

A Regional Analysis of K-12 Education Performance for the 2013-2014 School Year

Introduction

This year's education report card differs slightly from those BRAC has published in the past. Given the economic boom facing the Baton Rouge Area, the tremendous workforce need projected in jobs in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) industries, and the state's recent change to career and technical education through the Jump Start initiative, BRAC has chosen to include a more robust array of student achievement metrics to address both the college and career readiness outcomes for the area's public school systems.

Half of the Top Ten Districts in Louisiana Are Located in the Capital Region

The story about the changes in the Capital Region public education outcomes in 2014 was generally positive. The majority of Capital Region school districts, of which there are thirteen, achieved significant improvements in overall performance scores. The region, which in 2013 had four districts ranked in the top ten in the state and five districts ranked in the top twenty-five in the state, added a district to each category. This means that in 2014, half of Louisiana's top ten districts and nearly one-quarter of the top twenty-five districts were located in the nine-parish Capital Region.

This good news is tempered by the five area districts that still ranked in the bottom twenty-five districts in the state. Each of these bottom-ranked districts, however, saw improvement in their year-over-year score, with the most dramatic improvement taking place in the East Baton Rouge Recovery School District (RSD). Furthermore, growth in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS), which educates 36 percent of the Capital Region's public school children, remains slow at just one percent.

Change in Assessments and Scoring as Louisiana Transitions to Higher Standards

In Louisiana, as in every other state, students take a standardized test to measure whether they have met minimum benchmarks for their grade level, as set by the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). In 2010, Louisiana began transitioning to a new set of benchmarks called Common Core. The standardized tests for the 2013–2014 school year were in part based on the new standards, and in part based on the existing Grade Level Expectations (created in 2004). The test, as in prior years, was referred to as the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP). The scores on this exam form the basis for much of the achievement data in this report.

The new standards introduce a greater level of rigor to classroom content, address content in a way that prepares students for life after high school, and allow for more in-depth study of each topic. The test questions associated with the new content, and incorporated into the 2013-2014 LEAP exam, required students to do more critical thinking to reach the correct answers.

Figure 1: Common Core Aligned LEAP Tests

4th Grade English / Language Arts Under Prior Standards

In the spaces or on the lines below, write your answers to the following question for the news article, "Warning: Space Junk Ahead."

Use facts from the article to complete the chart below.

- Origin
- Size
- Velocity
- Destructive Power

4th Grade English / Language Arts Under Common Core Standards

You have read three texts describing Amelia Earhart. All three include the claim that Earhart was a brave, courageous person.

The three texts are:

- "Biography of Amelia Earhart"
- "Earhart's Final Resting Place Believed Found"
- "Amelia Earhart's Life and Disappearance"

Consider the argument each author uses to demonstrate Earhart's bravery. Write an essay that analyzes the strength of the arguments about Earhart's bravery in at least two of the texts. Remember to use textual evidence to support your idea.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education: CCSS Implementation, Oct. 2013

The Percentage of Students Who Are “At Grade Level” Determines a School’s Letter Grade Under the Louisiana Department Of Education’s School Rating System

These statewide standardized tests are graded on a five-point scale as follows:

1) unsatisfactory; **2)** approaching basic; **3)** basic; **4)** mastery; and **5)** advanced.

A basic score is required for advancement to the next grade, also known as being “at grade level.”

At a Louisiana elementary or middle school, where school performance scores are based almost entirely on statewide assessment scores, this means that an “A”-rated school is one at which nearly every student has achieved at least a score of basic. To put this in a broader perspective is a comparison with the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP is a test taken in every state by a statistically representative sample of students. The NAEP scoring comes in only three levels:

1) basic; **2)** proficient; and **3)** advanced. According to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE), a basic score on the LEAP exam is roughly equivalent to a basic score on the NAEP, while a mastery score on the LEAP roughly equates to a proficient score on the NAEP.

However, while Louisiana’s basic score definition states that such a score demonstrates a student has only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling, the basic score definition for the NAEP describes such a score as denoting only *partial* mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

This is, in part, why the LDE has set a policy goal for the next decade whereby “A”-rated schools will be those at which students are, on average, achieving at the mastery level.

Figure 2 “Basic” Explanation

Percentage of students who are at grade level	Letter Grade
88 – 100%	A
76 – 87%	B
64 – 75%	C
39 – 63%	D
0 – 38%	F

Source: Louisiana Department of Education

School Performance Scores Are Based On a Variety Of Factors, and This Year BESE Has Approved a Scale Developed for the Transition to Higher Classroom Standards

A variety of factors, focusing on student achievement, determines school performance scores (SPS). In the elementary and middle school levels, standardized statewide assessments determine the great majority of the school letter grade. In high school, two standardized tests are considered - the American College Test (ACT) and End of Course (EOC) tests in various subjects. Additionally considered at the high school level are the cohort graduation rate and the cohort graduation index, which takes into account achievement data including passing scores on college credit exams (i.e.: Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate). In addition, all schools can earn bonus points for making progress with students who have struggled academically.

Under the state's Jump Start initiative, discussed later in this report, districts have the opportunity to earn the same amount of points for students earning an advanced statewide career and technical certificate as they would for a student who earns a 3 or higher (out of 5) on an Advanced Placement exam. Students earning a basic statewide career and technical certificate provide the district with the same number of points as do students earning a 1 or 2 on an Advanced Placement exam.

