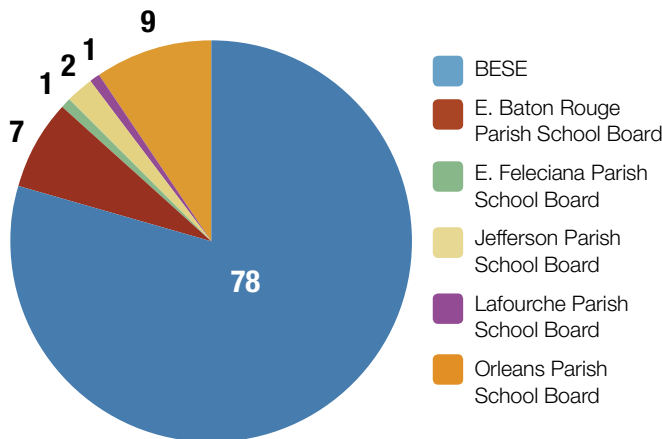


# Charter Schools and Choice

## What is a Charter School?

- Charter schools are public schools operated by a non-profit organization under an initial five-year contract (or “charter”) with either a local school board or the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). The non-profit organization may contract with a for-profit organization for day-to-day operations of the school.
- Charter schools are required to participate in the state accountability program and must meet certain achievement results in order to keep their charter.
- Charter schools are free from many of the rules and regulations that traditional public schools are subject to and have significant flexibility in the areas of hiring, budgeting, and instruction.
- Charter schools are subject to a three-year review by their authorizer and a five-year review to determine whether the charter will be renewed or revoked.

## Number of Charter Schools by Authorizer in Louisiana



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2011

## Charter School Governance

### Charter School Authorizer

The authorizer is the entity that enters into a contract with the charter school operator. In Louisiana, only BESE and local school boards are able to authorize charter schools. Authorizers approve charters, monitor and hold schools accountable, and renew or end charters based on school performance and other factors (financial, legal).

### Charter School Operator and Board

The charter school operator is the organization that oversees the operation, finances, and administration of the charter school. It is generally led by a board which sets policy and hires a school leader to implement its policy and handle school operations.

### Charter School Leader

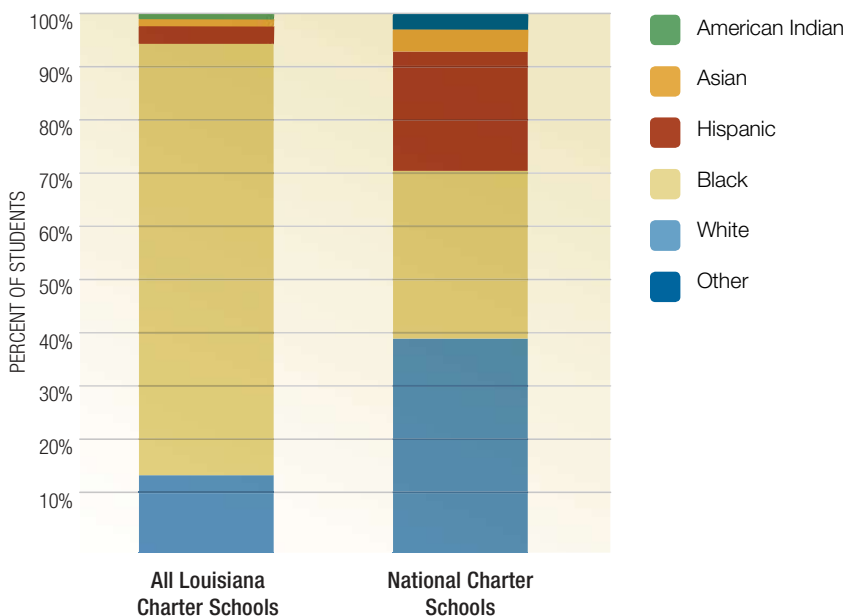
The charter school leader is hired by the school’s operator to oversee the daily operations of the school, including budgeting, personnel, and curriculum decisions. The school leader may or may not also fill the role of principal.

# Charter School Student Demographics

## Percentage of Students by Ethnicity, 2011

The ethnicity of students in Louisiana charter schools is different from the ethnicity of students in charter schools nationally. However, students in Louisiana charter schools have ethnicities similar to the large urban public school districts where most are located.

