

Louisiana Charter Schools

Annual Report 2013

The State of Louisiana's Type 2, 4, and 5
Public Charter Schools

Louisiana State Department of Education
Office of School Choice
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Overview

The vision of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) is to create a world-class education system for all students. One of the fundamental strategies for achieving this vision is creating a variety of high-quality school options, including charter schools, for students to access. Charter schools give families an opportunity to choose the school environment that is best suited to meet the needs of their children and put education decisions in the hands of parents and educators - those closest to students.

History

In 1995, Louisiana's initial Charter Law established a pilot program to allow eight school districts to voluntarily open charter schools. In 1997, the law was amended to expand the program, allowing the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), as well as local school boards, to act as charter school authorizers.

Charter schools are public schools funded through state and federal dollars and are required to participate in the state's accountability program, including standardized testing. While charter schools are granted autonomy in some areas, including personnel management and site-based budgeting, they are held to greater standards of accountability than traditional public schools. Charter schools not meeting the performance standards set forth in policy or in their contracts with BESE are subject to non-extension, non-renewal, or revocation.

Performance Expectations and Oversight

Charter schools in Louisiana are authorized either by BESE (Types 2, 4 and 5) or by a local school board (Types 1 and 3) for initial five-year terms and are subject to a comprehensive review after three years in operation. Charter schools must regularly demonstrate progress towards defined academic goals and maintain satisfactory financial, legal, and contractual performance in order to be considered for charter renewal. BESE policy sets the guidelines for the maximum renewal terms relative to academic performance for BESE-authorized charters.

Charter School Demographics at a Glance

Charter Type	Total Schools	Total Students	Free/Reduced Lunch	ELL
All Schools Statewide	1,445	712,340	472,772	13,950
Type 1	16	3,752	3,261	124
Type 2	18	10,208	6,468	98
Type 3	9	6,358	2,976	168
Type 4	3	1,979	1,091	75
Type 5	58	26,893	24,640	425
Total BESE Charters	79 (5% of state)	39,080 (5% of state)	32,199 (6 % of state)	598 (4% of state)
Total All Charters	104 (7% of state)	49,190 (6% of state)	38,436 (8% of state)	890 (6% of state)

Charter School Performance

All charter schools must participate in an Annual Review which entails a visit to every charter school each year and a review of all data related to academic and financial performance and legal and contractual compliance. Additionally, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) is required by law to review charter schools after their third year of operation to determine their eligibility to complete the remainder of their initial five-year term. This is referred to as a charter's "extension." Charter schools are required to provide a comprehensive progress report regarding the school's academic progress.

During a charter's fifth year in operation, or during the last year of any subsequent renewal terms, charter schools again undergo a thorough performance review to determine eligibility for renewal of their contract. If approved, renewal terms are based on the level of academic progress achieved during the previous term as well as financial performance and legal and contractual compliance. Charter school contracts may be revoked at any time for cause, as provided for in state law and specified in each charter contract.

During Annual Reviews, the Department of Education Office of School Choice (or the Recovery School District in the case of Type 5 charters) collects data and reviews performance in the following areas:

- *Student Performance:* The Louisiana Charter School Law requires charter schools to make demonstrable improvements in student performance over the term of their charter agreement. BESE uses the state's assessment and accountability programs as objective and verifiable measures of student achievement and school performance.
- *Financial Performance:* The charter operator is required to engage in financial practices, financial reporting and financial audits as set forth in state law, BESE policy, and the charter contract. BESE uses the Financial Risk Assessment to determine overall financial health of the school.
- *Legal and Contractual Performance:* BESE evaluates a charter school's performance based on the school's compliance with statutory, regulatory and contractual obligations and all reporting requirements.

The following outlines the specific metrics the Office of School Choice and Recovery School District use to determine if a charter school is meeting the aforementioned performance expectations.

Student Performance

Student performance is the primary indicator of quality for assessing the performance of charter schools. According to BESE policy, "BESE shall use the state's assessment and accountability programs as objective and verifiable measures of student achievement and school performance. Student performance is the primary indicator of school quality; therefore, BESE will heavily factor all annual evaluations and contract extensions and renewal decisions on a school's achievement of the student performance standards."

The standard metric for student performance is the School Performance Score (SPS) and school letter grade, which are based primarily on student assessment data. Schools receive their SPS and letter grade during the fall following spring testing. If a baseline SPS cannot be calculated due to a lack of data (for example in a charter's first year of operation), an assessment index (AI) is calculated based solely on student test results for one year. As a baseline measure, charters are also assigned a pre-assessment index that is calculated using students' test scores from the year prior to entering the charter school, if applicable.

