Public Education Data Transparency and Accessibility in New Orleans and Louisiana

"Data-driven decision making" are buzzwords for good reason—most can agree that quality decisions are made only after the decision maker is fully informed and armed with all necessary data and information. Data-driven decision making has become a long-standing focus of those in education circles and usually refers to teachers using data in classrooms to assess students and to adjust their teaching practices to address deficiencies. However, stakeholders other than teachers are making important decisions about education daily and data transparency and accessibility is paramount for them to do so successfully. Parents making decisions about where to send their children to school need access to information like schools' curricular themes and academic performance. Charter schools and districts should be transparent about their financial data so that taxpayers have access to information about where their money is being expended. And, of course, educators and school leaders should have real-time access to student performance data so that changes can be made rapidly to address the needs of students who are struggling.

For these reasons, state longitudinal data systems* and data access for researchers have become priorities for the U.S. Department of Education since Secretary Arne Duncan was appointed in 2009. One of the areas of focus of the 2010 federal grant program, Race to the Top, was to increase states' use of data in decision making. States' ratings were partially based on the collection, use, and availability of education data. Louisiana, while it was not a winner of Race to the Top, received high ratings in the area of data collection but not data use.[i]

---

* Longitudinal data systems compile data points on districts, schools and individual students over time, allowing users of these systems to track, for example, the progress of students as they move through the public education system over the course of their schooling from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary education.

Louisiana is routinely lauded for its longitudinal education data system, receiving high marks from national education policy groups like the Data Quality Campaign.[ii] It is true that the state does collect and store a large and varied amount of data from schools and districts, more than most states, in its eight database systems. Much of this data, aggregated to the school level, is available to the public through reports and spreadsheets published on the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDE) website.[iii] However, problems with the transparency and accessibility of school operations data remain acute. The available data can be hard to parse and use for the average citizen. Additionally, more detailed student-level data needed by researchers is difficult and expensive to obtain.

Since Hurricane Katrina, access to operational data for individual public schools in New Orleans has

Protecting Privacy

Stakeholder access to public school data must be balanced with the appropriate protections for the privacy of confidential student and personnel information. In particular, the federal Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 imposes limits on the disclosure of student records by educational agencies and institutions that receive funds from the U.S. Department of Education. In general, states can share information while meeting FERPA requirements and protecting individual privacy by providing access to data based on the role of the data user. This means that parents can have access to their child's academic and performance history; teachers, principals and administrators can have access to student-level data only for the students in their classrooms or schools; and researchers are limited to the data specified in their individual contracts with the state.

presented further, more particular, challenges. The bifurcated nature of the governance structure and the multitude of autonomous school operators mean that school policies, practices, and important information (like school registration dates) are no longer standardized or available from a single source. There is also no longer any central body or office collecting and disseminating this information.

The problems that Louisiana and New Orleans face are acute and finding a timely solution to them is vital. In this paper, the Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University will explore the importance of making data more readily available to stakeholders as well as discuss what other states and districts across the nation are doing to address similar challenges. We will also examine the state of data transparency and accessibility in New Orleans and Louisiana and make recommendations for improvement.

Data Transparency and Availability in K-12 Education
The Importance of Data Transparency and Accessibility in Education
Data transparency and accessibility are necessary to catalyze informed decision making, yet it is only recently that education data has become viewed as vital to the effective and successful functioning of schools and school systems. One report traces the focus on data-driven decision making to the shift during the 1980s and 1990s from processes to educational outcomes.[iv] Then, in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) began requiring states to collect and track more detailed data, which led to states building or upgrading their data collection systems to meet the new federal requirements.[v] Soon after, data became a hot topic in education.

Prior to the Obama Administration taking office, the federal government's role in education data had been only to mandate that states collect and report certain data to conform with NCLB. However, in 2009 a new federal commitment stressed the importance of the availability of data for educators to make informed decisions and researchers to conduct evaluations through a grant program called Race to the Top (RTTT). This program promised hundreds of millions of dollars to states that could prove that they were

innovating in a number of areas, including "building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction."[vi] Two states, Tennessee and Delaware, were awarded a

total of $600 million over four years in March 2010.[vii] Ten more states were named in August – Washington, DC, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Rhode Island – and were awarded $75 to $700 million.

