



# New Orleans by the Numbers: First-Time College Freshmen, Class of 2009

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The Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University launched the NOLA by the Numbers series in October 2010. This series aims to provide journalists, policymakers, community leaders, and the public with a timely and comprehensive review of state-released school-level data on public schools in New Orleans. This briefing focuses on first-time college freshman in the fall of 2009, the most recent year of data available. It, and others released by the Cowen Institute in the past, can be found at <http://education.tulane.edu>.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) annually releases the number of public high school graduates who enrolled as full-time college freshmen at a Louisiana two- or four-year, private or public college in the fall after graduating. The LDE also reports the number of first-time college freshmen who were enrolled in one or more developmental course. Developmental or remedial courses are courses that do not count as credit toward the student's graduation requirements. In addition, the state provides the number of students who were in good academic standing at the end of their first college term. The 2008-2009 First-Time College Freshmen report provides data on the high school graduating class of 2009 who enrolled in college in the fall of 2009. *High school graduates who attended out-of-state colleges or who attended on a part-time basis are not included in the data.*

## Fast Facts

- **2,062** students graduated from **16** public high schools in New Orleans.
- **46** percent of New Orleans public school class of 2009 graduates enrolled as full-time students at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009.
- The average ACT composite score of in-state college-goers from public schools in New Orleans was **18.4**, compared with **17.5** for all New Orleans public school test takers from the class of 2009.
- **55** percent of New Orleans public school graduates who enrolled in an in-state college or university took one or more developmental/remedial course.
- **83** percent of New Orleans public school graduates who enrolled in an in-state college or university were in good academic standing at the end of their first term.
- All Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) high schools had in-state college-going rates higher than the state public school average of **47** percent.
- **29** percent of 2009 graduates from Recovery School District (RSD) direct-run high schools enrolled as full-time students at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009 – nearly **double** the percentage from the previous year.



## College-Going Rates

Overall, 46 percent of New Orleans public high school graduates in the class of 2009 enrolled as full-time students at an in-state public or private, two- or four-year college or university in the fall of 2009. This represents a 10 percentage point increase from the 2008 college-going rate, though it is only one percentage point higher than in 2007. The college-going rate for public schools in New Orleans in 2009 is similar to the state public school average of 47 percent.

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems reports Louisiana's college-going rate for *both public and private* high school graduates in the class of 2008 (the most recent data available) at 65 percent, compared to a U.S. average of 63 percent. This includes graduates who enrolled in colleges out-of-state and/or part-time, while the Louisiana Department of Education reports only those graduates who enroll full-time at in-state colleges.

Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) schools, both charter and traditional, had the highest in-state college-going rates at 58 percent, with all seven high schools reporting rates above the state average of 47 percent. Given the relatively high academic performance of these schools, it is also likely that many of their graduates attended colleges or

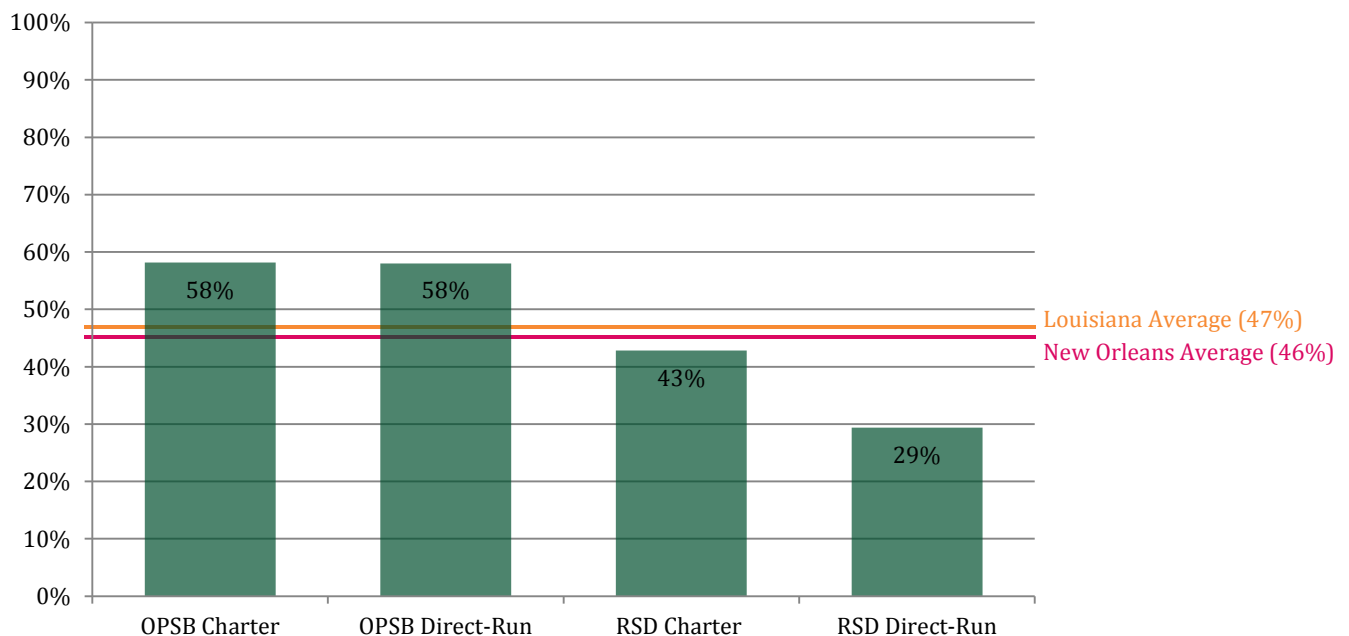
universities outside of Louisiana and were not counted in this data, making their total college-going rates even higher.

