

# Fewer Special Education Students In Charter Schools

**Dr. Barbara Ferguson  
Karran Harper Royal  
April 2010**

**Research on Reforms** is a nonprofit foundation, dedicated to improving New Orleans public schools through applied research. This research article was made possible, in part, with a grant from the **Community IMPACT Program at the Greater New Orleans Foundation**. *(To comment, please go to our website, [researchonreforms.org](http://researchonreforms.org).)*

~~~~~

Charter schools are supposed to provide special education students with the same opportunities for admission as they provide to regular students.<sup>i</sup> The culmination of the data shows, however, that New Orleans charter schools enroll significantly fewer special education students than do traditional schools.

Throughout this article, the term, “special education students,” means students with disabilities, excluding gifted and talented, and excluding speech, where noted. The following research questions are addressed:

**Part I:**

**Is the percentage of special education students who attend charter schools consistent with the percentage of the total number of students who attend charter schools in New Orleans?**

**Part II:**

**Do selective charters, open charters and traditional schools all enroll their proportionate share of special education students?**

**Part III:**

**How many special education students attend each New Orleans school?**

**Data Sources and Definition of Terms:**

Data Sources: Two separate databases from the Louisiana State Department of Education were used to collect data on regular student enrollment and special education student enrollment.<sup>ii</sup> Unfortunately, the state’s database on regular student enrollment, SIS (Student Information System), does not interface with the state’s database on special education student enrollment, SER (Special Education Reporting).<sup>iii</sup> The reason is not due to confidentiality purposes since the information from the database on special education provides only a count, and the count is not given when the number of students is less than ten (10). Also, the regular student enrollment database (SIS) is available through the Department of Education’s website, whereas the special education student enrollment database (SER) is not available on the site.

Thus, the sources of data are the two databases, SIS and SER, and the date of each data count, from each respective database, is October 1, 2009.

The regular student enrollment data from the SIS database includes grades kindergarten through twelfth. The special education database includes those same grades, and includes students with disabilities, such as, autism, deaf-blind, emotional, hearing impairment, mental disability, orthopedic, specific learning, visual impairment. The special education database also includes speech, which is not included in this research, except where noted that it is a part of the calculation. The special education data does not include the gifted and talented category.

Abbreviations:

OPSB: Orleans Parish School Board

RSD: Recovery School District

BESE: Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Part I: Is the percentage of special education students who attend charter schools consistent with the percentage of the total number of students who attend charter schools in New Orleans?**

**Answer: No. 68% of New Orleans students attend charter schools, and only 54% of special education students attend charter schools.**

The total number of all students who were enrolled in the New Orleans schools, on the October 1, 2009 count, was 38,724 students.<sup>iv</sup> At that time the count of special education students (excluding gifted and talented, and speech) was 2,527.

The breakdown of regular student enrollment by charter schools and traditional schools is given in Table 1. This table includes, also, the breakdown of special education student enrollment by charter schools and traditional schools.

The data shows that 68% of all students attend charter schools, and 32 % attend traditional schools. The charter schools enroll 54% of all special education students, and the traditional schools enroll 46% of the special education students.

Thus, traditional schools continue to enroll more special education students, per student population, than do charter schools.

**Table 1:** Percent of all students who attend charter schools and traditional schools.

Percent of special education students who attend charter schools and traditional schools:

|                                | Total Student Enrollment | % of Enrollment | Special Education Enrollment Excluding Speech | % Special Education Enrollment Excluding Speech |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>All Charter Schools</b>     | 26,507                   | <b>68%</b>      | 1,376                                         | <b>54%</b>                                      |
| <b>All Traditional Schools</b> | 12,217                   | <b>32%</b>      | 1,151                                         | <b>46%</b>                                      |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>38,724</b>            |                 | <b>2,527</b>                                  |                                                 |

Conclusions:

- Charter schools enroll 68% of all students, and 54% of special education students.
- Traditional schools enroll 32% of all students, and 46% of special education students.

**Part II: Do selective charters, open charters and traditional schools all enroll their proportionate share of special education students?**

**Answer:** No. To enroll their proportionate share of special education students would mean that they would each enroll 7% of their student population. Instead, 3% of special education students are enrolled in selective charters, 6% are enrolled in open charters, and 9% are enrolled in traditional schools.

