul Vallas)
- 33 Charters- BESE chartering authority
- All are Open Admission- demand exceeds supply, lottery conducted

### □ OPSB

- 5 Operated
- 12 Chartered
- Most have some admission criteria

### □ Other

- 2 “Type 2” charters

### □ Total

- 47 Charters (21,000 students)
- 38 Traditional (15,000 students)

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# What is a Charter School?

- **Independently Managed, Autonomous Public School**
- **Charter = Contract**
- **More Freedom**
  - Control over time, curriculum, people and money
  - No daily management from School Board
- **More Risk; More Work**
  - School is responsible for the non-academic operations
  - Charter can be revoked or non-renewed for failure to perform

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# How is Landscape Different?

- A “System of Schools”...not a school system
  - No longer a “top-down” model; no centralized decision making
    - No one person can make a decision for a majority of the schools!
    - Decentralized system of mainly autonomous schools
- Majority (58%) of students attending charter schools
  - Highest percentage in nation
  - Will continue to increase

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# How is it Different?

- **Public School Choice**

- No student is assigned to a school
- Schools must provide transportation if more than one mile

- **Competition for Employees**

- Schools set own salary and benefit schedule; work conditions; hours of operation
- Employees can choose where they want to work

- **Money Follows the Student**

- More equitable than traditional funding
  - Funding based on students; not staff allocation
- Money goes directly to the school
  - Charters getting 98% per pupil spending
- All RSD schools pay their “fair share” for the use of facilities
  - Per pupil less bond indebtedness

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# How is it Different?

- **Service Providers Compete for Business From the Charter Schools**
  - Must be responsive to School's needs
  
- **Total Transparency**
  - Students take LEAP/GEE
  - Every school subject to Louisiana's School Accountability System
  
- **Re-engaging in Public Education**
  - Charter Boards
    - 2 degrees of separation
    - Diversity
    - True local control

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# Results to Date: What do the numbers mean?

## ■ A score of 100

- Louisiana's goal is all students are BASIC
  - Basic = 100 points
  - Basic = ACT of 18-19
  - Basic = regional 4 year college; Community Tech College

