

Recovery School District

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the Louisiana Legislature voted to create the state Recovery School District (RSD), an entity whose purpose was to take control of and turn around persistently low-performing public schools. By August 2005, five failing schools in New Orleans had been transformed into charter schools under the auspices of the RSD.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Legislature passed Act 35 in November 2005 and immediately transferred over 100 low-performing Orleans Parish schools to the RSD. As of the 2014–15 school year, the RSD oversees 57 charter schools operating in New Orleans. These schools are operated by 24 different non-profit charter management organizations.

Note: All data in this report for RSD schools in the 2004–05 school year encompasses schools that were transferred to RSD control in November 2005. These schools were transferred based on their academic performance data from the 2004–05 school year.

ENROLLMENT

Citywide public school enrollment has returned to 67 percent of pre-Katrina levels, with 70 percent of students enrolled in RSD charter schools and 30 percent enrolled in OPSB schools. As of the 2014–15 school year, just over 30,000 students are enrolled in RSD schools (see figure A).

Ethnicity

RSD schools have continued to increase in ethnic diversity over time. Enrollment of Hispanic students in RSD schools increased from 1 percent in 2004–05 to 4 percent in 2014–15. The percentage of African-American students has decreased from 97 percent in 2004–05 to 93 percent in 2014–15 (see figure B).

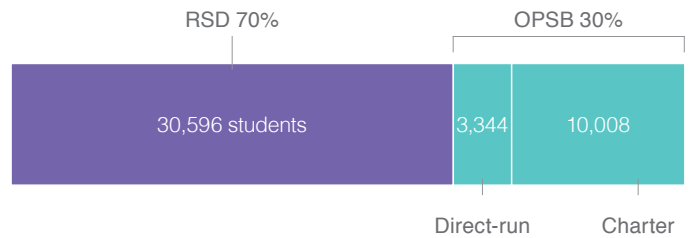
Economically Disadvantaged Students

The percentage of RSD students who are economically disadvantaged¹ is greater today than pre-Katrina. In 2004–05, 84 percent of students in the schools transferred to the RSD were economically disadvantaged, compared to 61 percent statewide. In the fall of 2014, 92 percent of RSD students were economically disadvantaged, compared to 68 percent statewide (see figure C).

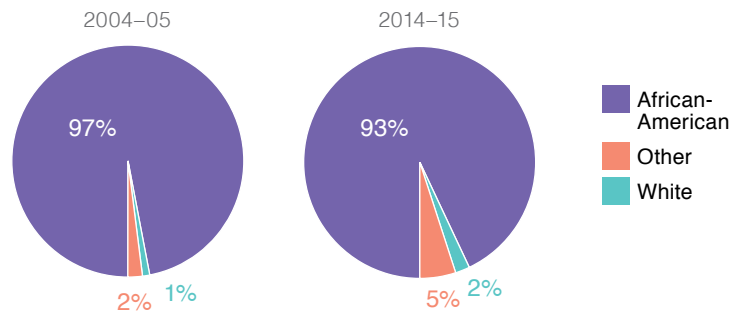
Students with Disabilities

The percentage of students with disabilities in RSD schools has changed little since before Hurricane Katrina. The percentage of students with disabilities in RSD schools in 2014, at 13 percent, is larger than the state average of 11 percent (see figure D).

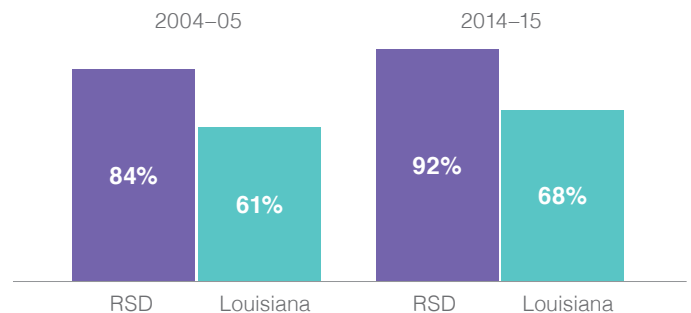
A. Student Enrollment by District (2014–15)



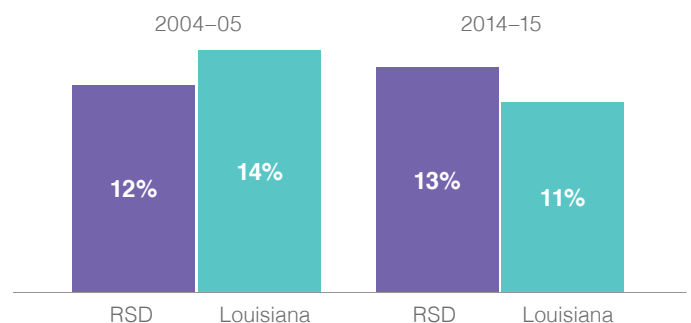
B. Ethnic Make-up of Students



C. Economically Disadvantaged Students



D. Students with Disabilities



ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

School Performance Scores and Letter Grades

In 2004–05, 74 percent of students in schools later transferred to the RSD—over 40,000 students—were enrolled in a failing school. In the fall of 2014, 8 percent of students were enrolled in an RSD school with a letter grade of F, a decrease in students of more than 90 percent (see figure E).