Figure 3: SPS Comparison Chart

SPS Calculations for 2013-2014 School Year

- K-6 Schools
 - LEAP Assessment Index (100%)
- Middle Schools (grades 7 – 8)
 - Credits earned through the end of the 9th grade (5%) + Assessment Index (95%)
- 9-12 Schools
 - ACT index (25%) + End of Course Test Index (25%) + Graduation Index (25%) + Graduation Cohort Rate (25%)

Grade	2011-2012 Scale	2012-2015 Scale (Elementary Schools)	2012-2015 Scale (High Schools)
A	100.0 – 150.0	100.0 – 150.0	100.0 – 150.0
B	85.0 – 99.9	83.9 – 99.9	84.3 – 99.9
C	70.0 – 84.9	66.2 – 83.8	70.0 – 84.9
D	50.0 – 69.9	45.2 – 66.1	47.1 – 69.9
F	0.0 – 49.9	0.0 – 45.1	0.0 – 47.0

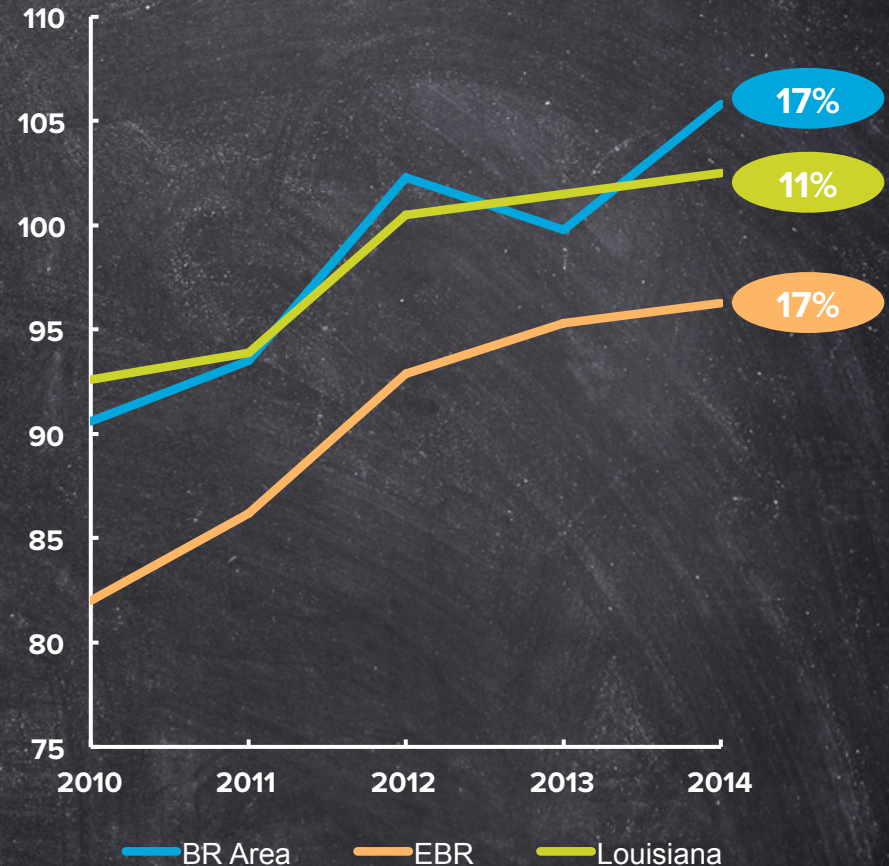
Source: Louisiana Department of Education

The Baton Rouge Area Continues To Improve with Growth Outpacing the State Average In 2014

To arrive at a district performance score (DPS), the LDE uses the same formula as for school performance scores, but uses just one year of data, treating each district as if it were just one large school. Over the past five years, the Baton Rouge Area has improved its district performance score by 17 percent. In the 2009 – 2010 school year, the region averaged at the very bottom of the scale for a “C” district. During the 2013-2014 school year, the region broke through to the next level, averaging a “B.” Improvement in the EBRPSS, the area’s largest district (serving over 42,000 students) slowed this year, but matched the state average of one percent.

The 2013 – 2014 school year was a tremendous year for progress in achievement by many of the area’s districts, with the region’s average score improving by 6 percent. Furthermore, all but one of the Capital Region’s districts improved, and nine of the total thirteen improved by at least 5 percent.

Figure 4: DPS Growth 2010 – 2014



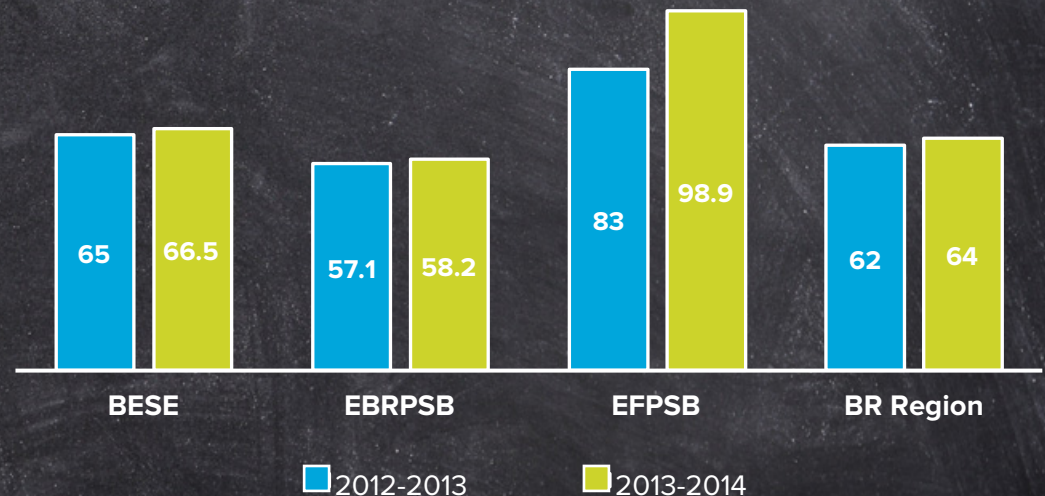
*BR Area’s score is the average of the DPS scores of all districts in the MSA
Source: Louisiana Department of Education; BRAC analysis

Charter School Performance in the Capital Region Remains Steady but Needs Improvement

The Capital Region is home to twenty-five charter schools. Of these, one is located in Iberville Parish and one is located in East Feliciana Parish. The charter school in Iberville was authorized by BESE, while the charter school in East Feliciana was authorized by the East Feliciana Parish School Board. The remaining twenty-three charter schools are located in East Baton Rouge. Ten of these were authorized by the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board, the remaining thirteen were authorized by BESE. Several of these charter schools began operating in 2014, so they will not earn a SPS until the end of the 2014 – 2015 school year. They are excluded from the calculations in Figure 5.

