

### **WHAT IS THE RECOVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT?**

Established in 2003, the Recovery School District is a special school district run by the Louisiana Department of Education that intervenes in the management of chronically low-performing schools. The mission of the RSD is to transform the state's most distressed schools into successful schools that are autonomous in making decisions and accountable for results. Once successful, these schools return to local governance.

### **WHAT HAS THE RSD ACCOMPLISHED?**

RSD schools have seen significant progress in transforming the most chronically low performing schools in Louisiana. Among the highlights, the RSD:

- Significantly decreased the number of students enrolled in failing schools in New Orleans, from 50 percent in 2009-2010 to just 7 percent today.
- Increased the high school graduation rates in New Orleans, which grew from 54 percent in 2004 to 75 percent in 2015 for students citywide.
- Boosted ACT scores in New Orleans, which grew from 17.0 in 2005 to 18.9 in 2016 for all students citywide, even as ACT participation became required for all students during the 2012-2013 school year.
- Nearly doubled the percent of students in New Orleans enrolling in college from 37 percent in 2004 to 64 percent in 2015.
- Improved all New Orleans students' performance on state exams. In 2005, 33 percent of students were proficient on LEAP and only 6 percent scored mastery, and today, those numbers are now 61 percent and 31 percent, respectively. And the same is true among special education students in New Orleans. Since 2007-2008, the percentage of students scoring proficient across all state exams has doubled, from 18 to 36 percent.
- Transformed graduation outcomes for students with special needs in New Orleans. Today, 51 percent of students with special needs graduate on time, when in 2003, only 10 percent of these students exited high school with a diploma.
- Became the nation's first school district comprised entirely of charter schools. In New Orleans, it solidified its role as a charter authorizer while ensuring students had equitable access to schools and services.
- Designed and implemented the accountability framework that holds schools accountable for academic, organizational and financial outcomes.
- Launched EnrollNOLA, the centralized enrollment system for New Orleans that provides students with equitable, transparent access to schools using OneApp.
- Created a School Facilities Master Plan to better learning facilities in New Orleans, placing every student in a new renovated, or refurbished facility.
- Established the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone, a system of type 2 charter schools, type 5 charter schools and other public schools educating Baton Rouge's most disadvantaged youth.
- Developed the Caddo Transformation Next Zone in Caddo Parish, which gives resources to low-income schools, establishes clear autonomy for principals, and ensures clear accountability to the community.

### **WHAT PROMPTED THE REORGANIZATION?**

The work of the RSD as a coordinator, authorizer and governing entity in the state's largest cities is evolving.

The number of charter schools under RSD and state governance is changing:

Geographic Area	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
RSD – New Orleans	50	40	<b>0</b>
RSD – Baton Rouge	9	8	TBD
RSD - Louisiana	1	1	TBD
<b>TOTAL RSD</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>TOTAL BRAZ</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>TBD</b>

At the same time, the state will be identifying a variety of schools for varying stages of intervention under ESSA, necessitating full alignment of the RSD with the state's ESSA plan.

	Current number of schools
"In Need of Comprehensive Support" under ESSA (rating of D or F for three years)	220
"Academically Unacceptable" (current rating of F)	94
RSD eligible (rating of F for four consecutive years)	17 (excludes alternative schools)

And the geographic concentrations of Louisiana's struggling schools have shifted over time, meaning that the vast majority of struggling schools are not located in Orleans Parish.

	% of all Academically Unacceptable schools in the state (2005)	% of all Academically Unacceptable schools in the state (2016)
<b>Orleans Parish</b>	40%	9%
<b>Caddo Parish</b>	11%	15%
<b>East Baton Rouge Parish</b>	12%	14%
<b>Other Parishes</b>	37%	62%

Now, more than ever before, the RSD must be organized as a statewide entity, responsive to highly variant local conditions.

**WHAT WILL CHANGE MOVING FORWARD?**

In New Orleans, the RSD will spend one year assuring a responsible transition, and in future years the RSD will exist to complete facilities and to serve as an advisor for the Orleans Parish School Board.

In Baton Rouge, the RSD and the state Department will develop systems necessary to support the emerging group of state- and local-authorized charter schools called the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone. This includes facilities planning, enrollment planning, authorizing and intervention, and planning for shared services such as talent recruitment and special education.

Statewide, the RSD will develop solutions with and for schools that are eligible for Title I school improvement grants but have failed at previous intervention efforts. This means that the work of comprehensive support grants and D- and F-rated schools is essentially the same work; however state has more profound tools and leverage in developing these plans within RSD-eligible districts and schools.

**WHO WILL LEAD THIS NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE? HOW WILL RESPONSIBILITIES CHANGE?**

There will be three key leadership changes. These appointments mark a renewed commitment by the Department and the RSD to radically improving the most persistently struggling schools in the state.

- **RSD Superintendent Dobard will serve as Chief Executive Officer of New Schools for New Orleans.** Dobard has served as RSD Superintendent for more than five years, during which he converted all schools to community-governance charter schools and guided the system toward a focus on issues of equity and fairness. Under his leadership, RSD schools not only improved academically but also developed essential structures such as the OneApp enrollment system, unified expulsion procedures, and the systemic reduction in out-of-school behavioral interventions. Dobard also led the implementation of one of the nation's largest school construction projects and was also leader in the development of Act 91, which unified New Orleans schools more than a decade after Hurricane Katrina.
- **Assistant State Superintendent of Portfolio Kunjan Narechania will now serve as Assistant State Superintendent and RSD-Louisiana Superintendent.** In this role, Narechania will complete the unification of Orleans Parish Schools and will guide the statewide Title I school improvement process as detailed in the state's ESSA plan. She will also authorize and monitor charter and nonpublic schools statewide. Narechania has served as Assistant Superintendent, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief of Staff at the Louisiana Department of Education, and as Chief of Staff at the Recovery School District. She led the establishment of a new funding formula for all Orleans Parish schools, oversaw the implementation of higher standards for charter school renewals, and is an architect of Louisiana Believes, the state's comprehensive plan for school improvement.
- **RSD Deputy Superintendent of External Affairs Dana Peterson will now serve as Assistant State Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer of the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone.** In this role, Peterson will coordinate charter school authorizing, school monitoring, facilities planning, and enrollment planning for schools in the Achievement Zone. He will also manage community- and community-leader facing activities in the Zone and will serve as a liaison with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System and non-profit partners such as New Schools for Baton Rouge, all in an effort to create opportunities for students and families. In his five years with the RSD, Peterson has led the development and implementation of the nationally recognized, community-based RFA process for replacing struggling schools and developed the common enrollment application program used in the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone. Prior to his tenure with the RSD, Peterson served as board chairman of FirstLine schools.

**WHAT IS NEW SCHOOLS FOR NEW ORLEANS?**

New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2006 whose mission is to deliver on the promise of excellent public schools for every child in New Orleans. To achieve this mission, NSNO drives change in three ways: 1) it invests in the launch or expansion of high-performing open-enrollment public charter schools, 2) it helps schools become more effective by providing them with direct support to help accelerate academic improvements, and 3) it coordinates solutions to citywide challenges to remove barriers to academic excellence.

**DOES THIS TRANSITION ADD POSITIONS TO STATE GOVERNMENT?**

No.