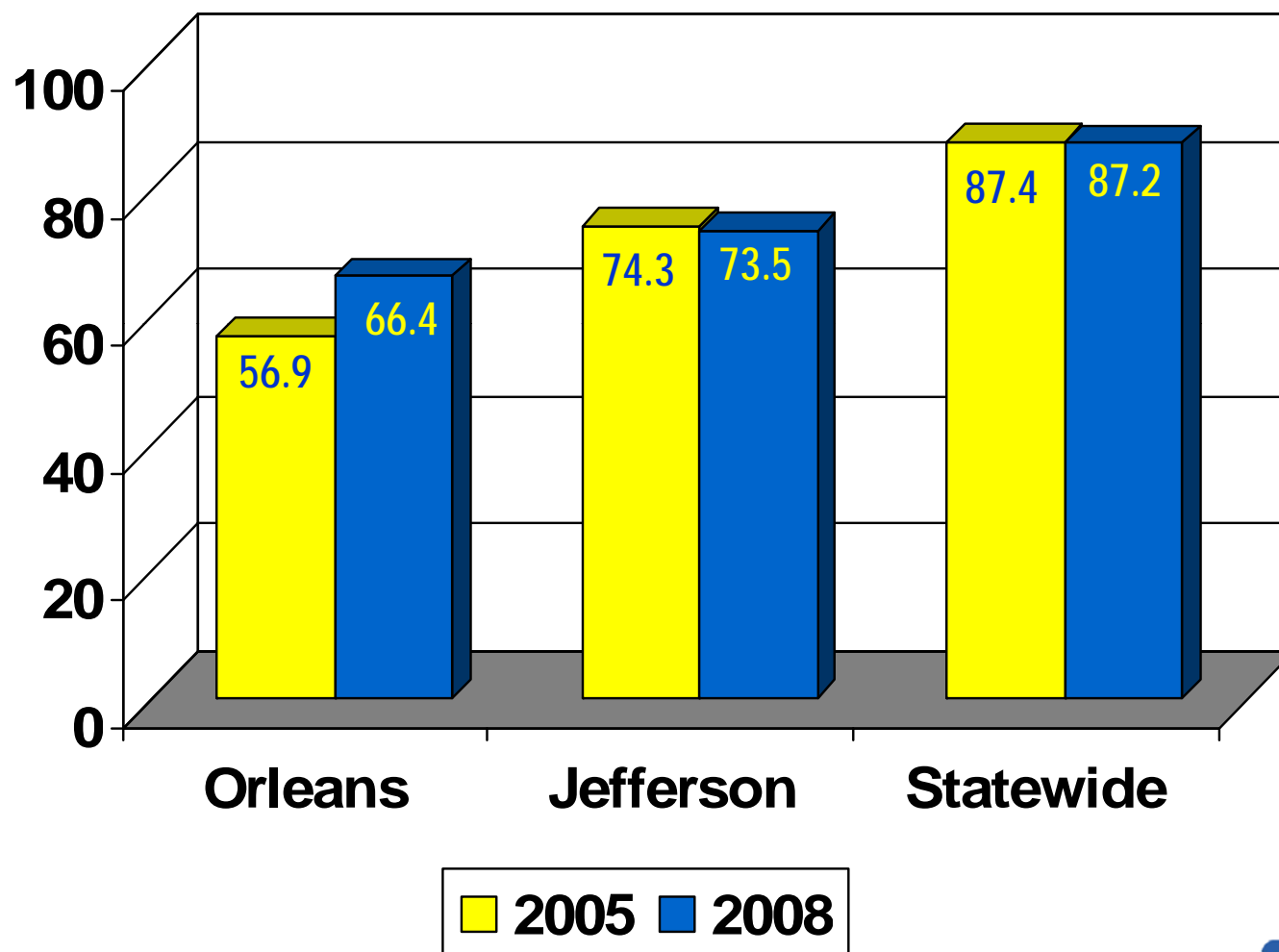
## ■ A score of 50

- Approaching Basic
  - ACT 15; not prepared for post secondary

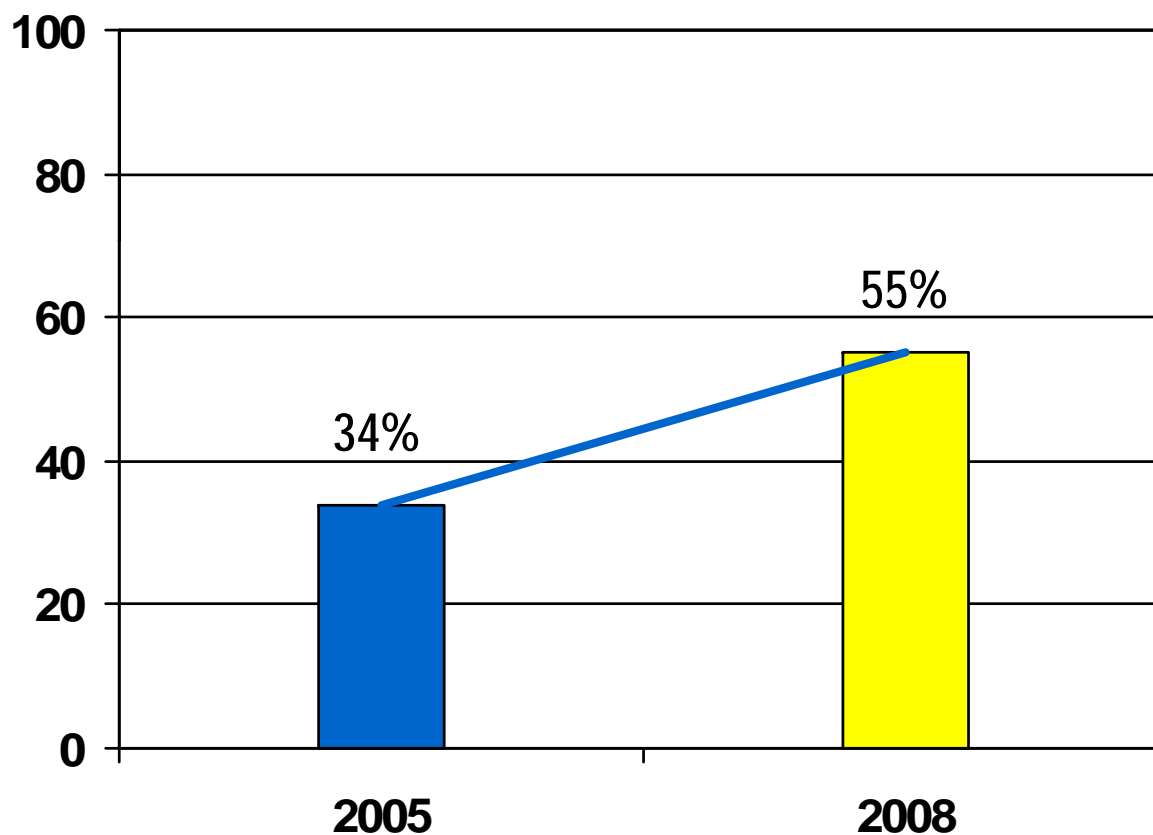
## ■ A score of 75

- Louisiana's promotional standard
  - Basic in one part; Approaching Basic in the other
  - ACT 17; Tops Tech