The average school performance score for a charter school in the Capital Region was 64, or a “D”-rating. The single charter school located in East Feliciana has an SPS of 98.9, just over one point away from an “A”-rating. Charter schools authorized by BESE average a score of 66.5 (“D”), similar to the region’s overall charter SPS. Those charter schools authorized by the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board fare slightly worse at an SPS of 58.2, also a “D” rating.

Figure 5: Average Charter School Performance Score by Charter Authorizer



Source: Louisiana Department of Education; BRAC analysis

Inequity Exists Despite Significant Performance Growth

The four-point increase in average DPS for the Baton Rouge Area's districts translates to 6 percent overall. This increase was facilitated in part by a big jump by the East Baton Rouge RSD, which increased its score by seven points, or 16 percent. The East Baton Rouge Parish School System continues to hover just under the score required to become a "B" rated district, remaining just four points away from meeting that goal.

Capital Region districts still span the gamut from very high performing to very low performing. Zachary Community Schools remains in the top spot, a position it has occupied for a full decade. The East Baton Rouge RSD and the St. Helena School District round out the bottom of the state rankings at seventy-one and seventy-three of seventy-four, respectively. In part, St. Helena's increase is due to the closure of St. Helena Middle School, the performance score of which deflated the district's overall score.

Figure 6: Key Baton Rouge Area Achievement Growth

- The region's average score improved by 6%, compared to 1% for the state
- Five districts ranked in the top ten in LA
- Twelve of 13 Capital Region districts improved their scores
- Central overtook Ascension as the #2 school district in the area
- Livingston posted the highest overall gain
- Three districts improved by a full letter grade, including Livingston, St. Helena, and the Recovery School District – EBR
- East Baton Rouge and Baker saw the least growth at 1% each, and West Feliciana fell slightly
- Nine of 13 districts saw growth of at least 5%
- Nine of 13 districts improved in the statewide ranking

Figure 7: Public School Districts Comprising the Baton Rouge Area



*Indicates districts / parishes in which at least one charter school is located

**Included only when data is available

Figure 8: DPS Scores for the 2013-2014 School Years

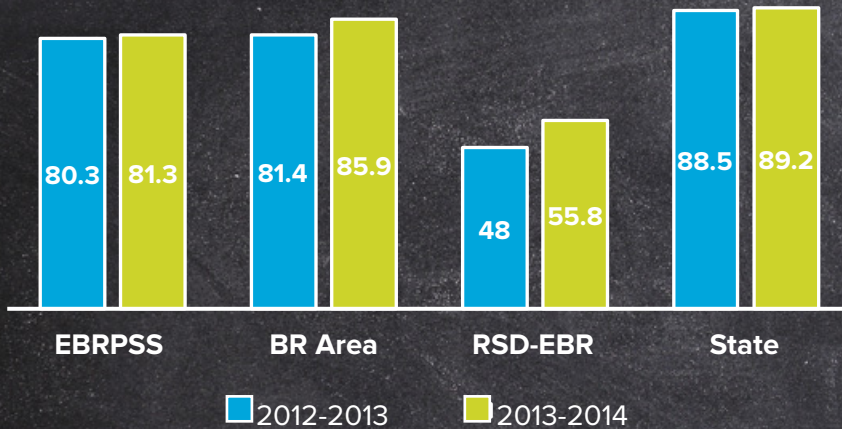


Figure 9: Baton Rouge Area 2014 District Rankings

District	DPS	Grade	Rank (of 74)	Rank Change from 2013
Zachary	114.4	A	1	same
Central	108.2	A	3	↑6
Ascension	106.9	A	4	↓1
Livingston	103.0	A	9	↑8
W. Feliciana	102.4	A	10	↓3
WBR	91.1	B	25	↑9
Iberville	83.0	C	44	↑4
EBR	81.3	C	46	↓1
Pointe Coupee	78.8	C	51	↑6
E. Feliciana	77.5	C	53	↑5
Baker	63.4	D	67	↑1
RSD – EBR	55.8	D	71	↑2
St. Helena	51.4	D	73	↑1

Figure 10: District Performance Score Ranges

Letter Grade	DPS Range
A	100 – 150
B	85.0 - 99.9
C	70.0 - 84.9
D	50.0 - 69.9
F	Below 50

Source: Louisiana Department of Education; BRAC analysis

The Region Improved Overall Last Year, Spurred By Significant Improvement in 70 Percent of the Region's Districts

The significant growth of Capital Region districts is highlighted in Figure 11, which compares DPS scores, letter grades, and rankings for the 2012 – 2013 and 2013 – 2014 school years. All but four districts improved their DPS scores over last year's by at least 5 percent, and three districts improved 13 percent or more.

