

2000-2001 Louisiana State Education Progress Report



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**Louisiana Department of Education
Cecil J. Picard, Superintendent
March 2002**

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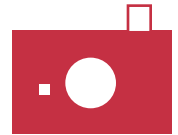
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Appreciation is extended to students and staff of schools at which the pictures for this publication were taken. The cooperation of photographers whose work is featured in this publication and of the newspapers that provided reprints is also acknowledged.

A Word From Your State Superintendent



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On behalf of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Louisiana Department of Education is proud to present the 2000-2001 Louisiana State Education Progress Report. This document, an annual state level “report card,” provides a succinct update on the condition and effectiveness of our public schools. Our intention is to raise public awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of Louisiana’s educational system by examining our statewide accountability and reform initiatives and measuring student and school progress against our established goals. The insightful analyses of this report may also be used as a valuable resource in the planning and formulation of additional reform initiatives for our public education system.

Focused on improving student achievement, the State of Louisiana initiated a crucial educational reform program in 1999. In a carefully planned implementation approach, our flagship School Accountability System initially included elementary and middle school grades, with the high school grades added in 2001. For the first time, schools and students alike were made responsible and accountable for their academic progress. Students are now expected to meet higher standards, while schools must show continual growth in meeting state established guidelines.

The first Accountability Cycle is successfully behind us, and we are extremely pleased to report that our students and schools are making great progress. Our Accountability System is producing tangibly positive results. An overwhelming majority of our schools (69%) either met or exceeded their Accountability Growth Targets. In fact, the State as a whole received an “Exemplary Academic Growth” label. Our students showed marked improvement on both the state administered LEAP 21 and the national Iowa tests. Class sizes are shrinking, and our student dropout rate is decreasing.

We are also receiving national recognition for our efforts. Education Week, a highly respected national publication, ranked Louisiana 4th out of the 50 states on our accountability and school improvement initiatives; our School Accountability System is being hailed as a model for other states to follow. We owe this great progress to the dedication and hard work of our teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, and students. They have all been working diligently to make our reform initiatives succeed.

Although we are proud of our accomplishments, we recognize that we still face many challenges. The shortage of certified teachers is critical. Our dropout rate, while falling, is still far too high. Our diverse student population suffers from a high poverty rate that causes our student achievement rates to lag behind many other states. We are not yet where we want to be academically, but we are making significant progress. We have a clear vision of where we need to go and how to get there.

The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Louisiana Department of Education, with strong support from the Governor's Office and the Louisiana Legislature, remain committed to educational excellence. If we stay the course, our 10-year goal is attainable. Together, we will succeed in improving student achievement for all of Louisiana's children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cecil J. Picard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Cecil J. Picard
State Superintendent of Education

Executive Summary

The following is a brief summary of the findings and analyses of Louisiana educational data for the 2000-2001 school year. A detailed discussion of each indicator is included within the report.

Louisiana Public School and Student Characteristics

- In the 2000-2001 school year, the 1,532 public schools reported a total student enrollment of 741,553, representing a decrease of approximately 13,000 students from the previous year, consistent with the overall downward trend for the public school enrollment.
- Statewide, 58.2% of all students were eligible to receive free or reduced-priced lunches during the 2000-2001 school year.
- Statewide, 85% of the 55,526 faculty members were fully certified in the courses they taught. Conversely, the remaining 15% had non-standard certification.
- The percent of faculty members with advanced degrees (Master's and above) was 37.5%, a slight decrease from 38.0% in the prior year.
- Statewide, great progress is being made in reducing class size. In 2000-2001, 42.6% of classes had 1-20 students as compared to 40.3% in the prior year. Percent of classes with 21-26 and 27 or more students were 36.1% and 21.3% respectively.

Student Participation

- In 2000-2001, the statewide student attendance rate for grades pre-kindergarten through twelve dropped slightly to 93.7% from 94.0% in the prior year. This represents approximately 47,000 students (6.3% of the total student population) who were absent on any given school day.
- In 1999-2000, 8.6% (approximately 19,000) of the students in grades 9-12 dropped out of school. The Statewide rate at 8.6% represented a welcomed decrease of 0.8% from 1998-1999 (approximately 1,900) fewer students who dropped out.

- In 2000-2001, a total of 72,473 public school students (9.3%) in Louisiana had at least one in-school suspension and 75,601 students (9.7%) had at least one out-of-school suspension.
- Statewide, 2,805 students (0.4%) were expelled in-school, and 3,089 students (0.4%) were expelled out-of-school.
- In 2000-2001, the first year of the LEAP 21 high-stakes testing for 4th and 8th grade students, the retention rate (K-12) expectantly climbed to 10.7%, equating to 73,740 retained students. This rate is an increase of 2.4% from the 1999-2000 school year.