Other national organizations have formed in light of the new focus on data availability and data-driven decision making. The Data Quality Campaign started operations in 2005 and bills itself as "a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the availability and use of high-quality education data to improve student achievement."[viii] They do this by providing states with resources on how to use their longitudinal data systems, as well as rating states on how well they meet some "essential elements" of a quality data system. Another example, the National Education Data Partnership, is a collaborative that actually compiles some basic data on schools nationwide and publishes it via a searchable online database.[ix] Additionally, states and districts individually began their own projects to build and upgrade data systems and to begin to use them in new ways. The next section of the report will explore some examples of how data is being used innovatively and by a multitude of stakeholders to make education-related decisions from the state policy level down to individual parents choosing schools for their children to attend.

Data Systems that Work
A high-quality data system collects information about how individual students are performing over time, from prekindergarten through 12th grade and into postsecondary education. It measures a multitude of student level indicators such as attendance, demographics, state test performance, college admission test performance, course-taking and course completion, grades, graduation and dropout information, and college admission and completion. School-level financial and operational data (such as transportation expenditures, teacher turnover rates, and average salaries) is also often collected.

State longitudinal data systems make it possible for policymakers, researchers, and school and district leadership to answer questions about the effectiveness of different types of schools and programs, while controlling for student background and other factors. Additionally, longitudinal data can help principals and teachers to identify learning gaps and behavior patterns in order to tailor instruction for individual students. Parents can utilize longitudinal data to monitor their children's academic performance over time as well as to compare schools and programs. Only when stakeholders have timely and direct access to this data will their decisions, practices and policies be driven by relevant information.

Some states and districts have recently developed effective mechanisms to provide education stakeholders with access to prompt and relevant data. A few examples are listed below.

Chicago, Illinois

The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) at the University of Chicago was formed in 1990 in response to the need expressed by education reformers for credible research after the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act that decentralized governance of the city's public schools. Based on an ongoing data-sharing agreement with Chicago Public Schools, CCSR has constructed the most encompassing longitudinal data archive on a city's public school system in the country. Because of this database, CCSR researchers are able to "identify what matters for student success and school improvement, create critical indicators to chart progress, and conduct theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working."[x] Additionally, CCSR is a resource for journalists and program administrators to access reliable information.[xi] In exchange for sharing the data, the central administration and individual schools receive regular analyses and feedback on their programs and practices.

Arkansas

The Arkansas Department of Education recently developed a state education data center with multiple portals for different kinds of users, including the general public; researchers and journalists; district and school leaders; and teachers, parents and students. Each user group is awarded a different level of access depending on his/her role. For

How can stakeholders use data when it is readily accessible?

- A **state legislator** can use an analysis of the success of high school graduates who go on to higher education to determine whether the state's proficiency standards are effectively ensuring that students are college and career ready.
- A **district superintendent** can identify successes and problem areas in order to guide district priorities, such as strengthening curriculum or teacher support.
- A **charter school board member** can compare his/her school's policies and practices with peer schools and make informed decisions based on this information.
- A **principal** can use comparisons with other schools to identify the school's stronger and weaker areas and strategize improvements.
- A **middle school teacher** can develop interventions for entering students who have been identified as at risk.
- **Parents** can actively choose where their children attend school by comparing relevant data on the academic performance of a variety of schools.
- A **high school student** can easily identify which classes and requirements he/she must meet in order to graduate.
- A team of **researchers** can analyze student-level data from multiple states to identify high performance programs and best practices.

example, legislators can view and manipulate aggregate level data regarding districts and schools,

researchers can view and export Excel spreadsheets with de-identified student-level data relating to district and school performance, the public has access to School Performance Reports detailing school-by-school academic performance, and teachers can improve instruction through identifiable student information. All portals with identifiable data are password protected.[xii]

New York, New York

In an effort to build evidence-based school cultures, in 2007 the New York City Department of Education launched an $80 million data system to track and analyze student and school performance. The Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) allows classroom teachers to access student data such as interim test scores, subject grades, attendance records, and English language learner status. These tools allow teachers to quickly identify at-risk students and spot long-term learning trends, even as students transfer schools and classrooms. Additionally, ARIS's Parent Link provides parents with password-protected information about their children's achievement and offers instructions in nine different languages.[xiii]