Figure 11: 2013 and 2014 DPS Scores, Growth, and District Rankings

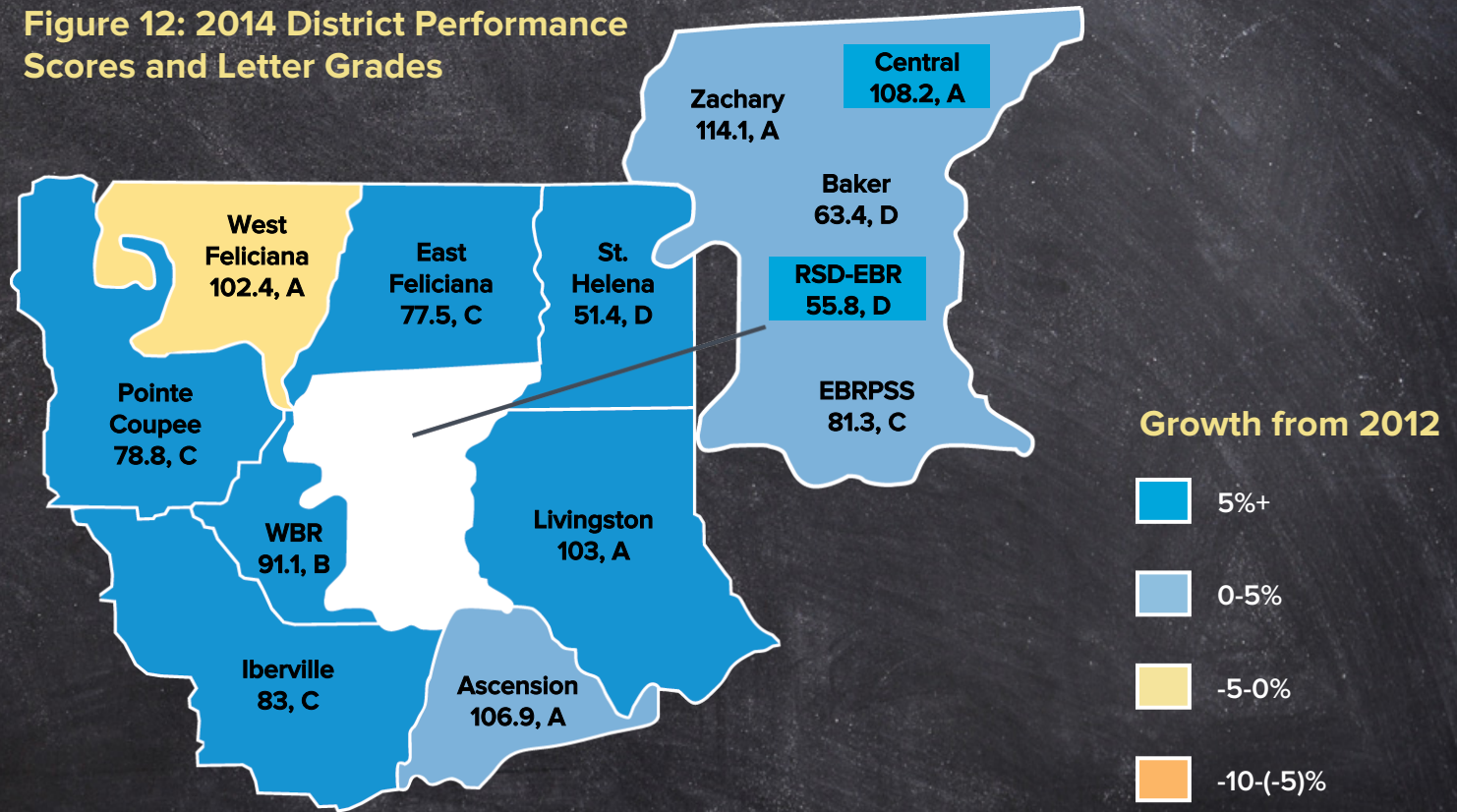
District	2013 DPS	2014 DPS	2014 Growth (pts.)	2014 Growth (%)	2013 Grade	2014 Grade	2013 Rank (of 74)	2014 Rank (of 74)
Zachary	109.1	114.4	5.3	5%	A	A	1	1
Central	101.3	108.2	6.9	7%	A	A	9	3
Ascension	104.9	106.9	2.0	2%	A	A	3	4
Livingston	91.1	103.0	11.9	13%	B	A	17	9
W. Feliciana	103.1	102.4	-0.7	-1%	A	A	7	10
WBR	86.5	91.1	4.6	5%	B	B	34	25
Iberville	78.7	83	4.3	5%	C	C	48	44
EBR	80.3	81.3	1.0	1%	C	C	45	46
Pointe Coupee	73.8	78.8	5.0	7%	C	C	57	51
E. Feliciana	72.9	77.5	4.6	6%	C	C	58	53
Baker	62.7	63.4	0.7	1%	D	D	68	67
RSD – EBR	48.0	55.8	7.8	16%	F	D	73	71
St. Helena	45.5	51.4	5.9	13%	F	D	74	73
Baton Rouge Area	81.4	85.9	4.6	6%	C	B	38	35

Source: Louisiana Department of Education; BRAC analysis

Performance Scores Grew Enough in Three Districts to Translate To Higher Letter Grades

The significant growth among the Capital Region districts has caused three of those districts to improve by a full letter grade. The level of growth among the area's districts is further revealed in Figure 12. RSD-EBR, Livingston, and St. Helena jumped up a letter grade.

Figure 12: 2014 District Performance Scores and Letter Grades



Source: Louisiana Department of Education

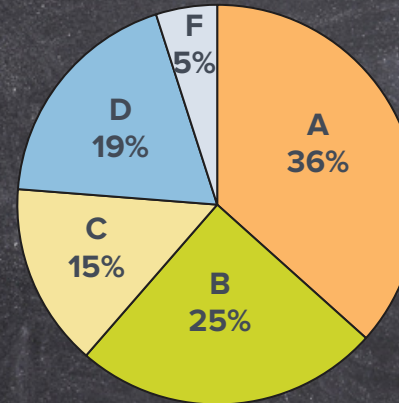
The Percentage of Students Attending A and B Schools Is Greater Than the Percentage of A and B Rated Schools

Sixty-one percent of Capital Region students attend one of the 110 “A” and “B” rated schools in the region. These highly rated schools make up 54 percent of all area public schools. The large proportion of students attending these high-performing schools emphasizes the demand from families for excellent education options.

In the EBRPSS, the percentage of students attending top-rated schools is 33 percent. These approximately 14,000 students attend twenty-seven of the eighty-four district (and district-approved charter) schools.