Recovery School District (RSD) direct-run schools, most of which had a long history of low achievement and were transferred to the RSD following Hurricane Katrina, reported an average in-state college-going rate of 29 percent for the graduating class of 2009, the lowest college-going rate of all public schools in New Orleans. However, on average, these schools nearly doubled their college-going rate from 2008.

The two RSD charter schools with graduates in 2009 had an average in-state college-going rate of 43 percent, just a few percentage points below the state average. The 2008 first-time college freshmen report does not report the number of graduates at these schools, so it is difficult to measure growth. However, from 2007 to 2009 one RSD charter school, O.P. Walker, increased its college-going rate by 17 percentage points, from 26 percent to 43 percent.

The following table illustrates by school type the percentage of New Orleans public school graduates in the class of 2009 that enrolled as first-time college freshmen at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009.

**In-State College-Going Rates, Class of 2009**



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2011

## Remediation Rates

Louisiana’s colleges and universities typically use ACT scores to determine whether an applicant will be admitted and is ready to enroll in college credit courses. When ACT scores (composite scores or scores in the subject area tests) are low or students don’t pass college-administered placement exams, some campuses offer developmental, or remedial, courses. Typically, these courses do not carry degree credit and are intended to prepare students to succeed academically in college courses. A high rate of first-time college freshmen enrolled in remedial courses can indicate a lack of college preparation. Nationally, more than one-third of first-time college freshman enroll in a remedial course according to a recent report by Strong American Schools.

Overall, 55 percent of New Orleans public school graduates in 2009 who enrolled as full-time freshmen at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009 took one or more developmental courses. This is eight percentage points higher than the previous year’s developmental course enrollment rate, or remediation rate, of 47 percent. Remediation rates grew for every school type from 2008 to 2009.

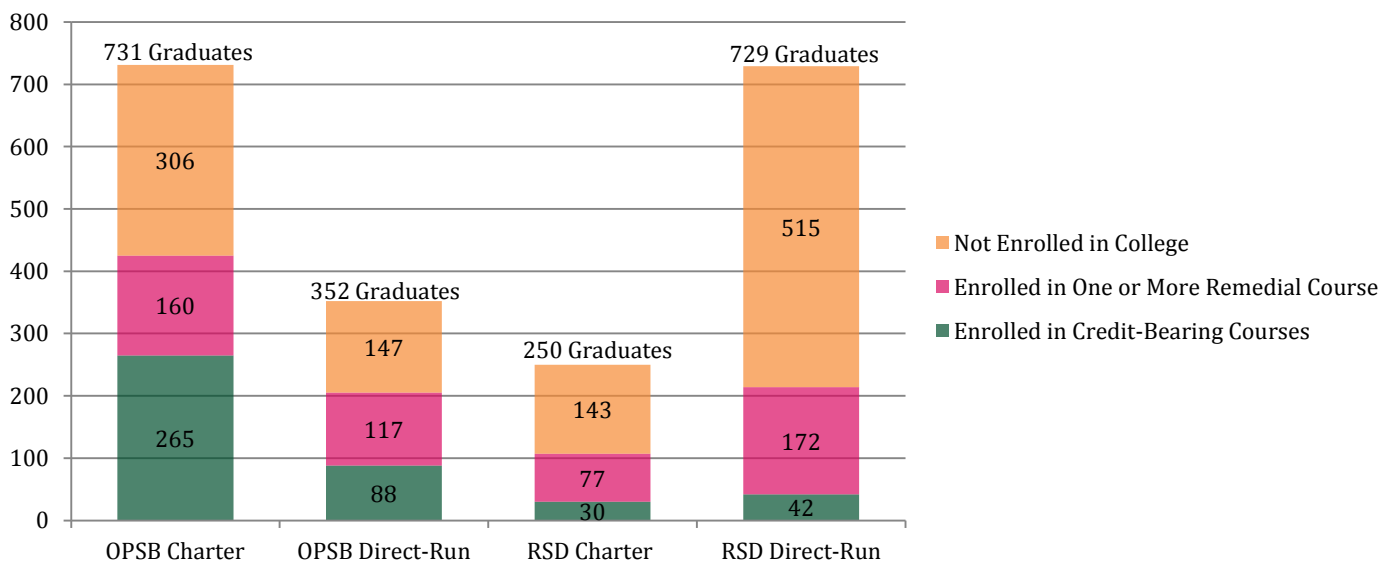
The remediation rate for New Orleans public school graduates in 2009 is significantly higher than the average state public school remediation rate of 32 percent. The state average has also grown slightly, from 28 percent in 2008 and 29 percent in 2007.

Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) charter schools reported the lowest average percentage of students enrolled in developmental courses of all school types in New Orleans. Yet the OPSB charter school average remediation rate of 38 percent was still higher than the state average of 32 percent. OPSB’s low rate was driven largely by two selective admissions schools, Benjamin Franklin High School and Lusher Charter School, which reported particularly low remediation rates of four and six percent, respectively. No other public schools of any type had rates lower than the state average.

Recovery School District (RSD) direct-run schools had the highest average remediation rates. On average, RSD direct-run schools had 80 percent of in-state college-goers enroll in one or more developmental course – more than double the state average and five percentage points higher than the previous year. One RSD school, John McDonogh High School, had a 93 percent developmental course enrollment rate.

The chart below illustrates by school type the number of New Orleans public school graduates in the class of 2009 that took one or more developmental course as a first-time freshmen at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009.

**Number of Graduates and College Enrollment by Type, Class of 2009**



Source: Louisiana Department of Education, 2011

## Successful Completion of the First College Term

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First-time college freshmen who completed the first college term successfully are reported as being “in good academic standing,” meaning they are not on academic probation. The percentage of first-time college freshmen considered in good academic standing after their first term can indicate the extent to which graduates were prepared for college as well as that students were well-served and adequately supported by the college they attended.

Overall, 83 percent of New Orleans public school graduates in 2009 who enrolled as full-time freshmen at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009 were in good academic standing at the end of their first term. This rate is similar to the previous year’s rate of 81 percent and slightly lower

than the 89 percent average for all public school 2009 graduates across Louisiana.

The majority of schools and school types had rates of first-time college freshmen in good academic standing similar to the city-wide average, with only a small handful of outliers. Benjamin Franklin High School, an Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) charter school with selective admissions, had the highest rate at 98 percent, while Walter L. Cohen High School, a Recovery School District (RSD) direct-run school taken over in 2005 for low performance, had the lowest rate at 64 percent. These percentages demonstrate some growth from 2008, when Cohen High School had only 50 percent of its first-time freshmen in good academic standing after the first term.

## Average ACT Composite Scores

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Most students who enroll in a Louisiana college or university were assessed with the ACT before graduating from high school. The ACT is designed to assess a student’s general educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and science and a student’s ability to complete college-level work. Scores range from 1-36.

Although the city-wide average ACT composite score for all test-takers from the class of 2009 was 17.5, the average ACT composite score for graduates who enrolled as first-time freshmen at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009 was 18.4. This compares to a state-wide first-time freshmen average ACT composite score of 21.7. A minimum ACT score of 20 is required for a student to be eligible for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Opportunity Award, a state-funded scholarship that pays tuition and certain fees for Louisiana residents who attend an in-state four-year college. The TOPS Tech Award pays tuition for skill or occupation training and requires a minimum ACT score of 17.