Data on Louisiana students taken from the October 2011 student enrollment count. National data from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2010-11.

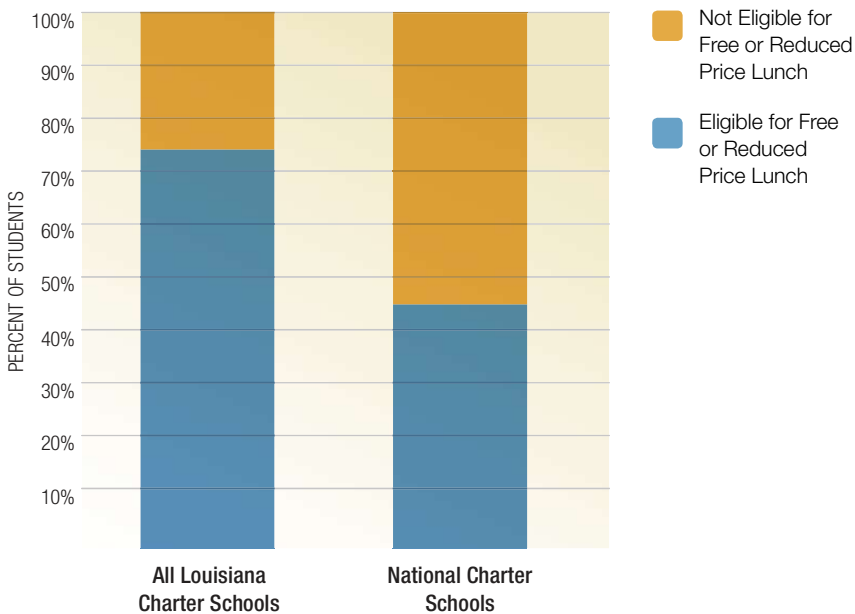


## Percentage of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, 2011

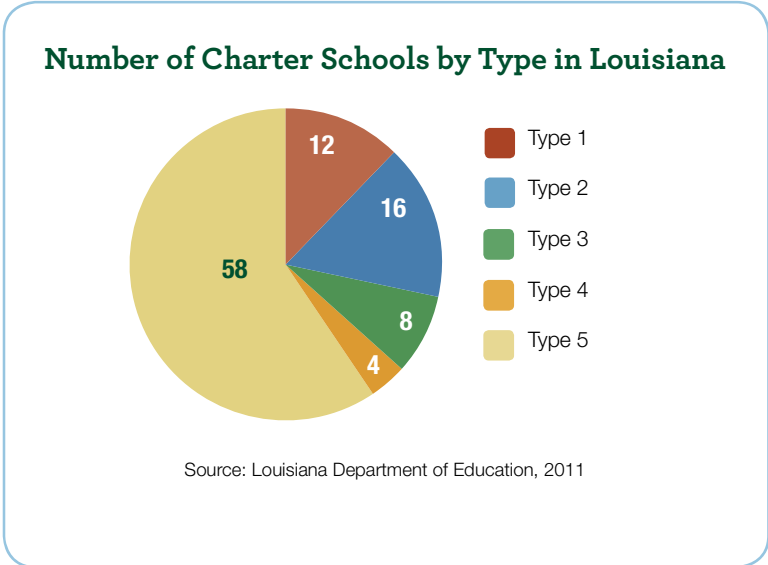
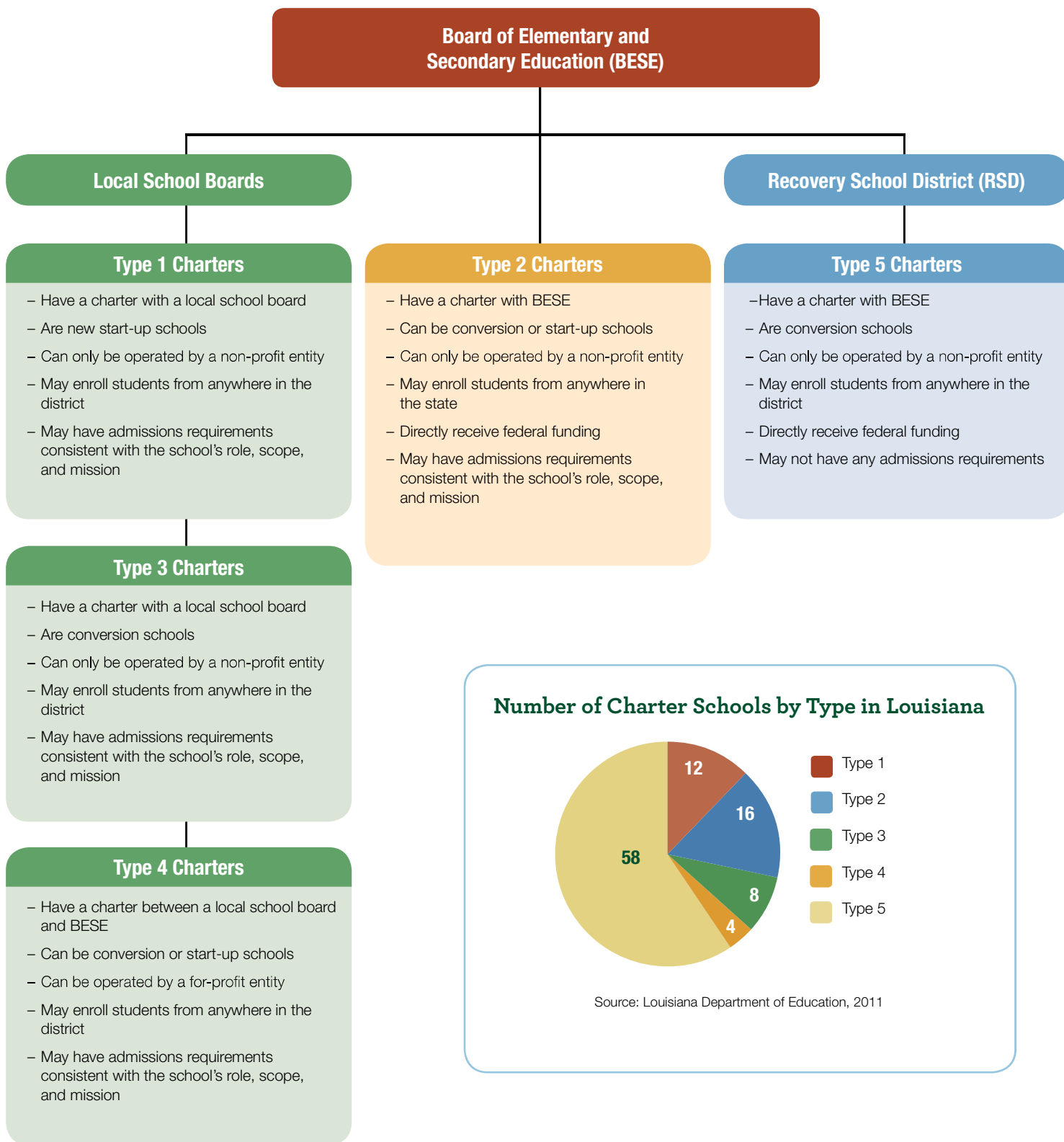
On average, charter schools in Louisiana serve a higher percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch than charter schools nationally.

Nationwide and in Louisiana, students in charter schools are eligible for free and reduced price lunch at a rate slightly higher than the general student population in traditionally operated schools.

Data on Louisiana students taken from the October 2011 student enrollment count. National data from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2010-11.