Student Achievement and College Readiness

- **DRA:** At the spring 2001 assessment of the 2nd graders, of the 53,609 students assessed, 77.5% (41,498) were reading on or above grade level, which was a slight (0.3%) decrease over the previous year. Conversely, 22.6% of the students (12,111) were identified as reading below grade level. For the 3rd graders, of the 54,488 students, 76.0% (41,393) were reading on or above grade level, representing a modest (0.5%) increase over the 3rd graders from the previous year.
- **LEAP 21:** On the 4th grade English Language Arts test, 60% scored at the Basic or higher achievement levels as compared with 56% last year. On the 4th grade Mathematics test, 53% scored at the Basic or higher achievement levels as compared to 49% last year. Fourth grade students scoring at the Basic or higher achievement levels on the LEAP 21 Science and Social Studies tests were at 51% and 56% respectively.
- **LEAP 21:** On the 8th grade English Language Arts test, 52% scored at the Basic or higher achievement levels as compared with 54% last year. On the 8th grade Mathematics test, 50% scored at the Basic or higher achievement levels as compared with 46% in 1999-2000. On the 8th grade Science and Social Studies test, the students scoring at the Basic or higher achievement levels in the spring of 2001 were at 50% and 54% respectively.
- **GEE 21:** Fifty-six percent (56%) of students performed at the Basic or higher achievement levels on the English Language Arts tests as compared to 51% on the Mathematics tests.
- **Iowa:** For the second year in a row, Louisiana students showed marked improvement on

every grade for the national Iowa Tests. Specifically, the 3rd grade students had a national percentile rank of 50, while the 5th graders scored at the 52nd percentile rank exceeding the national percentile rank of 50. The 6th and 7th graders scored at the 48th and 47th percentile ranks respectively while the 9th graders had a percentile rank of 50.

- **Graduation:** Based on the 1999-2000 results, approximately 92% of the 42,072 Louisiana's public school seniors graduated from high school. The percent of seniors graduating has increased slightly over the past 3 years (an increase of 1.2 percentage points).
- **ACT:** The Louisiana ACT 2001 composite score remained steady at 19.6 for the third year in a row, 1.4 points below the national average of 21.0, which has also remained unchanged.
- **FTF:** Of the 38,959 Louisiana public high school graduates in 1999-2000, 15,867 (41%) were First-time Freshmen (FTF) in Louisiana colleges and universities during the fall 2000 semester. In the fall of 2000, the percent of developmental FTF from public high schools declined from 42% to 41%.

Accountability Growth Results

- In fall of 2001, a total of 1,046 elementary/middle schools and 119 combination schools completed Cycle I of the Louisiana School Accountability system and received their Growth Labels.
- A majority (70%) of the **elementary/middle schools** received the top two Growth Labels of "Exemplary Academic Growth" and "Recognized Academic Growth" by meeting or exceeding their required Growth Targets for Cycle I. A total of 14 elementary/middle schools (1%) were labeled as a "School in Decline." Furthermore, 234 schools (22%) either showed insufficient growth, no growth, or declined by five points or less, receiving labels of "No Growth" or "Minimal Academic Growth."
- Similar results were also seen for the 119 combination schools as close to 62% received the top two Growth Labels. Only two combination schools were identified as a "School in Decline." Thirty-eight (32%) of the schools had insufficient growth, no growth, or had declined by five points or less.

Accountability Performance Results

- In fall of 2001, a total of 1,381 schools were given a new baseline School Performance Score (SPS). However, not all schools started the same accountability cycle. A total of 1,054 elementary/middle schools, which had completed their Cycle I, were assigned their baseline SPS for Cycle II. The remaining schools, the 120 combination and 207 high schools were given their baseline SPS for Cycle I.
- The overall 2001 State average for the elementary/middle schools was calculated at 79.9, an improvement over the previous year. The 2001 Baseline State SPS for combination and high schools was calculated at 75.9.
- Of the 1,054 **elementary/middle schools** starting Cycle II, 179 schools (17%) scored above the 10-year SPS goal of 100, 325 schools (30.8%) scored at or above the State average of 79.9 but less than 100, 527 schools (50%) scored below the State average but above 30.0, and 23 schools (2%) scored at or below 30.
- Of the 120 **combination schools**, 17 schools (14%) scored above 100, 65 schools (54%) scored above the State average of 75.9 but below 100, 35 schools (29%) scored below the State average but above 30, and 3 schools (3%) scored at or below 30.
- Of the 207 **high schools** started their first Accountability Cycle in 2001, 26 schools (13%) scored above the 10-year SPS goal of 100, 65 schools (31%) scored above the State average 75.9 but below 100, 103 schools (50%) scored below the State average but above 30, and 13 schools (6%) scored at or below 30.

Accountability Rewards and Corrective Actions Results

- Based on the 2001 results, a majority (69% or a total of 799) elementary/middle and combination schools which either met or exceeded their Cycle I Growth Targets and became eligible to receive monetary rewards from an estimated \$10 million budgeted amount.
- The schools not achieving their required growth or identified as declining could have been placed in Corrective Actions. Currently, almost 15% of the total schools are in either Corrective Actions I or Corrective Actions II. Specifically, there are 181 schools (13.1%) in Corrective Actions I, while 25 schools (1.8%) are in Corrective Actions II.