

NOLA Public Schools
Strategic Plan: 2018 - 2021

OUR VISION

Every student receives a high quality education that fosters his or her individual capabilities, while ensuring that they thrive and are prepared for civic, social, and economic success.



NOLA Public Schools at its heart is a school district dedicated to the success of every New Orleans public school student. *“We are not limited by our abilities, but instead by our vision.” - Unknown*

The vision of the Orleans Parish School Board and NOLA Public Schools is that:

Every student receives a high quality education that fosters his or her individual capabilities, while ensuring that they thrive and are prepared for civic, social, and economic success.

This vision boldly reimagines what is possible for our students and families, and in turn, our city. To advance our vision, the seven members of the Orleans Parish School Board, President John A. Brown, Sr., Vice President Leslie Ellison, Ethan Ashley, Sarah Newell Usdin, Ben Kleban, Woody Koppel, and Nolan Marshall, Jr., with support from the Superintendent of NOLA Public Schools, Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr., created this strategic plan, which guides the school district’s efforts to continue to improve education in New Orleans.

Our system is designed to develop students who are ready to meet the world and capitalize on every opportunity presented to them.

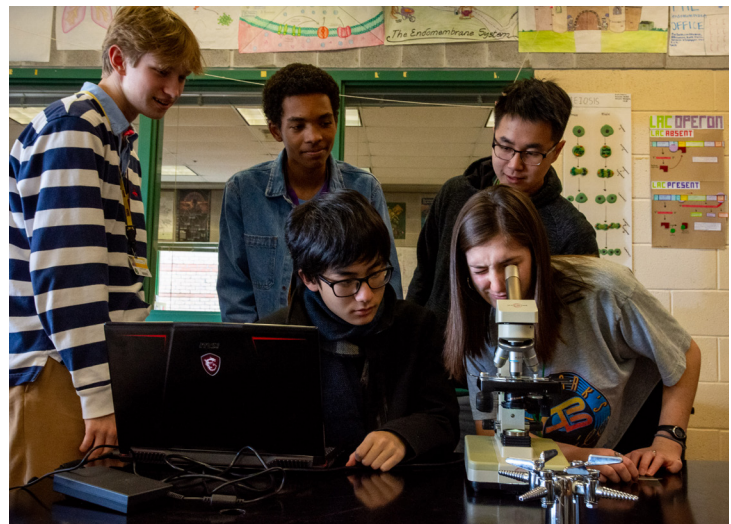
Each Student in NOLA Public Schools will be:

- An Effective Communicator
- A Lifelong Learner
- A Critical Thinker
- A Resilient Human
- An Engaged Citizen

This three-year plan starts the vision above, and eight ambitious goals that fall into five priority areas, which each have specific corresponding strategies. The following pages outline each goal and how it dovetails with each priority and then lists the strategies we are using. Thank you in advance for your engagement.

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OUR GOALS

The strategic team of OPSB and the new NOLA-PS (see pages 7-8 for more information on the *working group*) identified eight goals to build around for the foreseeable future. We have collected those here; throughout this plan, you will see icons that correspond to our eight goals, showing how we are weaving our intentions throughout our work.



Advance **equity** for all students and families



Increase the share of students **at or above grade level** in reading and math



Raise the high school **graduation rate**



Improve high school **graduates' readiness** for future success



Increase the number of students attending **"A" and "B"** schools



Increase the **diversity of schools and programs** offered to students and families



Expand access to **early childhood** education



Increase **public engagement and public confidence** in the school system

STATUS OF NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS

Academic performance has improved dramatically since Hurricane Katrina. More students are graduating high school, earning scholarships, and heading to college. They are also doing better on the ACT.

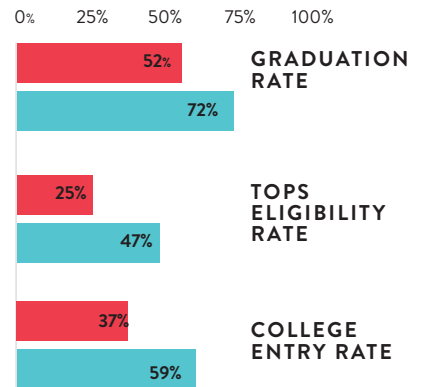
New Orleans experienced a period of growth after Katrina, hit a plateau at the ten-year anniversary (2016), and recently, a small decline. Because of this data, a group of passionate individuals came together to begin the work you see in this plan and set New Orleans schools, students, and districts back on a course of success and strength.