# Results: All Students Major Gains



# Results: Schools are Better SPS One or Greater



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# School Performance: The Inspiration

- Four RSD charter schools did great
  - KIPP Believe College Prep Charter 98.6
  - KIPP McDonogh #15 Charter School 94.4
  - Martin Behrman Charter School 92.6
  - Dr. MLK Charter School 89.2
- Same demographic profile as other RSD schools
- Expect more will follow suit
- *Prove it can be done: our challenge is to do it*

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# Quality Chartering

- **Nationally, charters do not out perform traditional schools**
  - RSD charters are outperforming RSD traditional schools
- **Chartering wisely key to long term success**
  - Problem nationally of weak charter operators
- **BESE is a great Chartering Authority**
  - 11 members; 3 appointed; 8 elected
    - State policy board
  - Develop standards, rules and process: apolitical
    - National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)
      - 6 of 44 applicants approved first year
    - Strong Accountability
      - Meet standards by year 3 and 5 or charter revoked/non-renewed

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# Replacing Central Office: Support for Schools

- **State created a shared service center for non-academic functions**
  - Charters can purchase services
  - Transportation; food service, etc.
- **NGOs providing support**
  - Teacher recruitment
  - Special Education Support
  - Charter School Incubation and Support
  - Advocacy
  - Parent Education

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# Still Building the System

- **Parents and the Community are understanding the “system of schools” better each year, but more to do**
  - Communication
  - Data functions
    - Enrollment
    - Identifying “lost kids”/drop outs
  - “Connecting” to Schools
    - Nonprofits, business partners, social services
  - **Parent Ombudsman**

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# Will Need a More Sophisticated Internal School Financing Formula

- Same money irrespective of which governing authority
- More frequent student count
  - Money follows student if change schools/ alternative school
- Recognition - some students more expensive
  - Special Needs students
    - BESE has three funding categories; OPSB does not

# Challenge...Impatience

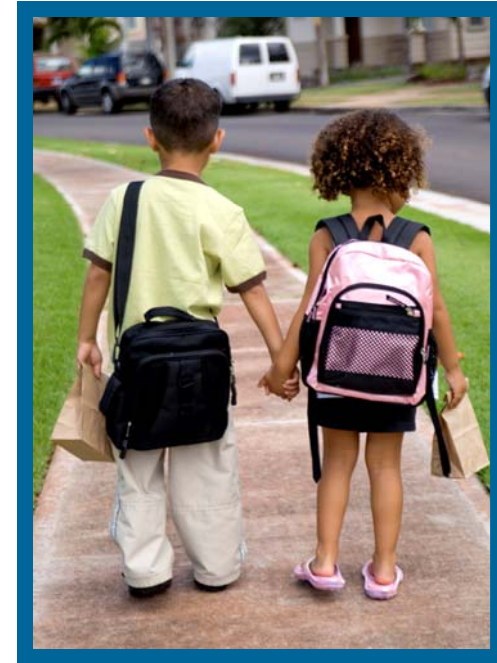
- **Desire for a “resolution” of state’s role**
  - Law does not mandate return
    - After year four (now in year 3), State Superintendent recommends to BESE; school by school
  - Pressure building from all Directions
    - Charters not wanting to return to OPSB
    - Civic/Community Groups wanting to define issue
    - Those who never supported the state action
    - New School Board
- **We have / need time:**
  - Pushing to decide the “who” before understanding the “what”
  - Need time to get a better understanding of what will be needed before determining who should do it

*“School reformers must demonstrate an unflagging commitment to “what works” to dramatically boost academic achievement.”*

Rev. Al Sharpton and NYC Superintendent Joel Klein  
Wall Street Journal, January 12, 2009



**Educate Now!** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to effective and sustainable reform of New Orleans public schools



To learn much more  
please visit our website:

[www.EducateNow.net](http://www.EducateNow.net)