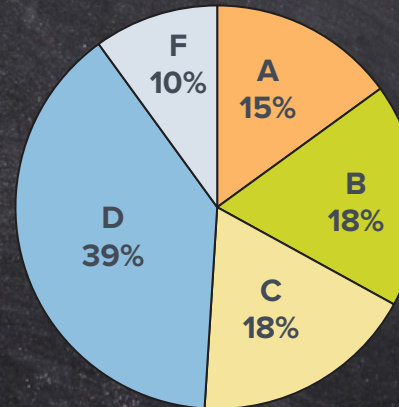
Figure 13: Percent of Students by 2014 SPS Letter Grade*

Baton Rouge Area



110 of 204 schools** (54%) in the Baton Rouge Region scored an A or B

East Baton Rouge Parish School System



27 of 84 schools** (32%) in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System scored an A or B

*Only students attending schools that received 2013 SPS letter grades are included

**Excludes RSD – EBR schools

Source: Louisiana Department of Education; BRAC Analysis

Almost Half of Students In EBRPSS Continue To Attend Underperforming Schools

The other half of the story of students attending top-ranked schools translates into nearly three of every ten Capital Region students attending a “D” or “F” rated school. In EBRPSS, nearly five of every ten students attends a bottom-rated school. This is a slight increase over last year. Between 2011 and 2013, the percentage of students attending D and F schools in EBRPSS went from 67 percent to 41 percent. For the 2013 – 2014 school year, the percentage is up to 48 percent.

The EBRPSS chose to create several alternative schools in the 2013 – 2014 school year, most of which are rated “F.” These schools serve students who are overage, have disciplinary difficulties, or who learn better outside a traditional setting. This programmatic change has created more schools within the system rated as “F,” but the schools have relatively low enrollment numbers. The district’s policy for alternative schools gives the appearance of having more “F” schools, but these school target troubled students by design.

Figure 14: Students Attending D or F Schools

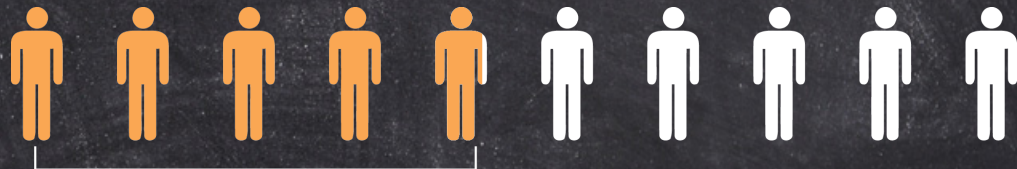
Baton Rouge Area (61 schools)**

27,261 out of 115,863*, or nearly 3 out of every 10 BR Area students, attend D or F schools



East Baton Rouge Parish School System (42 schools)

20,275 out of 41,844*, or nearly 5 out of every 10 EBR students, attend D or F schools



*Students not counted in total if school’s 2013-2014 SPS data or February 2014 enrollment data was unavailable

**Excludes RSD – EBR Schools

Source: LA Department of Education; BRAC analysis

EBRPSS' Top Schools Remain Primarily Magnets and Programs Remain in High Demand

Of the top 10 percent of EBRPSS schools, three-quarters are magnet schools, meaning they offer special programs and services designed to draw a more diverse student body to enroll. These magnet schools also practice selective admission, demanding a minimum GPA and other prerequisites, depending on the program. For many years, EBRPSS' best-performing schools have primarily been magnet schools.

Figure 15: EBRPSS School and Rank

School & EBRPSS Rank	2012-2013 SPS Score	Letter Grade	Selective	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	State Rank of 1,311
1. Baton Rouge Magnet HS	130.1	A	Yes	40%	12
2. Westdale Heights Academic	126.6	A	Yes	41%	17
3. Sherwood Middle Academic	121.9	A	Yes	56%	23
4. Mayfair Laboratory School	118.1	A	Yes	68%	34
5. BR Foreign Language Acad	116.8	A	Yes	55%	40
6. BR Visual & Performing Arts Ctr	115.5	A	Yes	51%	46
7. Parkview Elementary	112.6	A		64%	63
8. Forest Heights Academy	112.4	A		78%	67
36. Woodlawn High School	75.4	C		66%	841
37. Bernard Terrace Elem. School	75.1	C		86%	849
38. Twin Oaks Elem. School	72.5	C		>95%	901
39. Capitol Elementary School	71.2	C		>95%	922
40. Ryan Elem. School	71.1	C		>95%	924
77. Northdale Supt. Academy	24.4	F		85%	1,282
78. Greenville Supt. Academy	21.8	F		>95%	1,288
79. EBR Readiness Supt. Academy	19.4	F		91%	1,291
80. Christa McAuliffe Supt. Acad.	17.5	F		>95%	1,293
81. Beechwood Supt. Academy	15.1	F		>95%	1,298
82. Career Academy	13.4	F		94%	1,301
83. Eden Park Supt. Academy	11.0	F		>95%	1,303
84. AMIKids Baton Rouge	5.9	F		94%	1,307

East Baton Rouge And Ascension Parishes Host the Region's Top-performing Schools; East Baton Rouge Hosts Most of the Region's Bottom-performing Schools

EBRPSS also leads the region in top-performing schools, taking six of the ten top slots. All six of the schools are magnet schools. Ascension Parish takes the other four top ten slots. Rounding out the bottom of the region's schools are eight EBRPSS schools, and one each from Livingston and Baker.