Schools have gotten better, but we have a long way to go.

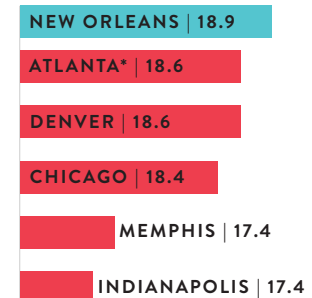
- ▶ 29% of schools saw their SPS increase
- ▶ Over 70% of the schools in OPSB and the New Orleans RSD saw their SPS (School Performance Score) decrease in 2017.
- ▶ New partnership with Center for Resilience in 2019 for stronger mental health programs for students (60% of children in New Orleans suffer from PTSD)
- ▶ Education Dive recognizes unique, successful unification of RSD and OPSB as District of the Year



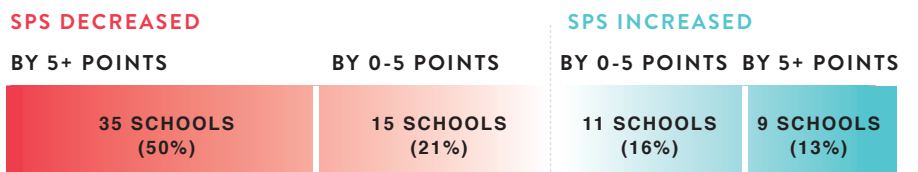
NEW ORLEANS STUDENTS, PRE & POST KATRINA



NOLA ACT SCORES COMPARED TO SIMILAR DISTRICTS



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORE CHANGES FROM 2016 TO 2017



PROGRESS INDEX SCORES

78% OF DISTRICT SCHOOLS SCORED A OR B
THIS MEANS SCHOOLS ARE ON AN UPWARD TREND FOR 2019

Sources on this page: Louisiana Department of Education (DOE) (bottom chart includes all OPSB + RSDNO schools with a 16 and 17 SPS; including those whose site code closed in 2017); Educate Now, nola.com, Chicago Public Schools, CO DOE, IN DOE, GA DOE, TN DOE
* School system did not require all students to take ACT



OVERVIEW

Through late 2017 and into 2018, we began work on the strategy that became the plan you see here. We designed our new vision to keep us inspired, and we identified **five priorities** to focus on between 2018 and 2021. They serve different elements of our goals, which we explore in further detail on the following pages.

A1. PRIORITIES

- I. The Superintendent and administration will provide **all families** in New Orleans with access to **diverse, high-quality public schools**.
- II. The Superintendent and administration will set high standards and provide both **accountability and support** for schools.
- III. The Superintendent and administration will work to ensure that all New Orleans youth have a **diverse array of secondary options** that offer student-tailored pathways to success in high school and beyond.
- IV. The Superintendent and administration will serve as the public education ecosystem leader, responsible for **system-wide unmet needs** for school and student supports.
- V. The Superintendent and administration will **effectively, fairly, and transparently** steward resources for public education in Orleans Parish.

A2. CORRESPONDING STRATEGIES

We identified strategies for each of these five priority areas (see following pages), and then assigned the strategies to the appropriate departments within NOLA-PS. In some areas, we created departments or reorganized current departments and duties, and developed external partnerships to achieve these aims. The internal departments, in turn, worked to identify the necessary steps to execute the assigned strategies.

This process of focusing, aligning, and then operationalizing our strategic plan clarified our organization workflow into two specific departments: Core and Responsive.

OUR VISION

Every student receives a high quality education that fosters his or her individual capabilities, while ensuring that they thrive and are prepared for civic, social, and economic success.





PRIORITY I:

The Superintendent and administration will provide **all families** in New Orleans with access to **diverse, high-quality public schools**.



STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

- Support the cultivation of high-potential schools, including those with leaders who reflect the students they seek to serve and those with local leaders
- Run a high-quality authorization process, aligned to best practices, and responsive to local needs
- Manage portfolio planning, school transformation, and enrollment target setting processes to support family choice and system health
- Manage enrollment processes with consistency, efficiency, and responsiveness to student and family needs
- Ensure equity of access to schools, through fair, transparent, and consistent enrollment requirements across the district
- Support successful schools to expand capacity to serve more families
- Provide families with access to supports when families are affected by school transformation decisions
- Provide families with access to supports when families are affected by school closures
- Provide families with proactive and meaningful communications regarding school performance

PRIORITY II:

The Superintendent and administration will set high standards and provide **both accountability and support for schools**.



STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

- Implement high standards for performance along with systems for evaluating schools
- Conduct consistent, ongoing oversight, and provide school leaders and boards with feedback so they are aware of the necessary improvements to meet expectations
- Engage with charter school boards to train, monitor effectiveness, and provide ongoing oversight to facilitate appropriate governance that is aligned with applicable law and OPSB Board Policy
- In the pursuit of defining quality and understanding school impact, continue to research and engage on new, innovative school evaluation methods

Continued on next page



PRIORITY II (continued):

The Superintendent and administration will set high standards and provide **both accountability and support for schools.**



STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

- Engage with school leaders and charter boards that fail to meet academic expectations in alignment with the Charter School Accountability Framework
- Promote the conditions for school success by advocating for adequate resources; ensuring policy environment at the state and local level respects school autonomy and helps maximize school impact; and ensuring central teams respond efficiently to school requests and needs
- Increase school access to tools, expertise, and resources designed to promote vibrant and high-achieving schools
- Work collaboratively with schools and other partners to strengthen oversight and support regarding special education and other federal obligations
- Cultivate and manage external partnerships and opportunities with non-profit and other governmental agencies focused on improving student experiences and learning
- Supporting and guiding the charter school board and executive team throughout the process of school closure and transition

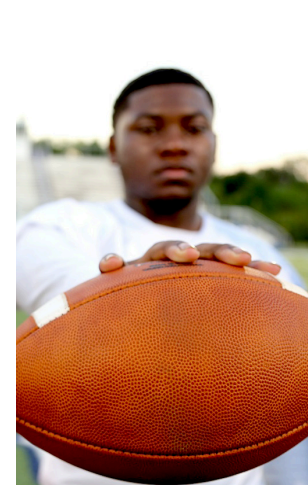
PRIORITY III:

The Superintendent and administration will work to ensure that all New Orleans youth have a **diverse array of secondary options** that offer student-tailored pathways to success in high school and beyond.



STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

- Partner with schools and local organizations to expand the array of high-growth, high-wage JumpStart pathways offered to students
- Expand the array of quality alternative and accelerated charter schools, including schools seeking to serve over-age middle school students and opportunity youth
- Engage with post-secondary institutions to provide additional dual-enrollment opportunities to high school students that best prepare them for college success
- Partner with schools to improve the cohort graduation rate by sharing early-warning data and reducing unnecessary retention
- Partner with schools and government agencies to reduce the number of students whose education is interrupted by justice system involvement
- Develop systems to track post-secondary outcomes for our system of schools for future use by the district
- Cultivate solutions and provide access to resources to re-engage students who have dropped out



PRIORITY IV:

The Superintendent and administration will serve as the public education ecosystem leader, responsible for **system-wide unmet needs** for school and student supports.



STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

- Make student and system needs and gaps transparent through annual processes of data analysis and publication
- Support the development and sustainability of appropriate, high-quality, specialized programs for students with special needs, including a center for early childhood services to identify and provide services to children with exceptionalities
- Lobby for additional early childhood funding to expand access to high quality programs by working with local early childhood advocates
- Support the citywide allocation of early childhood education seats that ensures equitable access to high-quality early childhood education programs.
- Evaluate performance of existing OPSB-funded initiatives and, as appropriate, identify and implement changes

PRIORITY V:

The Superintendent and administration will **effectively, fairly, and transparently steward resources** for public education in Orleans Parish.



STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

- Provide transparency to the community with a budget that clearly shows how school and system finance works
- Promote opportunities for local small businesses, especially DBEs through policies and procurement processes
- Ensure that funding for schools and programs meets the needs of the city’s students through the use of differentiated funding and other avenues
- Preserve and maintain the facilities of the system through the School Facilities Preservation Fund and master planning
- Lead efforts to attract additional resources, inclusive of local philanthropy, national philanthropy, grants, and other streams

B. ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE

The start of 2019 signals the official launch of NOLA-PS. The Strategic Working Group (see next page) worked hard to create a more effective and efficient system for managing our city's schools and their needs. Our goal was to make NOLA-PS more open, bright and accessible feeling and looking; this is aligned with strategic changes to prioritize and support the unique disposition of the schools as autonomous, but still accountable to our locally elected board.



COMMUNITY
Chooses schools to attend, can participate on individual school boards, elects OPSB members

OPSB
A collective body of elected board members from the 7 board districts. They select, hire, and manage the Superintendent.

NOLA-PS
The Central Office
The Superintendent is the "CEO" of the central office. NOLA-PS represents the central office plus all 78+ schools.*

OUR 78* SCHOOLS
Our varied schools serve over 45,000 students across seven board districts.

*As of publication, NOLA-PS and OPSB oversee 78 open schools in New Orleans. Visit <https://opsb.us/schools/opsb-charter-schools/> for the full list.



C. BUILDING TOGETHER

STRATEGIC WORKING GROUP

Our working group has been comprehensive of local stakeholders to create and enact the content, structure, and actions described in this plan. We will continue to build together. This group included the Superintendent’s office, Strategic Priorities, Legal, Innovation and Planning, Student Access, Citywide Counsel, Human Resources, School Leadership (including Safety, Facilities, and Education) Children’s Services, and Equity and Accountability. This team also comprised members from OPSB and RSD. In particular, we wish to **highlight and thank Board members from each district in the city:**



John A. Brown Sr.
District 1



Ethan Ashley
District 2



Sarah Newell Usdin
District 3



Leslie Ellison
District 4



Ben Kleban
District 5



Woody Koppel
District 6



Nolan Marshall Jr.
District 7

COMMENTS, IDEAS, QUESTIONS?

We welcome feedback, contributions, and thoughtful critiques on our strategic work. If you are interested in getting involved or have a comment you wish to share, please reach out to communications@opsb.us, and our working group will review your message at our quarterly progress meetings. You can also follow our work on social media and at our monthly newsletter (sign up on our website).



www.opsb.us | 504-304-3520

communications@opsb.us



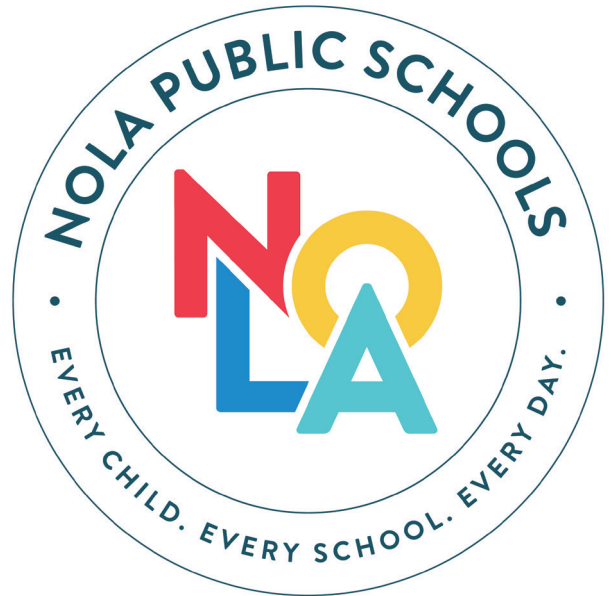
NOLA Public Schools
2401 Westbend Parkway
New Orleans, LA 70114





NOLA PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

EVERY CHILD. EVERY SCHOOL. EVERY DAY.



CONCLUSION & INVITATION

Thank you for engaging with our Strategic Plan. When our first working group came together, we asked why we were all here – at that meeting, at this organization, in this city. What we all had in common: a deep, determined passion for our city’s children and the education we know they deserve. By reviewing our plan, we believe you too know the seriousness of this work, and are just as committed to making our city’s schools the best they can be.

We invite you to reach out to us, come to town hall meetings, engage with your local school boards, and however else works for you to build with us.

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