Proficiency on State Tests

To assess student and school performance for 3rd through 8th grade, Louisiana used the LEAP tests (4th and 8th grade) and iLEAP tests (3rd grade and 5th through 7th grade) through the 2013–14 school year.³

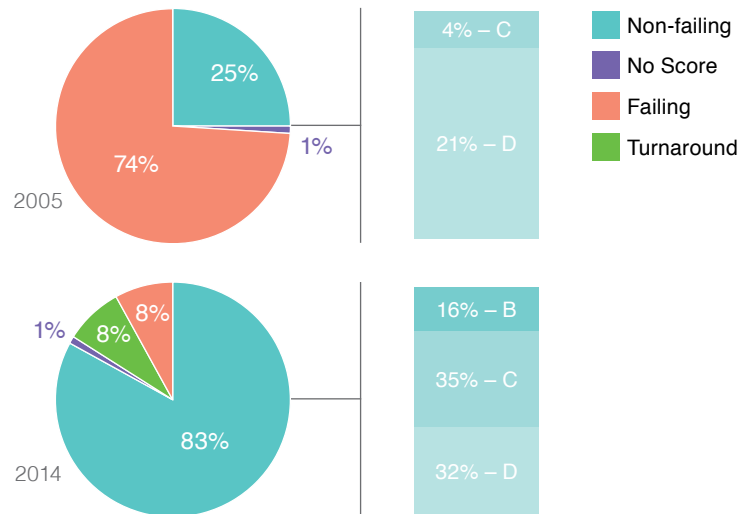
High school students in 2004–05 were required to take the state’s Graduate Exit Exam (GEE). By 2013–14, Louisiana had transitioned to End-of-Course tests and had also added the ACT to its high school assessments.

Looking at all grades and tests, RSD schools increased the percentage of students proficient by 31 percentage points, from 25 percent in 2004–05 to 56 percent in 2013–14. The RSD is closing the gap with the state average, down from 33 points in 2004–05 to 12 points in 2013–14 (see figure F).

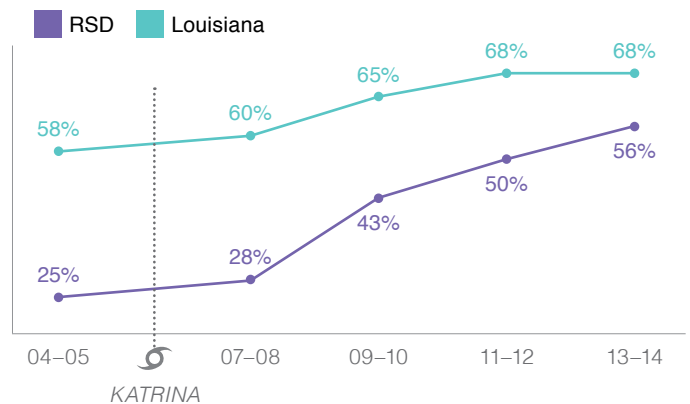
Elementary and Middle School Performance

In 2004–05, just over one-quarter of elementary and middle school RSD students were proficient on LEAP or iLEAP while the statewide average was 57 percent. In 2013–14, 57 percent of RSD students were proficient, a gain of 30 percentage points, and the gap with the state average was reduced from 30 percentage points to 12 percentage points (see figure G).