North Carolina

The North Carolina Education Research Data Center was established in 2000 through a partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The Data Center stores and manages all data on the state's public schools, school districts, students, and teachers. The Data Center has created longitudinal student and teacher databases, which allow researchers to follow students and teachers over time and link their records across files. Data is made available to qualified researchers for a fee.[xiv]

Colorado

The Colorado Growth Model, developed by the Colorado Department of Education and launched in 2009, is a data visualization tool that enables users to explore a complete set of the state's academic performance data. District and school users have password-protected access to longitudinal growth and achievement reports for a particular student or group of students and can run comparisons. Reports can then be printed out or uploaded as PDFs, making them easy for teachers to share with students and parents or for a district superintendent to share with school leaders.[xv] Additionally, the web portal guides users through the data, helping the general public to understand the various data sets and create their own custom charts.[xvi]

Knoxville, Tennessee

Knox County Schools has developed the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to track both academic performance and financial data on its schools.[xvii] The district utilizes the state-wide Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System, a longitudinal database linking students and student outcomes to schools, school systems, and teachers. Principals, counselors, and teachers who have been trained in data use by the district are able to access their students' information through a password-protected web portal.[xviii]

Seattle, Washington

Since November 2009, Seattle Public Schools has released an annual district scorecard to give the public and families a snapshot of district-wide performance. The scorecard includes academic data, including growth and progress towards the district's five-year goals, as well as operations metrics on central office support services such as transportation and facility maintenance.[xix]

Data Transparency and Availability in Louisiana and New Orleans

Louisiana was favored to win some Race to the Top (RTTT) dollars due in part to its commitment to collecting extensive data from schools and districts. Publications like *Education Week*[xx] put Louisiana at the top of the list to receive funding and the Louisiana Department of Education put extensive time into the application process, also believing that it would surely be a winner. The state, however, did not receive RTTT funding in part due to its failure to fully and effectively use the data it collects.[xxi] Louisiana also received criticism from reviewers for not readily making data available to researchers.[xxii]

Yet Louisiana was one of only 11 states that met all ten "Essential Elements" in an analysis by the Data Quality Campaign (DQC), which measures states on how well they use data to improve student achievement.[xxiii] The disconnect in the opinions of the DQC and RTTT reviewers lies in the elements that they are considering. The DQC's elements focus on data use and sharing within the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) as well as the collection of particular data points such as student level graduation and dropout data. The U.S. Department of Education, on the other hand, was concerned less with what was being collected and shared internally and more with how easy it was for educators and researchers to access the data that the LDE collects.

This, essentially, sums up the most pressing problem with the availability of statewide data. A significant amount of student- and personnel-level longitudinal data is being collected and stored by the LDE. In our experience, however, this data was nearly impossible to access due to both the LDE's lack of capacity to handle data requests and the prohibitive costs that come with getting data from the outside organization charged with holding it.[†] Additionally, the school- and district-level data that is released via the Internet is in formats that are difficult to use.

Compounding the data accessibility and transparency issue in New Orleans is the bifurcated governance system and the autonomous nature of the schools. After Hurricane Katrina, the majority of Orleans Parish public schools were taken over by the state Recovery School District (RSD). Many reopened as new or converted charter schools. Currently, two school districts (the RSD and the Orleans Parish School Board), as well as nearly 40 charter organizations, are operating schools in the city. There are no longer any geographic attendance boundaries, with parents able to select schools from across the city for their children to attend.

This new landscape makes access to data for all stakeholders even more important. Parents need to be aware of schools' performance data, as well as curricular themes, transportation options, and the like, to be able to make informed choices about where to send their children to school. Charter school board members need to have easy access to their own schools' data as well as that of peer schools in order to make smart decisions about budgeting and policies. In the current environment, there is no entity that is tracking students as they move across systems and schools with their academic and discipline histories and any special needs documents such as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), which should be easily accessed by their new teachers and principals. The lack of a central office or central governing body to collect and disseminate this information has made access to data difficult for all stakeholders in the city.