During the fall of a charter school's fourth year of operation student performance is measured using the following standards in order to determine if the charter will receive an extension:

- (a) SPS Year Three is above AUS status;
- (b) Assessment Index Year Three is above AUS status; or
- (c) Assessment Index increase of 15 points from the pre-assessment index.

Consistent with the philosophy of rewarding strong performance and providing incentives for schools to strive for continual improvement, the renewal terms for BESE-authorized charter schools are linked to each school's letter grade (based on the school's performance on the state assessment in the year prior to the renewal application). When charter renewals are considered by BESE, the charter school's academic performance will determine the length of the renewal according to the following standards:

School Performance Labels and Maximum Charter Renewal Terms	
Performance Label	Maximum Renewal Term
A	10 Years
B	10 Years
C	5 Years
D	3 Years
F	3 Years

Financial Performance

Each charter operator is required to engage in sound financial practices, financial reporting, and financial audits to ensure the proper use of public funds and the successful fiscal operation of the charter school. Charter schools are evaluated using the Financial Risk Assessment. The Financial Risk Assessment is the primary factor in determining the financial performance of a charter school. A charter contract will not be renewed if the school has failed to demonstrate over the term of its charter the fundamental ability to operate a fiscally sound charter school, as evidenced by repeated failure to adhere to the financial standards. The Financial Risk Assessment:

- a) monitors external conditions encountered by charter operators that, if not addressed, could render the school financially vulnerable; and
- b) identifies internal factors that could lead to weaknesses or challenges in the financial operations of an operator.

Legal and Contractual Performance

Finally, charter schools are evaluated on their compliance with legal and contractual requirements. BESE will consider a standard not met if a violation: a) indicates a deliberate act of wrongdoing or reckless conduct, or causes a loss of confidence in the abilities or integrity of the school; or b) seriously jeopardizes the rights of students, safety of students, or the continued operation of the school. While not limited to the following, the table below includes the primary areas of oversight for legal and contractual performance. The standard for each is based on applicable laws and regulations and contract provisions.

Indicators	
Special Education and ELL Program Student Discipline Student Enrollment	Health and Safety Governance Facilities

Summary of Performance for 2011-2012

Academically, Louisiana's charters are performing well. The 2009 National Charter School Study conducted by CREDO found that reading and math gains for Louisiana charter school students were significantly better compared to their traditional public school peers.

On average, charters throughout the state have improved their Baseline SPS. Charter schools overall showed an average increase of 6.0 points with an average SPS score of 88.4.

Average Charter School Growth		
	Average Points of Growth	Average SPS Score
Type 1	5.6	84.4
Type 2	12.3	100.9
Type 3	4.6	138.7
Type 4	12.9	105.2
Type 5	6.0	76.8

The tables to follow provide a summary of charter school performance for each different type of charter school with BESE oversight (charter types 2, 4 and 5). The Financial Performance of each school results in an assessment using the following scale:

No Action – The school's fiscal health is determined to be satisfactory.

No Action* – Schools in their second year of operation with low-fund balances that would otherwise qualify for a No Action rating.

Monitor – The Department will monitor specific aspects of the financial risk assessment in order to assure continued progress in areas that have been problematic.

Dialogue – The Department will conduct a detailed review of the school's finances and financial practices; follow-up may include, but not be limited to, discussions between Department staff and school leadership regarding issues of major concern, a formal site visit, or recommended action by BESE in order to address deficiencies.

Summary of Charter School Performance

Type 2 Charter Schools	2012 School Performance Score	Letter Grade	Financial Performance	Legal and Contractual Performance
Avoyelles Public Charter School	132.2	A	No Action	IDEA; Title I; Title II, Title III
Belle Chasse Academy	117.0	B	No Action	
D'Arbonne Woods Charter School	100.4	C	Monitor	IDEA
Delhi Charter School	106.8	B	No Action	Title IX
Glencoe Charter School	111.3	B	No Action	
International School of Louisiana	118.5	B	No Action	National School Lunch Program
International High School of Louisiana	81.5	D	No Action*	
JS Clark Leadership Academy	New School	New School	New School	National School Lunch Program
Lake Charles Charter Academy	New School	New School	New School	
Louisiana Connections Academy	New School	New School	New School	
Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy	New School	New School	New School	Special Education; Enrollment
Lycee Francais de la Nouvelle Orleans	New School	New School	New School	At-Risk Population
Madison Preparatory Academy	75.6	D	No Action	
Milestone SABIS Academy	87.5	D	No Action	
New Orleans Military Maritime Academy	New School	New School	New School	
New Vision Learning Academy	103.1	C	No Action	IDEA
Southwest Louisiana Charter Academy	New School	New School	New School	
The MAX Charter School	75.8	D	No Action	At-Risk Population