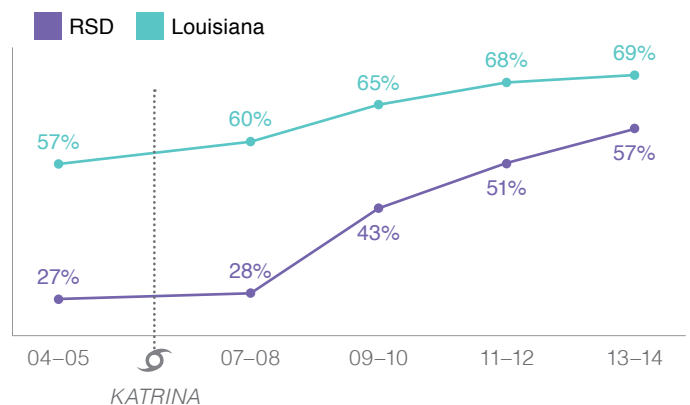
E. Student Enrollment by Letter Grade²



F. Percentage Proficient on State Tests (all students, all grades, all tests)



G. Percentage Proficient on LEAP/iLEAP



HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

High School Enrollment by Letter Grade

In 2004–05, 94 percent of students in RSD high schools—over 11,000 students—were enrolled in a failing school. In the fall of 2014, 19 percent of high school students were enrolled in a failing RSD school, a decrease in students of nearly 90 percent (see figure H).

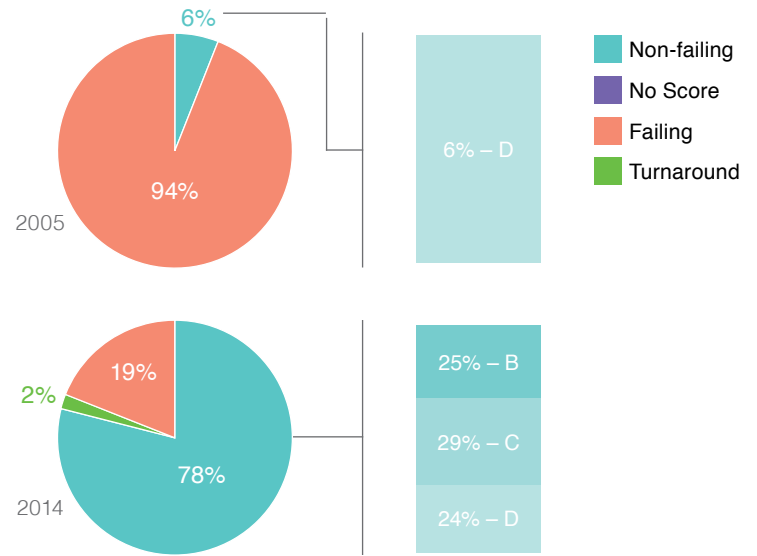
On-Time Graduation Rates

The percentage of RSD students in the class of 2014 graduating in four years was 61.1 percent, up from 49.7 percent in 2010, the first year a cohort graduation rate was calculated for the RSD.

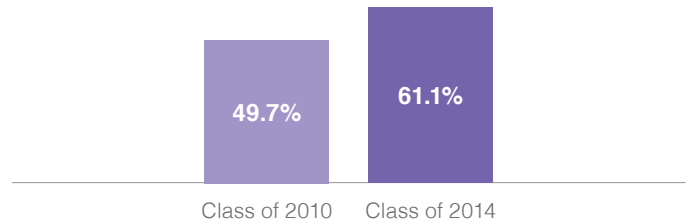
Over the last four years, the RSD has seen its cohort graduation rate increase by 11.4 percentage points. RSD schools account for all of the growth seen in New Orleans schools' graduation rate over that time (see figure I).

RSD schools continue to see growth in graduation rates among typically underserved student groups, including African-American students, African-American male students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities (see figure J).

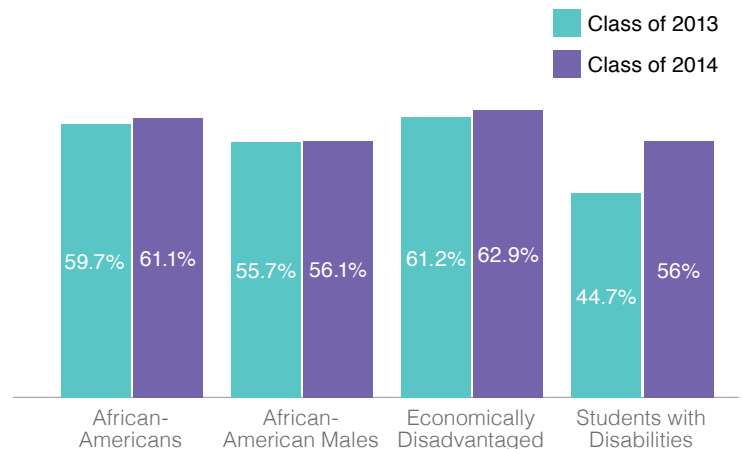
H. High School Enrollment by Letter Grade



I. 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate



J. 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate by Subgroup



HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE (CONT.)

ACT Scores

In 2004–05, the composite ACT score for schools later transferred to RSD was 14.4. In 2013–14, the composite ACT score for RSD schools was 16.4, a gain of two points.