State-Collected Data Availability and Usability

A significant amount of state-, district-, and school-level data is widely available to the public through the LDE's website. The data includes grade-level information on students such as ethnicity and at-risk status; district-level personnel information, including teacher experience and education; and college readiness data, like the number of students enrolling in remedial college courses and average ACT scores. School and district performance data is available in the form of standardized test passage rates and state-issued School Performance Scores and Performance Labels.[‡] Additionally, the public can access district financial data, including average teacher salaries, expenditures per student, and revenue sources. (The Appendix to this report has a full listing of what can be downloaded by the public from the LDE website.)

The availability of such a large amount of data and the multitude of formats it is presented in has not solved problems with transparency for stakeholders. None of the data is searchable and it is often unclear what information is contained in certain reports or spreadsheets based only on their titles. Additionally, for those unfamiliar with Microsoft Excel, navigating data in this format could be difficult. Much of the data is also presented in PDF reports, which makes comparisons difficult. All of the data, in both Excel and PDF formats, is organized by school year. Longitudinal comparisons are only possible by accessing multiple documents or spreadsheets and doing manual calculations.

Lastly, those interested in data on schools in New Orleans face an additional complication. Most of the schools open in Orleans Parish are not operated by the Orleans Parish School Board but are either charter schools or are operated by the Recovery School District. Locating information on these schools is more difficult than in other parishes because state data is broken down by local education agency (LEA). This means that charter schools and RSD schools are

---

[‡] While student progress is assessed by individual test scores, schools are given a composite score, the School Performance Score (SPS), based on test scores on all of the state tests (LEAP, iLEAP, and GEE), dropout rates, and attendance. School Performance Scores range from 0.0 to either 236.4 or 266.7 (depending on the grade configuration of the school). Schools with a baseline SPS of 140 or above receive a Performance Label of five stars. For 2010, schools with an SPS below 60, are deemed "Academically Unacceptable."

[†] The Cecil J. Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette

listed separately and it is difficult to tell which of these schools are located in the city of New Orleans, making compilation of data on schools city-wide difficult and time-consuming.

To further complicate matters, the financial data collected by the state for each LEA (be it a district or a charter school), is compiled and submitted by LEAs individually. This means that each LEA is responsible for interpreting what certain budget, revenue, and expenditure categories mean to them, which can vary widely across schools. For example, some schools include transportation costs under a category called "transportation" while others list those expenditures under "professional services." This makes it impossible to compare what schools and districts are spending on any given category.

The formatting of the voluminous amount of data can make it virtually useless for the average stakeholder trying to make sense of what is happening in public education in their district or school. For example, a parent in New Orleans who is making a school choice decision would have to go through the following steps to determine whether or not the schools he or she is considering have improved their test scores over the last three years:

1. For each year being considered, the parent would have to download a separate spreadsheet, choosing between a number of files listed for each year, only one of which contains the percentages of students in each school that have scored at each level on the standardized test in question. For those unfamiliar with the way that state data is released, it may be difficult to tell which of the files is correct based only on its name.
2. Once these spreadsheets are downloaded, the parent must determine if it is "initial testers," "re-testers," or "all testers," that should be considered. Each of these is listed separately in tabs within each spreadsheet.
3. After making this decision, the parent must then sort through approximately 1500 schools to find the schools he or she wishes to compare, going through this process for each year.
4. Finally, the parent would have to manually compare the numbers or, if familiar with Excel, create a new spreadsheet to do any calculations.

All of this assumes a significant amount of sophistication and technical literacy, in addition to access to a computer and the Internet.

While aggregated data is difficult for the public to use, it is, at least, readily available. Research and non-profit organizations such as the Cowen Institute have made it our mission to analyze some of the data and release it in formats and reports that are easier to use for stakeholders. One of our regular publications, *NOLA by the Numbers,* does this for New Orleans' demographic and school performance data as it is released by the LDE throughout the year. Additionally, we routinely respond to individual requests for data and analysis.

Researchers, however, have a difficult time accessing the raw, disaggregated student-level data necessary for much scientific and academic research and evaluation. In one instance, a joint study by the Cowen Institute and the RAND Corporation required access to student-level data that took approximately one year to obtain and was eventually procured at significant cost from the Picard Center at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, which is authorized by the state to hold student-level data and to allow authorized researchers access. Another Cowen Institute report on school finances was delayed significantly by a lag in the release of charter school financial data. Financial information from the 2008-2009 school year was not released until Fall 2010, more than a year after the LDE collected the data from schools.