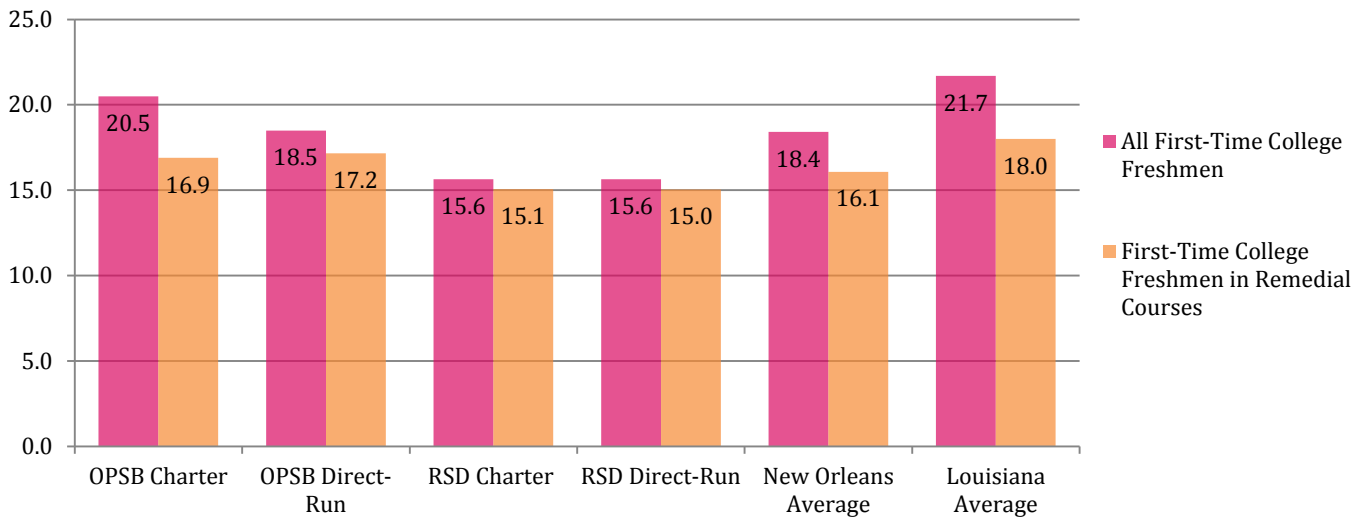
Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) charter schools, some of which have selective admissions policies, had the highest average ACT composite score for in-state college-goers at 20.5, compared with 18.5 for OPSB direct-run schools and 15.6 for both charter

and direct-run Recovery School District (RSD) schools. It is notable that a much higher percentage of RSD charter school graduates (43 percent) were first-time freshmen in 2009 than were RSD direct-run school graduates (29 percent), despite their similar average ACT composite scores. This may indicate that RSD charter schools are beginning to build a college-going culture.

Average ACT composite scores were lower for New Orleans first-time freshmen enrolled in one or more developmental course in 2009 compared with the average for all first-time freshmen. This is true for New Orleans as a whole (16.1) as well as each school type. The state average ACT composite score for first-time freshmen enrolled in developmental courses is 18.0.

The chart on the following page illustrates the average ACT composite scores, by school type, for all New Orleans public school graduates in the class of 2009 that enrolled as first-time college freshmen at an in-state college or university in the fall of 2009, as well as those who took one or more developmental course in their first term.

## Average ACT Composite Scores, 2008-2009



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>.

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## Appendix

### First-Time College Freshmen (FTF), Class of 2009

School	# 2008-2009 Graduates	Class of 2009 Avg. ACT Composite	# FTF	% FTF	FTF Avg. ACT Composite	# in Remedial Courses	% in Remedial Courses	Remedial Avg. ACT Composite	# in Good Academic Standing	% in Good Academic Standing
Benjamin Franklin	151	27.1	80	53%	26.8	3	4%	25.0	78	98%
Edna Karr	191	18.4	134	70%	19.4	53	40%	17.3	113	84%
Lusher	74	23.9	36	49%	24.2	2	6%	19.0	28	78%
New Orleans Charter Science & Math High	94	17.3	55	59%	18.3	31	56%	16.4	43	78%
Warren Easton	221	16.6	120	54%	17.5	71	59%	16.4	96	80%
<b>OPSB Charter Avg.</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>86%</b>
Eleanor McMain	127	18.7	80	63%	19.5	45	56%	17.8	71	89%
McDonogh #35	225	16.7	125	56%	17.9	72	58%	16.8	105	84%
<b>OPSB Direct-Run Avg.</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>85%</b>
Algiers Technology Academy	37	15.9	16	43%	16.4	14	88%	15.3	13	81%
O.P. Walker	213	14.7	91	43%	15.5	63	69%	15.0	69	76%
<b>RSD Charter Avg.</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>77%</b>
Frederick A. Douglass	94	15.5	27	29%	16.9	22	81%	15.2	21	78%
G.W. Carver	63	14.4	17	27%	15.5	12	71%	14.1	13	76%
John McDonogh	115	13.9	28	24%	15.1	26	93%	14.7	24	86%
Joseph S. Clark	102	14.5	27	26%	16.2	22	81%	15.4	24	89%
L.E. Rabouin	163	14.8	48	29%	15.0	37	77%	15.2	42	88%
Sarah T. Reed	148	15.1	53	36%	15.8	43	81%	15.1	46	87%
Walter L. Cohen	44	14.7	14	32%	13.9	10	71%	15.0	9	64%
<b>RSD Direct-Run Avg.</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>All New Orleans</b>	<b>2,062</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>All Louisiana</b>	<b>35,140</b>	<b>21.1*</b>	<b>16611</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>5,841</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>14,558</b>	<b>88%</b>

\*Includes nonpublic schools.