Figure 16: Regional School and Rank

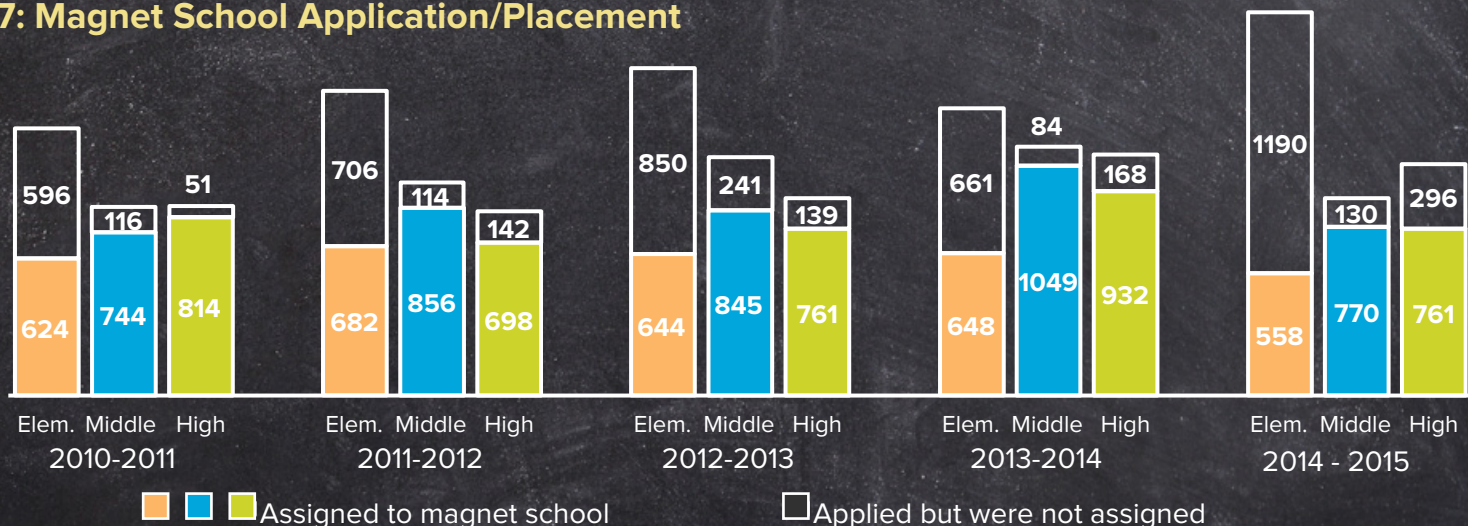
School & EBRPSS Rank	2013-2014 SPS Score	District	Letter Grade	Selective	% Free/ Reduced Lunch
1. Baton Rouge Magnet HS	130.1	EBRPSS	A	Yes	40%
2. Westdale Heights Academic	126.6	EBRPSS	A	Yes	41%
3. Sherwood Middle Academic	121.9	EBRPSS	A	Yes	56%
4. Mayfair Laboratory School	118.1	Ascension	A		27%
5. Mayfair Laboratory School	116.8	EBRPSS	A	Yes	68%
6. BR Foreign Language Academy	115.5	EBRPSS	A	Yes	55%
7. Oak Grove Primary School	112.6	Ascension	A		27%
8. BR Visual and Performing Arts Ctr	112.4	EBRPSS	A	Yes	51%
9. Galvez Primary School	75.4	Ascension	A		38%
10. Prairieville Primary School	75.1	Ascension	A		32%
194. Pine Ridge School	34.9	Livingston	F		70%
195. Bakerfield Elementary School	27.9	Baker	F		86%
196. Arlington Prep. Academy	24.6	EBRPSS	F		78%
197. Northdale Supt. Academy	24.4	EBRPSS	F		85%
198. Greenville Supt. Academy	21.8	EBRPSS	F		>95%
199. EBR Readiness Supt. Academy	19.4	EBRPSS	F		91%
200. Christa McAuliffe Supt. Aca.	17.5	EBRPSS	F		>95%
201. Beechwood Supt. Academy	15.1	EBRPSS	F		>95%
202. Career Academy	13.4	EBRPSS	F		94%
203. Eden Park Supt. Academy	11	EBRPSS	F		>95%
204. AMIKids Baton Rouge	5.9	EBRPSS	F		94%

Demand Continues To Exceed Supply For Magnet Schools

The demand for magnet programs at all grade levels remains strong, a reflection of parents looking to choose excellent public school options. As has been the trend, demand far outpaces supply, particularly at the elementary school level. This year, in particular, there was a 5 percent jump in the number of applicants to East Baton Rouge Parish’s magnet schools, and 68 percent of those applicants were not assigned to a magnet school. Although demand for elementary school magnet seats is higher than ever, and 33 percent higher than last year alone, approximately ninety less seats were assigned for the 2013-2014 school year than for each of the four school years preceding it.

Assuming all applicants for the magnet program met the required qualifications, there are enough elementary school applicants to fill 2.7 average-sized East Baton Rouge elementary schools.

Figure 17: Magnet School Application/Placement

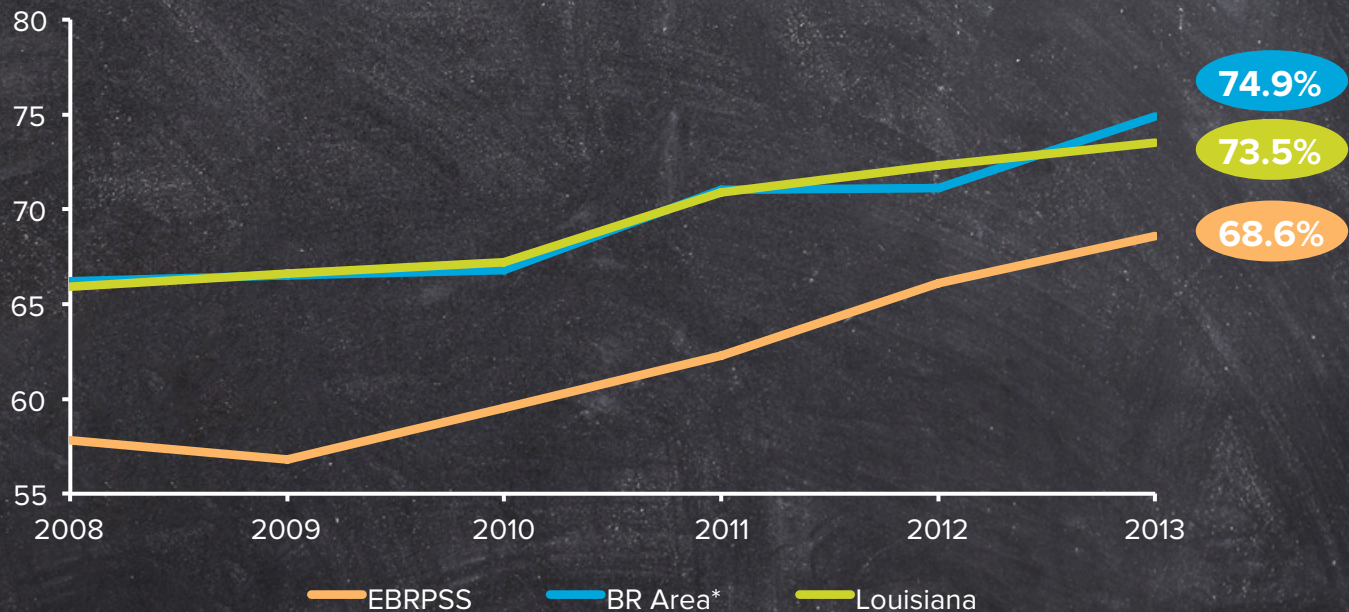


Source: “Analysis of Magnet School Lottery Data for School Years 2010-2015” by Joseph White Associates prepared for EBRPSS. Data is for the first round of applications only.