Creating a Statewide Longitudinal Database

The LDE has recognized these problems with data accessibility and usability and is currently working to rectify them. According to the LDE's Data Quality Director, the state is in the process of building a data system that will link all eight of its databases, creating one student and personnel-level longitudinal database. This process is expected to take until October 2011 to complete the initial phase. After the completion of future phases, expected to take another 18 months approximately, the system will offer tiered access to different types of users. There will be an outward facing web-based portal for the public to access school-, district-, and state-level data. Additionally, approved researchers will have more

ready access to a database with longitudinal student- and personnel-level data for their research purposes.

Given the LDE's estimated time frame for creating its public database, as well as the unique needs of parents, education leaders, charter school board members, and the public in New Orleans, the Cowen Institute has also embarked on its own project to create a Virtual Center for Education Data (VCED). The VCED will be a web-based tool that will allow stakeholders to access publicly available state education data via a user-friendly interface that can respond to queries and produce easy-to-understand reports. It will have the ability to connect information from different data collection systems, e.g., tying school finances to student achievement records. The goal of this project is to catalyze informed decision making by parents, educators, administrators, and policymakers.

The following are some examples of the type of questions currently difficult to answer that the VCED will allow users to answer more easily:

1. How has the School Performance Score of a school changed over time? How does the average School Performance Score of one type of school compare to other types of schools in a given year? Over time?
2. What percentage of students in a school (or school type) is eligible for free or reduced lunch? How has free or reduced lunch eligibility changed over time?
3. What percentage of students in a school, school type, or across all schools are minorities? How has the percentage of students that are minorities changed over time?
4. What is the average School Performance Score for a school where more than 75 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch?
5. What is the average teacher salary and/or experience at a school where more than 75 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch?
6. At schools with an SPS of more than 100, what is the average expenditure per student?

Information Availability and Transparency in New Orleans' Choice-Based System

A decentralized system of public schools with city-wide school choice, like that in New Orleans, requires access to even greater information for truly informed decision making than is provided, collected, and disseminated by the LDE. For example, charter school board members in New Orleans should be able to compare their schools' expenditures, programmatic offerings, and academic outcomes with peer schools, a task that cannot be accomplished using only the LDE's data. Additionally, parents making choices about which schools their children attend need more detailed information about the curriculum, academic performance, and extracurricular activities of schools than those who attend schools in districts with geographic attendance zones and which do not offer school choice.

However, the LDE's new database and the Cowen Institute's VCED will only partly rectify the problems with information accessibility and transparency that exist in New Orleans. As it currently stands, due to the bifurcated governance structure and multitude of school operators, there is no body charged with collecting and disseminating important information on all schools operating in the city, a type of information that differs from the performance, personnel, or financial data compiled by the state. This leaves schools themselves and self-appointed non-profits as the primary entities providing some school-level information, such as extracurricular activities, principal names and contact information, and transportation options, to parents and other interested community members.

The New Orleans Parent Organizing Network (NOPON) operates a website that offers close-up looks at individual schools, listing contact information, curricular offerings, sports programs, performance data, and the like.§ (A complete listing of the data this group compiles and disseminates is located in the Appendix of this report.) NOPON also distributes printed copies of its annual *New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools*. As helpful as this tool is, it is updated only annually. Because schools are not required to report any changes to their information to NOPON, the information can quickly

---

§ New Orleans Parent Organizing Network (www.nolapon.org)

become inaccurate or outdated, especially in printed form.

There are four areas of particular concern resulting from the lack of a centralized body tracking the data and information on schools in New Orleans that is not being collected by the state. The first concerns the application and enrollment process. In a system of open choice, it is vital that parents are aware of application deadlines and required materials in sufficient time to take advantage of their right to choose. With no one responsible for tracking and publicizing this information, choice is reliant on the sophistication of individual parents.