Type 4 Charter Schools	2012 School Performance Score	Letter Grade	Financial Performance	Legal and Contractual Performance
Alice Harte Charter School	112.5	B	No Action	
Edna Karr Charter High School	120.7	A	No Action	
Louisiana School for the Agricultural Sciences	82.5	D	No Action	

Type 5 Charter Schools	2012 School Performance Score	Letter Grade	Financial Performance	Legal and Contractual Performance
Akili Academy of New Orleans	96.2	C	No Action	
Algiers Technology Academy	85.5	D	Dialogue	
Andrew H. Wilson Charter School	77.9	D	Dialogue	National School Lunch Program
Arise Academy	78.6	D	No Action	
Arthur Ashe Charter School	82.0	D	Monitor	
Batiste Cultural Arts Academy at Live Oak Elementary	63.3	T	No Action*	
Benjamin E. Mays Preparatory School	53.3	F	No Action	
G.W. Carver Collegiate Academy	New School	New School	New School	
G.W. Carver Preparatory Academy	New School	New School	New School	
Cohen College Prep	New School	New School	New School	
Crescent Leadership Academy	New School	New School	New School	
Crocker Arts and Technology School	64.8	F	Monitor	
Dr. Martin Luther King Science and Technology Charter School	98.5	C	No Action	
Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School	81.7	D	No Action	
Edgar P. Harney Spirit of Excellence Academy	71.2	T	No Action	
Esperanza Charter School	68	T	No Action	National School Lunch Program
Fannie C. Williams Charter School	75.2	D	New School	
Gentilly Terrace Charter School	74.9	T	No Action*	
Harriet Tubman Charter School	66.6	T	New School	

Intercultural Charter School	72.7	F	Dialogue	
James M. Singleton Charter School	73.6	F	No Action	
John Dibert Community School	73.8	T	Dialogue	
John McDonogh High School	New School	New School	New School	
Joseph A. Craig Charter School	New School	New School	New School	
Joseph S. Clark Preparatory High School	55.8	T	New School	
Kenilworth Science and Technology	71.9	F	Dialogue	
KIPP Believe: Edward Phillips Learning Academy	112.9	B	Monitor	
KIPP Central City Academy	106.4	B	No Action	
KIPP Central City Primary	88.5	D	Monitor	
KIPP McDonogh #15	91.5	C	No Action	
KIPP New Orleans Leadership Academy	75.8	D	No Action*	
KIPP Renaissance High School	85.3	D	No Action*	
Lafayette Academy	93.4	C	No Action	National School Lunch Program
Lagniappe Academies of New Orleans	58.6	F	Monitor	
Lake Area New Tech Early College High School	97.9	C	Monitor	National School Lunch Program
Langston Hughes Academy Charter School	New School	New School	New School	
Linwood Public Charter School	58.7	F	No Action	
Martin Behrman Elementary School	107.1	B	No Action	
McDonogh 28 City Park Academy	67.8	F	No Action	
McDonogh 32 Elementary School	63.3	F	No Action	
McDonogh 42 Elementary Charter School	New School	New School	New School	

Miller-McCoy Academy	71.0	F	Monitor	
Morris Jeff Community School	84.6	D	No Action	
Nelson Elementary School	79.9	D	No Action	
The NET Charter School	New School	New School	New School	
O. Perry Walker Senior High School	108.9	B	No Action	
Pierre A. Capdau Learning Academy	75.8	D	No Action	
Pride College Preparatory Academy	62.4	F	No Action	
Reed Elementary School	68.9	T	New School	
ReNEW Accelerated High School, City Park Campus	27.3	F	New School	
ReNEW Accelerated High School, West Bank Campus	33.5	F	New School	
Samuel J. Green Charter School	81.0	D	Dialogue	
Sci Academy	111.8	B	No Action	
SciTech Academy at Laurel Elementary	67.0	T	No Action*	
Sophie B. Wright Learning Academy	78.9	D	No Action	National School Lunch Program
Success Preparatory Academy	65.6	F	No Action	
Sylvanie Williams College Prep	81.9	D	No Action	
William J. Fischer Elementary School	72.3	F	No Action	