Definition of Terms:

- Selective Charters: Charter schools that select students through an admissions process and/or that remove students through a process defined by the school.<sup>v</sup>
- Open Charters: Charters that do not select students; admission is open to all students.
- Traditional Schools: Schools open to all students and operated through the traditional central office system.

All charter schools in New Orleans do not have open enrollment. Selective charter schools have conditioned enrollment, meaning that the student's initial enrollment and/or continued enrollment is conditioned upon his/her academics, behavior and/or parent participation. <sup>vi</sup>

On the October 1, 2009 count, 38,724 students were enrolled in New Orleans schools. Table 2 (below) gives the percent of the 38,724 students who attended the selective charter schools, the open charter schools and the traditional schools.

Table 2: Total student enrollment on October 1, 2009 in selective charters, open charters, and traditional schools.

| Student Enrollment                | New Orleans Schools       |                      |                     | Total Enrollment |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
|                                   | Selective Charter Schools | Open Charter Schools | Traditional Schools |                  |
| OPSB: Orleans Parish School Board | 3,748                     | 3,797                | 2,742               | 10,287           |
| RSD: Recovery School District     | 1,296                     | 16,748               | 9,475               | 27,519           |
| BESE: Bd of Elem and Sec Educ     | 0                         | 918                  | 0                   | 918              |
| Total                             | 5,044                     | 21,463               | 12,217              | 38,724           |
| Percent of Total Enrollment       | 13%                       | 55%                  | 32%                 |                  |

Of the 38,724 students who were enrolled in the New Orleans schools on October 1, 2009:

- 13% attended selective charter schools,
- 55% attended open charter schools, and
- 32% attended traditional schools.

The October 1, 2009 count shows that 2,572 special education students were enrolled in New Orleans schools. The 2,572 students account for 7% of the total student population. (See Table 3). Of the 2,527 special education students, 3% were enrolled in selective charters, 6% were enrolled in open charters, and 9% were enrolled in traditional schools. (See Table 4).

**Table 3:** Total Enrollment and Percent of Special Education Students

| % Special Education Students per Total Enrollment |                                    |                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Total student enrollment                          | Total special education enrollment | % Special Education of Total Enrollment |
| 38,724                                            | 2,527                              | 7%                                      |

**Table 4:** Total student enrollment and special education student enrollment in selective charters, open charters, and traditional schools.

| % Special Education Students per respective enrollment of selective charters, open charters, and traditional schools |                  |                                    |                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                      | Total Enrollment | Special Education Excluding Speech | % Special Education Excluding Speech |
| Selective Charters                                                                                                   | 5,044            | 150                                | 3%                                   |
| Open Charters                                                                                                        | 21,463           | 1,226                              | 6%                                   |
| Traditional Schools                                                                                                  | 12,217           | 1151                               | 9%                                   |

**Conclusions:**

In the total population of New Orleans students, 7% are special education students. These special education students are distributed as follows:

- 3% are in selective charter schools.
- 6% are in open charter schools.
- 9% are in traditional schools.

*In selective charter schools, 3 out of 100 students have disabilities.*

*In open charter schools, 6 out of 100 students have disabilities.*

*In traditional schools, 9 out of 100 students have disabilities.*

**Part III: How many special education students attend each New Orleans school?**

**Answer:** The percentages are given in Tables 5-6. Some schools have no special education students, and others, excluding alternative schools, have as high as 18% special education students.