Additionally, outside of twice-a-year state enrollment counts, no one is tracking students as they move among and between systems and schools. If there are problems, as some claim, with special education students being discouraged from registering or re-enrolling at some charter schools[xxiv], currently compiled and available data make it difficult to analyze and understand the issue. The lack of a local body collecting this information in real time means that getting a handle on the existence and extent of the problem requires waiting for the state to release student level data, including mid-year transfer information, to researchers who can complete a study. Even this, however, might not fully capture what is happening, since the system of choice allows students to move schools at any time during the year.

There are other issues related to choice that could benefit from closer study but which are difficult to analyze due to the manner in which data is collected. For example, the LDE does not collect student addresses. These are compiled by individual LEAs. With student address information, researchers could conduct a study to analyze enrollment patterns in a city where students are largely not required to attend schools according to geographic zones. Because this data is not held centrally, acquiring it for analysis means approaching each charter school, charter management organization, and district separately.

Lastly, a system of charter schools and choice, with its reliance on free market principles, assumes that parents are making their choices with full and accurate information about schools. Yet there is a pronounced lack of transparency in schools' operations as exemplified by the sometimes secretive nature of charter schools' board meetings – meetings that are legally required to be publicized in advance and open to the public. A recent investigative report found many charter boards reluctant to release required information about board meetings and members, with most boards either failing to provide the information upon request or refusing to even acknowledge the request.[xxv]

The problem of citizens feeling uninformed about who is controlling schools was confirmed by a late 2010 public opinion poll conducted by the Cowen Institute. Surveying voters in New Orleans, the poll found that 37 percent did not feel they had sufficient information on school governance, while this rose to 46 percent among African Americans, who comprise the majority of the parent population.[xxvi] Problems with transparency and the accessibility of information such as this threaten the functioning of a system of choice and the principles it rests upon.

Recommendations

Though there is clearly a significant amount of information on schools statewide that is being released, it remains difficult for the general public to easily access and use. Additionally, for stakeholders in New Orleans, information accessibility and transparency on school operations and finances remain a problem. Given these continuing issues, the Cowen Institute recommends the following:

#1: A statewide school-level information database for the public

The Louisiana Department of Education is already on the right track in creating such a database for public use. However, it remains about two years from completion. It also remains to be seen how user-friendly the interface will be and whether or not it will be able to answer the type of questions that stakeholders have. The Cowen Institute is also concurrently developing a web-based data dashboard that will incorporate academic, operational, and financial data on public schools in New Orleans and across the state. It will include pre-defined reports as well as allow ad hoc queries of state data via an easy-to-use web based portal. At its launch, the tool will include statewide LDE-released data as well as richer and more detailed information about schools in New Orleans, later expanding to other areas in the state.

#2: A new statewide public information dissemination law

The Louisiana Legislature should pass a new law requiring all schools to publicize certain information, regardless of any public request, via media such as the Internet, local newspapers, and signs posted on school property. Information could include times and dates of board meetings (for charter schools), the latest test scores and School Performance Scores, and anything else deemed pertinent and essential. Penalties should be associated with failure to comply with the law.

#3: A centralized information collection and distribution body for New Orleans

New Orleans presents a unique problem with data accessibility and transparency due to its multitude of school operators and bifurcated governance structure. The state legislature should mandate that one body collect and disseminate important information, such as application deadlines and requirements, for all schools in New Orleans, regardless of operator. This body could be new, or could be one of the current governance entities already in place, such as the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Orleans Parish School Board, or the Recovery School District. Schools should be required to report certain information by a given date to the designated entity and to abide by that information to the greatest extent possible. By mandating that a central body collect information and distribute it, New Orleans can use data innovatively like other districts, despite its decentralized nature.

The Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University is an action oriented think tank that informs and advances research-based policy, legislative, and programmatic solutions to eliminate the challenges impeding the success of K-12 education in New Orleans and beyond.

Applied Research at the Cowen Institute

We serve as an objective voice to education leaders, policymakers, the media, and the public about what is taking place in public education in New Orleans–particularly in the areas of accountability, finance, facilities, and governance–by disseminating relevant data and research. This publication, and others released in the past, can be found at http://education.tulane.edu.

Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives
Tulane University
200 Broadway Street, Suite 108
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118
504-274-3690
http://education.tulane.edu

End Notes

[i] Race to the Top Fund, *States' Applications, Scores, and Comments for Phase 1*, U.S. Department of Education, (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase1-applications/index.html).