Graduation Rates in the Region Continue to Grow, Outpacing the State; EBRPSS Continues to Close the Gap in the Dropout Rate

The region as a whole turned around a slight decline between 2011 and 2012 and saw a three-point increase in 2013, beating out the state average for the first time since 2007. EBRPSS' graduation rate continues its slow and steady climb, but still trails both the region and the state, and its graduation rate ranks third from the bottom among the region's thirteen school districts, higher than only St. Helena and the RSD-EBR, both lower-ranked, D-rated districts.

Figure 18: Cohort Graduation Rates 2008-2013

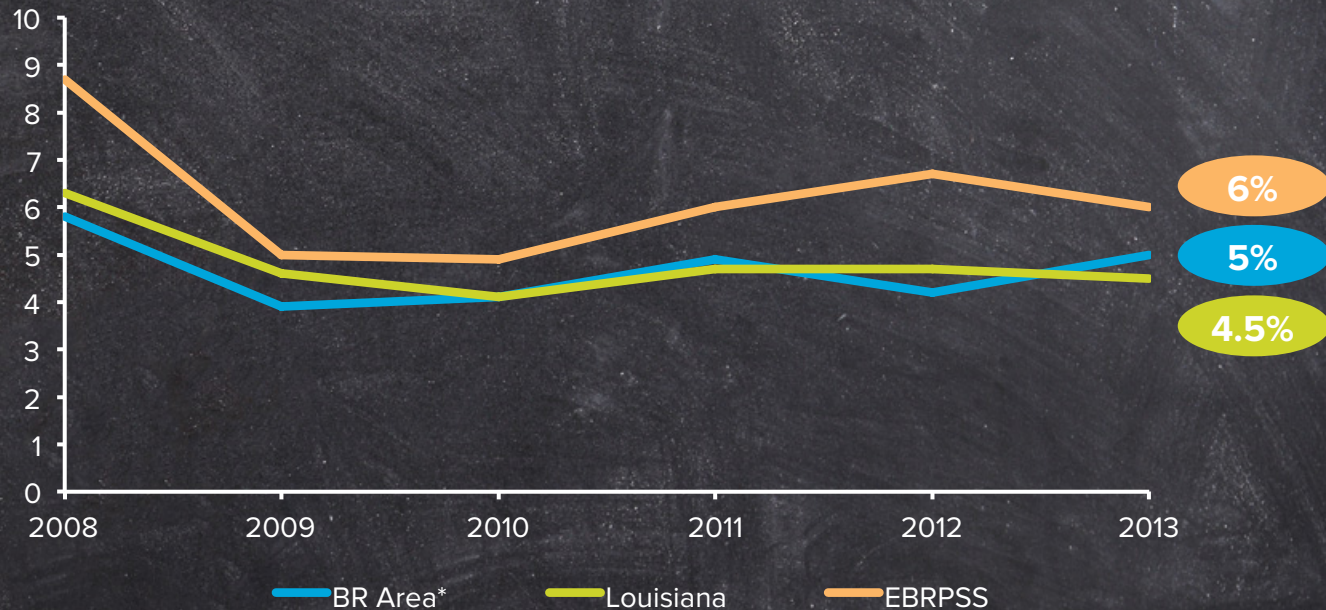


* Average Cohort Graduation Rate for the school districts in the Baton Rouge MSA
Source: LA Department of Education; BRAC analysis

Baton Rouge Area Drop Out Rate Increased; EBRPSS Rate Declined but Remains Higher Than the State And Regional Average

The annual dropout percentage shows the percent of students that drop out of school each year in grades nine through twelve. It does not show the dropout rate for a cohort of student (i.e.: the percent of a ninth grade class that drops out before finishing high school). The dropout rate rose slightly for the Baton Rouge Area as a whole, but dropped for EBRPSS. The region's largest school system saw a smaller dropout rate in 2013 after two years of increases.

Figure 19: Annual Dropout Percentages 2008-2013



* Average Annual Dropout Percentage for the school districts in the Baton Rouge MSA
Source: LA Department of Education; BRAC analysis

ACT Scores Remain Steady with Very Slight Increases Across the Capital Region

2013's higher regional graduation and dropout rates were accompanied in 2014 by steady public school ACT scores in the Baton Rouge Area. The state's average score dropped slightly, by just 0.3 points, while the Capital Region's score rose slightly, by just over half a point.

After a drop between 2012 and 2013, when the ACT became a mandatory exam for all high school juniors, the average ACT in EBRPSS has slightly increased in 2014.

Beginning in the next school year, high school students pursuing the career pathway diploma may take the ACT WorkKeys exam. ACT WorkKeys is a nationally recognized workforce readiness assessment. Scores on the exam will count toward SPS, similar to ACT scores. Students will still be required to take the ACT exam, but a higher WorkKeys exam score will substitute when determining SPS.