## Special Education Summary Data: October 1, 2009

The summary special education data is found in the following tables:

- Table 5A: Selective Charters
- Table 5B: Open Charters
- Table 5C: Traditional Schools

### Summary Data

**Table 5A**

| Selective Charters             |                  | New Orleans Schools |                     |                                    | October 1, 2009                      |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                | Total Enrollment | Special Education   | % Special Education | Special Education Excluding Speech | % Special Education Excluding Speech |
| OPBS: Orleans Parish School Bd | 3,748            | 137                 | 4%                  | 66                                 | 2%                                   |
| RSD: Recovery School District  | 1,296            | 118                 | 9%                  | 84                                 | 6%                                   |
| BESE: Bd of Elem and Sec Educ  | 0                | 0                   | 0%                  | 0                                  | 0%                                   |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>5,044</b>     | <b>255</b>          | <b>5%</b>           | <b>150</b>                         | <b>3%</b>                            |

**Table 5B**

| Open Charters                  |                  | New Orleans Schools |                     |                                    | October 1, 2009                      |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                | Total Enrollment | Special Education   | % Special Education | Special Education Excluding Speech | % Special Education Excluding Speech |
| OPBS: Orleans Parish School Bd | 3,797            | 245                 | 6%                  | 162                                | 4%                                   |
| RSD: Recovery School District  | 16,748           | 1,418               | 8%                  | 1,050                              | 6%                                   |
| BESE: Bd of Elem and Sec Educ  | 918              | 28                  | 3%                  | 14                                 | 2%                                   |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>21,463</b>    | <b>1,691</b>        | <b>8%</b>           | <b>1,226</b>                       | <b>6%</b>                            |

**Table 5C**

| Traditional Schools            |                  | New Orleans Schools |                     |                                    | October 1, 2009                      |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                | Total Enrollment | Special Education   | % Special Education | Special Education Excluding Speech | % Special Education Excluding Speech |
| OPBS: Orleans Parish School Bd | 2,742            | 236                 | 9%                  | 185                                | 7%                                   |
| RSD: Recovery School District  | 9,475            | 1,168               | 12%                 | 966                                | 10%                                  |
| BESE: Bd of Elem and Sec Educ  | 0                | 0                   | 0%                  | 0                                  | 0%                                   |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>12,217</b>    | <b>1,404</b>        | <b>11%</b>          | <b>1,151</b>                       | <b>9%</b>                            |

## Special Education School Site Data: October 1, 2009

### School Site Data

The special education school site data is found in the following tables:

- Table 6A: Orleans Parish School Board – Selective Charters
- Table 6B: Orleans Parish School Board – Open Charters
- Table 6C: Orleans Parish School Board – Traditional Schools
- Table 6D: Recovery School District – Selective Charters
- Table 6E: Recovery School District – Open Charters
- Table 6F: Recovery School District – Traditional Schools
- Table 6G: Board of Elementary and Secondary Education – Open Charters

**Table 6A: Orleans Parish School Board – Selective Charters**

|   | School Code and Name                     | District | Type    | Enrollment includes K | Special Educ | % Spec Educ | Spec Educ Excluding Speech | % Spec Educ Excluding Speech |
|---|------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 036005: Audubon Charter School           | OPBS     | Charter | 770                   | 32           | 4%          | 10                         | 1%                           |
| 2 | 036035: Warren Easton Senior High School | OPBS     | Charter | 849                   | 33           | 4%          | 33                         | 4%                           |
| 3 | 036043: Benjamin Franklin High School    | OPBS     | Charter | 609                   | NR           | 0%          | NR                         | 0%                           |
| 4 | 036079: Lusher Charter School            | OPBS     | Charter | 1,520                 | 72           | 5%          | 23                         | 2%                           |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>                             |          |         | <b>3,748</b>          | <b>137</b>   | <b>4%</b>   | <b>66</b>                  | <b>2%</b>                    |

**Table 6B: Orleans Parish School Board – Open Charters**

|   | School Code and Name                                   | District | Type    | Enrollment includes K | Special Educ | % Spec Educ | Spec Educ Excluding Speech | % Spec Educ Excluding Speech |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 036013: Einstein Charter School                        | OPBS     | Charter | 452                   | 50           | 11%         | 28                         | 6%                           |
| 2 | 036056: Alice Harte Elementary Charter School          | OPBS     | Charter | 615                   | 66           | 11%         | 45                         | 7%                           |