[ii] *Results: Essential Elements 2009-2010*, Data Quality Campaign – Using Data to Improve Student Achievement, (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey/compare/elements#essentialelements).

[iii] *Planning, Analysis and Information Resources*: *Data and Reports*, Louisiana Department of Education, (http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/pair/1419.html).

[iv] Janet Hansen, "Education Data in California: Availability and Transparency", The RAND Corporation, November 2006.

[v] Ibid.

[vi] *About Us*, Data Quality Campaign, (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html).

[vii] Delaware and Tennessee Win First Race to the Top Grants, Press Release, U.S. Department of Education, March 29, 2010 (http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/delaware-and-tennessee-win-first-race-top-grants).

[viii] *About Us*, Data Quality Campaign, (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html).

[ix] Hansen, November 2006 and The National Educational Data Partnership, *School Matters*, (www.schoolmatters.com).

[x] *About CCSR*, Consortium on Chicago School Research, (http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/page.php?cat=1).

[xi] Melissa Roderick, John Q. Easton, and Penny Bender Sebrin, "The Consortium on Chicago School Research: A New Model for the Role of Research in Supporting Urban School Reform," The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, February 2009.

[xii] "What Does Role-Based Access Look Like? Examples from States," Data Quality Campaign, March 2010.

[xiii] Bill Tucker, "Putting Data into Practice: Lessons from New York City," Education Sector Reports, October 2010.

[xiv] *Projects: North Carolina Education Research Data Center*, Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University, (http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/project_detail.php?id=35).

[xv] "State Action 5: Role-Based, Timely Access to Information," Data Quality Campaign, June 2010.

[xvi] "Building a Robust Data System in Washington: How Effective Use of Data Can Improve Instruction and Student Achievement," Partnership for Learning, July 2010.

[xvii] "An Education Management Information System: The Knox Model," Knox County Schools, March 2010.

[xviii] Elizabeth Laird, "Data Use Drives School and District Improvement," Data Quality Campaign, September 2006.

[xix] "Building a Robust Data System in Washington…"

[xx] Lesli Maxwell, "Race to the Top, Round Two: The Contenders," *Education Week*, June 1, 2010.

[xxi] Race to the Top Fund, *States' Applications, Scores, and Comments for Phase 1*, U.S. Department of Education.

[xxii] Ibid.

[xxiii] *2009-2010 National Survey Results*, Data Quality Campaign (http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey/states).

[xxiv] Cindy Chang, "New Orleans special needs students file federal lawsuit against Louisiana Department of Education," *The New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 29, 2010.

[xxv] Jessica Williams, "It's none of your business: Most charters don't comply with open-meetings law," *The Lens*, October 7, 2010 (http://thelensnola.org/2010/10/07/charter-school-transparency).

[xxvi] *K-12 Public Education through the Public's Eye: A Survey of the New Orleans Community*, The Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, October 18-21, 2010 (http://www.coweninstitute.com/our-work/applied-research/2010_community_poll/).

Appendix

The following tables include all data publicly available, without request, on public schools in Louisiana from the Louisiana Department of Education and on public schools in New Orleans from multiple sources.

State Public Data Availability

Reports Legend
DCR = District Composite Report (PDF)
PSE = Public School Enrollment (Excel)
AFR = Annual Financial and Statistical Report (PDF)
MFP = MFP Accountability Report for low performing/ low to no growth schools (PDF)
SAR = School Accountability Reports (Excel)
SCR = District and State Accountability Subgroup Composite Reports (PDF)
RPDS = Summary of Reported Personnel and District Salaries (Excel)
FRAR = Financial Risk Assessments and Ratings (PDF)

Type of Data	Reports	School Level	District or LEA Level	Other (Gender, Grade Level, etc.)
Enrollment Data				
Enrollment Numbers	DCR, PSE, AFR	X	X	X
Ethnicity	PSE	X	X	
Gender	PSE	X	X	
English proficiency	PSE	X	X	
At-Risk status	PSE	X	X	X
Grade placement	PSE, AFR	X	X	
Percent SPED @ Low performance/Low growth schools	MFP	X		
Number SPED by type by district	AFR		X	
Percent gifted @ Low performance/Low growth schools	MFP	X		
Grade Structure	DCR	X	X	
Non public high school graduates	AFR		X	X