* Includes only public school students

** Includes both public and non-public school students

***includes all RSD schools outside NO

Source: Louisiana Department of Education; BRAC analysis

Figure 20: Average ACT Scores from 2009 to 2013

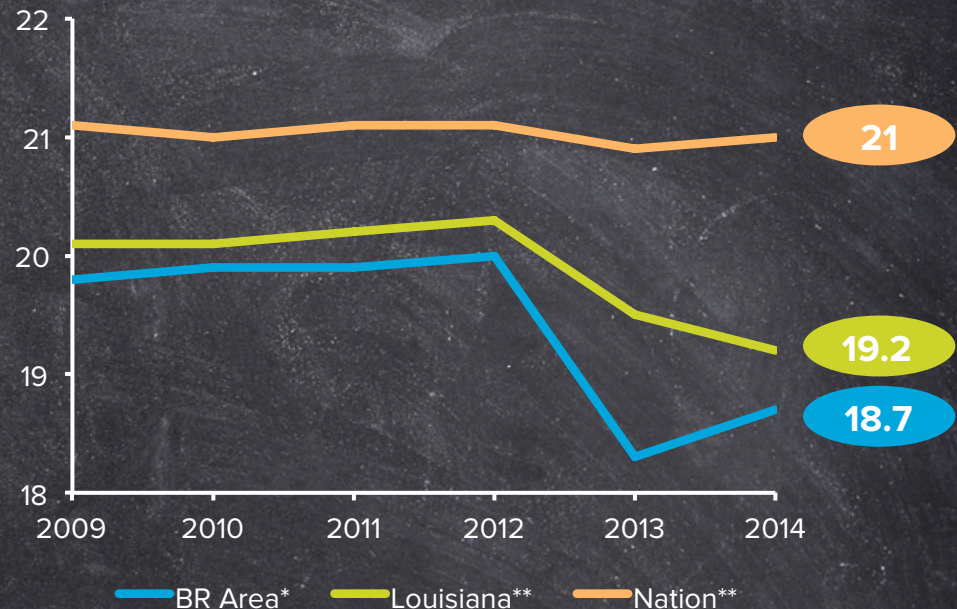


Figure 21: ACT Score Comparison

2014 ACT Composite Scores		
	2013	2014
Louisiana	19.5	19.2
EBRPSS	18.3	18.8
RSD-EBR	15.0	15.4***
BR Area	18.1	18.7

The Capital Region Lags In Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above Mastery on Leap Math and Science Scores

The Baton Rouge Area, and the state of Louisiana as a whole, is experiencing a manufacturing renaissance spurring an economic boom. The region's increase in economic opportunity is concentrated in STEM industries, which are creating jobs at a higher rate than non-STEM industries. Graduating high school students are encountering STEM career opportunities at every level of education, but particularly at the technical certificate and two-year post-secondary level. These jobs will require proficiency in the STEM subjects.

Unfortunately, achievement data in STEM subjects demonstrates that Capital Region students are not realizing STEM literacy at the needed level. Although nearly 40 percent of students achieved a mastery score or higher in 4th grade math, that number drops to 12 percent for 8th grade students. In science, just 17 percent of Capital Region 4th graders scored at or above the mastery level, and slightly more, 19 percent, achieved that score in 8th grade.

When it comes to STEM college and career readiness, ACT scores indicate that Louisiana and Capital Region students do not meet the national benchmarks. The 2013 benchmarks for math and science were 22 and 23, respectively. These benchmarks indicate that students have a 75 percent chance of achieving at least a "C" grade in the corresponding freshman year college class. Figure 23 demonstrates that both state and Capital Region district averages fall below these benchmarks.

Figure 22: Percent of Students at Mastery in LEAP STEM Subjects 2014

District	4 th Grade Math	8 th Grade Math	4 th Grade Science	8 th Grade Science
State	40%	12%	20%	21%
East Baton Rouge	33%	12%	15%	16%
RSD – EBR	13%	<1%	<1%	3%
BR Area	38%	12%	17%	19%

Figure 23: ACT STEM Subject Scores 2013

District	Math (benchmark: 22)	Science (benchmark: 23)
State	19.2	19.2
East Baton Rouge	18.4	17.9
RSD – EBR	15.7	14.4
BR Area	18.0	17.9

Source: LA Department of Education; BRAC analysis

Regional Career and Technical Education Leads in Developing Career Awareness Courses

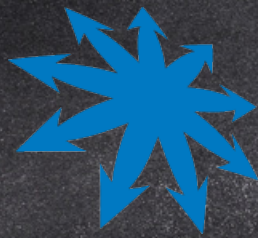
Addressing the needs of the state’s growing economy, the LDE has revamped career and technical education (CTE) through the Jump Start initiative. Jump Start serves to better connect CTE with the needs of the state’s regional economies. The initiative requires that businesses, community colleges, and school districts work together to provide career courses and workplace experiences to high school students. It also puts a system in place to provide accountability points (those that lead to School and District Performance Scores) for CTE courses that culminate in students achieving credentials that prepare them for high-growth, high-wage jobs. The jobs for which students can earn credentials under Jump Start have been identified by the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, a body of public and private stakeholders that creates strategic workforce development plans based on economic data and best practices.

The nine-parishes that make up the Baton Rouge Area are split among two regional teams: the Capital Region and the Northshore Region. The Capital Region team has been recognized by the LDE for developing CTE graduation pathways relevant to the regional economy, and for developing and deploying a new generation of career readiness courses. These career readiness courses are focused on providing the type of knowledge and skills students will need for success after high school, including practical literacies in both academic subject areas and real-world actions and broader competencies such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration.

Figure 24: Jump Start Teams / Activities

Capital Region Parish(es)	Team	Activity to Date
Ascension, Central, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana, Zachary	Capitol	Leader in terms of : 1) developing graduation pathways and a regional proposal; and 2) developing and deploying a new generation of Career Readiness courses
Livingston, St. Helena (also includes Bogalusa, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington)	Northshore	Graduation pathways under development, draft proposal in development

Source: LDE, BRAC analysis



Baton Rouge Area Chamber®

Looking Forward

The Baton Rouge Area's public school districts must begin preparing for the future. The educational landscape in the region and the state is changing to emphasize greater rigor, more relevancy to the workplace, and increased importance for skills in STEM fields. Several of the region's districts have made great strides, but more work is needed to ensure that all public school students receive an excellent education and the life opportunities that come along with it. BRAC will actively engage in advocacy for policies and initiatives that will improve education opportunities for students and will continue to report regional performance to the area's stakeholders.