# Charter School Types

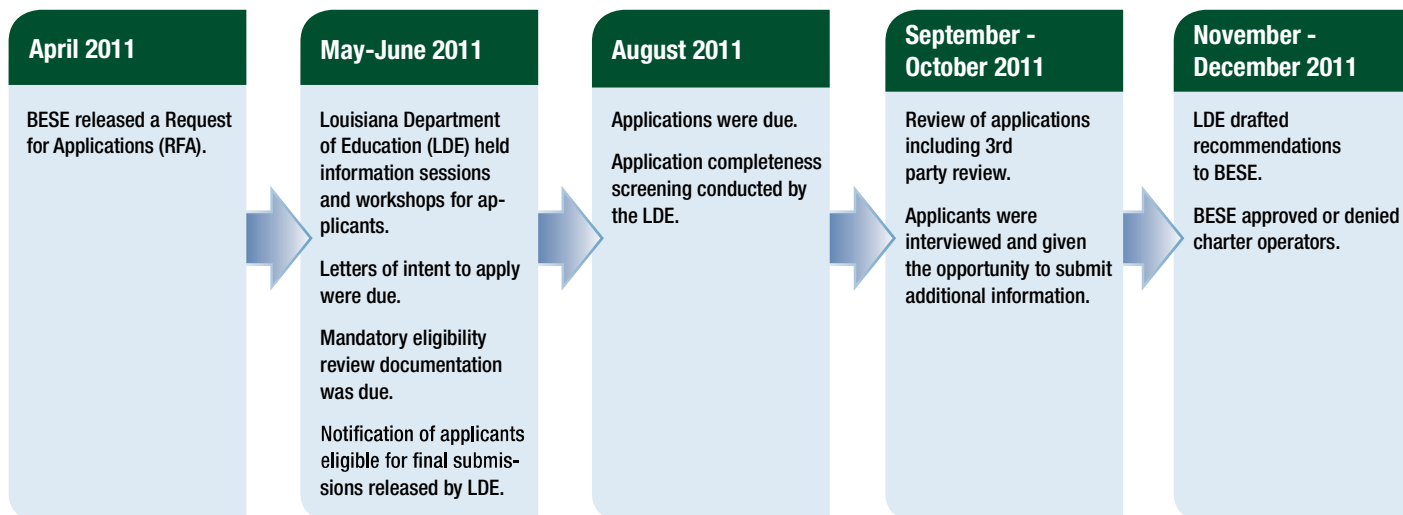


# Charter School Authorization

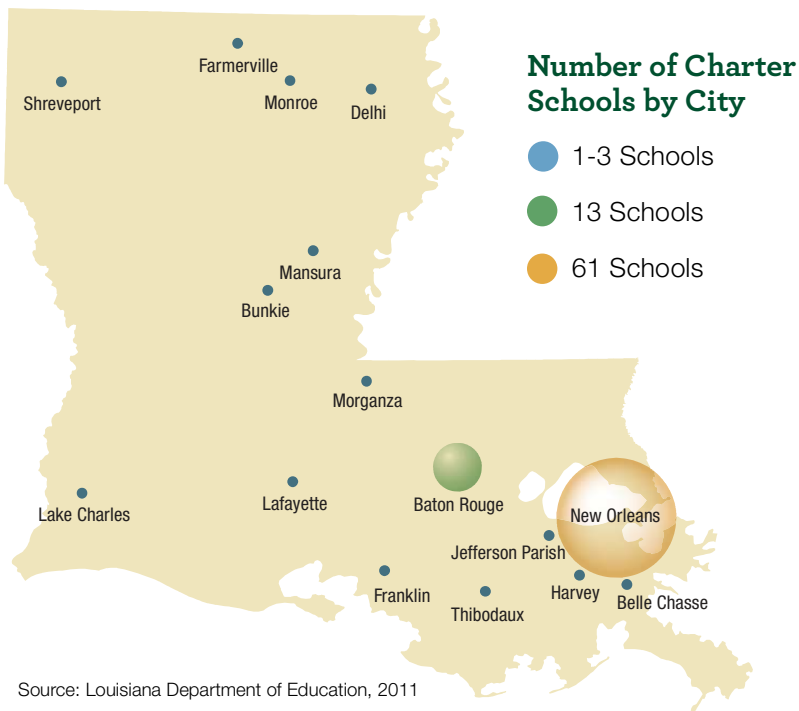
## Charter School Authorization Processes in Louisiana

The charter school authorization processes in Louisiana are rigorous and competitive. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and most school boards in Louisiana contract with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to conduct a third party evaluation of charter applications and make recommendations to the boards based on strict criteria. Boards then decide which operators to approve based on NACSA's evaluations and other factors, like district capacity needs.

The flow chart below represents the 2011 charter school authorization process for BESE, which authorizes Type 2, Type 4, and Type 5 charters. For local districts, which authorize Type 1 and Type 3 charters, the process is similar.