Number and type of non public schools	AFR		X	
Number of non public school faculty	AFR		X	
Non public registration by grade, gender, ethnicity	AFR	X		X

Type of Data	Reports	School Level	District or LEA Level	Other (Gender, Grade Level, etc.)
Student and School Performance Data				
LEAP results	DCR, SAR	X	X	X
iLEAP results	DCR, SAR	X	X	X
GEE results	DCR, SAR	X	X	X
School Performance Scores, Growth and Baseline	DCR, School Accountability Reports	X		
School Performance Labels	DCR, School Accountability Reports	X		
AYP Status	DCR	X	X	
Subgroup performance on tests	SCR		X	X
Subgroup AYP	DCR, SCR	X	X	
District Performance Scores	State Performance Summary		X	
NAEP results	SCR			X

Type of Data	Reports	School Level	District or LEA Level	Other (Gender, Grade Level, etc.)
College Readiness				
Average ACT score/ # taken per school	DCR, ACT Report	X	X	
Percent students requiring remedial college classes	DCR	X	X	
Dropout percentages	DCR, Dropout Numbers and Percentages	X	X	X
First time college freshmen in LA colleges	DCR	X	X	
Cohort graduation rate	DCR, Cohort Graduation Rate	X	X	
Number and percent of graduates, public and non public, by race	DCR, AFR, Full Time College Freshmen	X	X	
Number and percent of students in AP courses @ Low performance/Low growth schools	MFP	X		

Type of Data	Reports	School Level	District or LEA Level	Other (Gender, Grade Level, etc.)
Personnel Data				
Actual and budgeted average Teacher Salary	Classroom Teacher Salary Averages		X	
Actual and budgeted average teacher salary by years of experience	Classroom Teacher Salary Averages		X	
Teacher experience	AFR		X	
Staff ethnicity	AFR		X	
Staff gender	AFR		X	
Number and type of employees	AFR		X	
Average employee salary	RPDS		X	
Teacher turnover @ Low performance/Low growth schools	MFP	X		
Percent of certified teachers @ Low performance/Low growth schools	MFP	X		
Education of school instructional staff	AFR		X	
Average teacher days absent @ Low performance/Low growth schools	MFP	X		
Teachers with a Masters degree or higher	DCR	X	X	
Percent of teachers that are minority	RPDS		X	

Type of Data	Reports	School Level	District or LEA Level	Other (Gender, Grade Level, etc.)
Financial Data				
Revenue sources and amounts	AFR		X	
Expenditure per student	AFR		X	
Expenditures by group	AFR		X	
Expenditures by fund source	AFR		X	
Current expenditures	AFR		X	
Total expenditures by object	AFR		X	
Year end balances	AFR		X	
Debt service expenditures	AFR		X	
Salaries by type and function	RPDS		X	
Assessment of financial risk	FRAR		X	

Type of Data	Reports	School Level	District or LEA Level	Other (Gender, Grade Level, etc.)
Other				
Suspensions and expulsions	DCR	X	X	
Student retention rate	DCR	X	X	
Attendance rate	DCR	X	X	
Class Size	DCR	X	X	
Classes taught by highly qualified teachers	DCR	X	X	

Local New Orleans School Data Availability

Type of Data	Website
Charter board chair	NOPON
Principal	NOPON
Transportation	NOPON
Health services	NOPON
SPED model	NOPON
Before and aftercare availability	NOPON
School features and programs (i.e. extended day)	NOPON
Extracurricular activities	NOPON
Sports	NOPON
Student ethnicity	NOPON
Governance organization chart	NOPON
SPS growth	NOPON
School name, location, and contact information	NOPON
Charter status	NOPON
Chartering organization and/or district	NOPON
Mission statement	NOPON
Grades served	NOPON
Application due date	NOPON
Registration process and requirements	NOPON
Map	NOPON
Free lunch percentage	NOPON
Staff names and contact info	School Websites**

Board member names and contact info	School Websites**
Board meeting dates	School Websites**

NOPON = New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, www.nopon.org

** This information is not available on every school's website.