In 2012–13, Louisiana began to require all high school students take the ACT, not just college-bound students. Between 2004–05 and 2013–14, Louisiana’s average composite ACT score went from 19.8 to 19.2, while the RSD average rose (see figure K).

College Enrollment

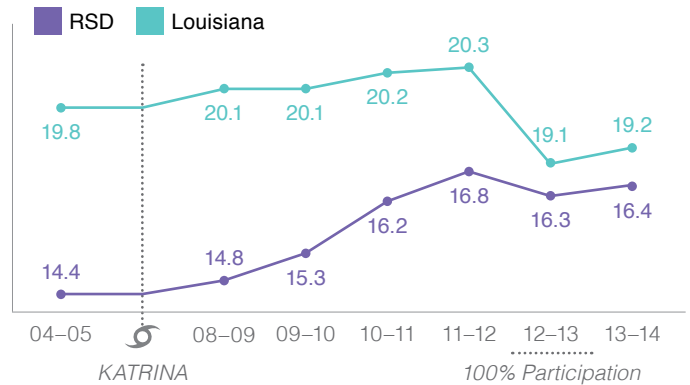
The percentage of students who enroll in college in the first fall following high school graduation has nearly doubled from when schools were first transferred to the RSD. In 2014, graduates entered college at 22 percentage points higher than in 2004, outpacing state growth by 14 percentage points (see figure L).

TOPS Scholarships⁴

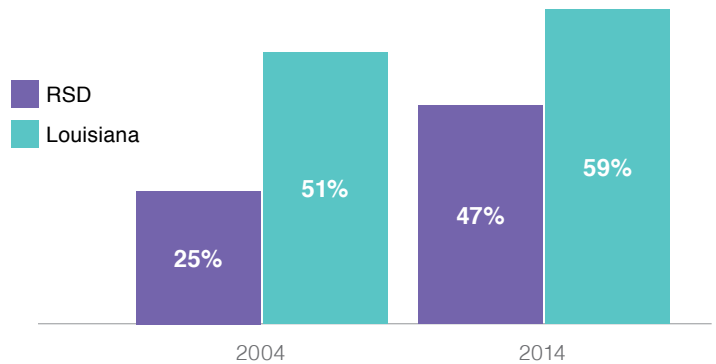
Louisiana offers qualifying students a scholarship to a 4-year or 2-year in-state college based on a combination of GPA, required coursework, and ACT scores.⁵

In RSD high schools, the 2005 percentage of students eligible for all TOPS awards was 5.6 percent, with 1 percent eligible for a four-year scholarship. By 2014, RSD had increased the percentage of students TOPS eligible by over 18 percentage points. For RSD’s class of 2014, 24 percent of students were eligible for TOPS, with 11 percent eligible for a four-year scholarship (see figure M).

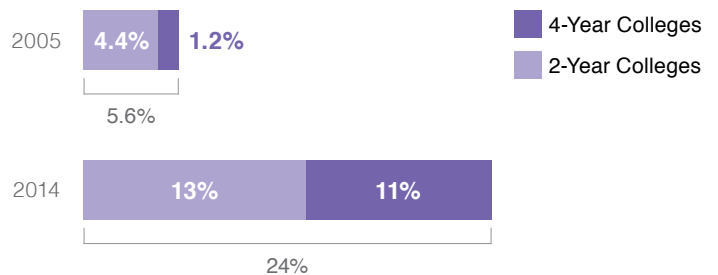
K. Composite ACT Scores



L. Percentage of High School Graduates Enrolled First Fall After Graduation



M. Breakdown TOPS Scholarship Awards for Qualifying RSD Graduates



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1 Economically disadvantaged for 2004-05 to 2013-14 is the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch. For 2014-15, it is percentage of students eligible for SNAP, TANF or Medicaid.

2 Schools in Louisiana receive an annual School Performance Score (SPS) based on student achievement, academic indicators, and measures of career and college readiness. Based on the SPS, the Louisiana Department of Education assigns a letter grade to each school. In 2005, schools were given stars (1 to 5) not letter grades; for the purpose of comparison, 4 and 5 stars = A, 3 = B, 2 = C, 1 = D, and "Academically Unacceptable" = F. In 2014, T schools are schools in the first or second year of Turnaround. Read more about Louisiana's [School Performance Scores](#) and [letter grades](#).

3 Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, students are assessed using a combination of LEAP, iLEAP, and PARCC tests.

4 TOPS scholarship data was accessed at <http://www.osfa.state.la.us>.

5 Read more about TOPS scholarships on the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance [website](#). Download annual [TOPS reports](#).