## Charter School Locations, 2011-12



### Recently Approved Charter Schools

BESE recently approved one Type 2 charter in St. Landry Parish, nine Type 5 charters to open in Orleans Parish under the Recovery School District, and eight Type 5 charters to open statewide under the Recovery School District.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2011

# Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Pilot Program in New Orleans

## School Vouchers

The Louisiana Legislature enacted Act 509 in 2008 establishing the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Pilot Program, a state-funded nonpublic school voucher program in New Orleans. The program was created to offer low-income families in Orleans Parish an alternative to attending a failing public school by providing a publicly-funded scholarship to attend a participating private or parochial school. The program began by serving grades K-3 and added a grade each year. It currently serves about 1,850 students in grades K-6.

### Voucher Funding

Appropriated from the Legislature (not to exceed \$10 million)

Equivalent to 90% of total state and local funding for the participant

Paid by the Louisiana Department of Education directly to participating private or parochial schools quarterly

### Who is Eligible?

Residents of Orleans Parish

Students whose household income does not exceed 250% of federal poverty level, or \$57,600 for a family of four

Students entering K-6 grades

Students previously enrolled in a failing public school (except students entering kindergarten)

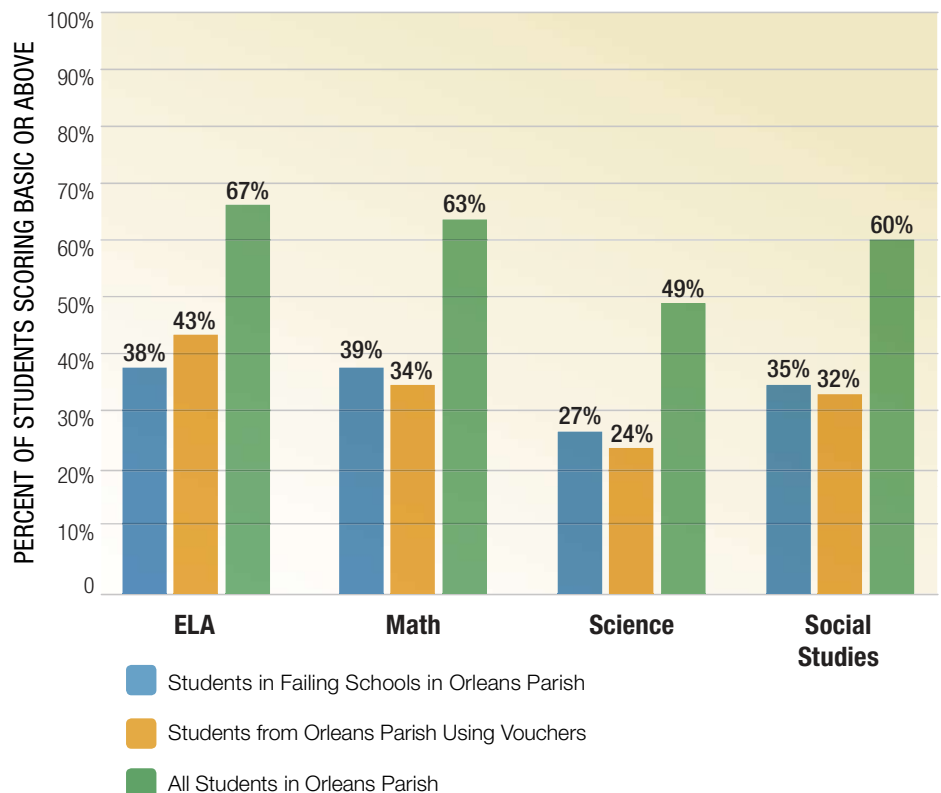
## Performance of Students Using School Vouchers in 2011

Students in New Orleans who receive a voucher to attend a private or parochial school are required to take Louisiana's standardized tests.

This graph shows the percentage of students performing Basic or above on LEAP and iLEAP for students using vouchers, students in RSD failing schools, and all public school students in Orleans Parish (grades 3, 4, and 5 combined).

Note: Data for All Students in Orleans Parish includes Type 2 charter schools, all RSD direct-run and charter schools, and all OPSS direct-run and charter schools.

Source: The Louisiana Department of Education, 2011.





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