| 3 | 036060: Edward Hynes Charter School                    | OPBS     | Charter | 485                   | 43           | 9%          | 15                         | 3%                           |
| 4 | 036064: Edna Karr Secondary School                     | OPBS     | Charter | 843                   | 31           | 4%          | 31                         | 4%                           |
| 5 | 036073: Priestley School of Architecture/Construction  | OPBS     | Charter | 308                   | 17           | 6%          | 17                         | 6%                           |
| 6 | 036149: Robert Russa Moton Charter School              | OPBS     | Charter | 279                   | NR           | 0%          | NR                         | 0%                           |
| 7 | 036158: Lake Forest Elementary Charter School          | OPBS     | Charter | 442                   | 18           | 4%          | 6                          | 1%                           |
| 8 | 036163: New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics HS | OPBS     | Charter | 373                   | 20           | 5%          | 20                         | 5%                           |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>                                           |          |         | <b>3,797</b>          | <b>245</b>   | <b>6%</b>   | <b>162</b>                 | <b>4%</b>                    |

**Table 6C - Orleans Parish School Board – Traditional Schools**

|   | School Code and Name                                  | District | Type        | Enrollment includes K | Special Educ | % Spec Educ | Spec Educ Excluding Speech | % Spec Educ Excluding Speech |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 036011: Mary Bethune Elementary Literature/Technology | OPBS     | Traditional | 345                   | 58           | 17%         | 36                         | 10%                          |
| 2 | 036088: McDonogh #35 Senior High School               | OPBS     | Traditional | 1,008                 | 70           | 7%          | 70                         | 7%                           |
| 3 | 036096: Eleanor McMain Secondary School               | OPBS     | Traditional | 707                   | 34           | 5%          | 34                         | 5%                           |
| 4 | 036132: Youth Study Center                            | OPBS     | Traditional | 28                    | NR           | 0%          | NR                         | 0%                           |
| 5 | 036157: The Alternative Learning Institute            | OPBS     | Traditional | 69                    | NR           | 0%          | NR                         | 0%                           |
| 6 | 036161: Benjamin Franklin Elem. Math-Science Magnet   | OPBS     | Traditional | 585                   | 74           | 13%         | 45                         | 8%                           |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>                                          |          |             | <b>2,742</b>          | <b>236</b>   | <b>9%</b>   | <b>185</b>                 | <b>7%</b>                    |

**Table 6D - Recovery School District – Selective Charters**

|   | School Code and Name                                  | District | Type    | Enrollment includes K | Special Educ | % Spec Educ | Spec Educ Excluding Speech | % Spec Educ Excluding Speech |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 398001: KIPP Believe College Prep (Phillips)          | RSD      | Charter | 333                   | 26           | 8%          | 26                         | 8%                           |
| 2 | 398002: KIPP McDonogh 15 School for the Creative Arts | RSD      | Charter | 480                   | 59           | 12%         | 35                         | 7%                           |
| 3 | 398003: KIPP Central City Academy                     | RSD      | Charter | 288                   | 20           | 7%          | 20                         | 7%                           |
| 4 | 398004: KIPP Central City Primary                     | RSD      | Charter | 195                   | 13           | 7%          | 3                          | 2%                           |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>                                          |          |         | 1,296                 | 118          | 9%          | 84                         | 6%                           |

**Table 6E: Recovery School District – Open Charters**

|    | School Code and Name                                  | District | Type    | Enrollment includes K | Special Educ | %Spec Educ | Spec Educ Excluding Speech | % Spec Educ Excluding Speech |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | 300001: P. A. Capdau School                           | RSD      | Charter | 426                   | 20           | 5%         | 20                         | 5%                           |
| 2  | 300002: Nelson Elementary School                      | RSD      | Charter | 413                   | 36           | 9%         | 21                         | 5%                           |
| 3  | 300003: Thurgood Marshall Early College High School   | RSD      | Charter | 377                   | 22           | 6%         | 22                         | 6%                           |
| 4  | 337001: Belle Chasse Academy                          | RSD      | Charter | 847                   | 70           | 8%         | 48                         | 6%                           |
| 5  | 373001: Arise Academy                                 | RSD      | Charter | 198                   | 0            | 0%         | 0                          | 0%                           |
| 6  | 374001: Success Preparatory Academy                   | RSD      | Charter | 238                   | 21           | 9%         | 10                         | 4%                           |
| 7  | 375001: Benjamin E. Mays Preparatory School           | RSD      | Charter | 140                   | 16           | 11%        | 1                          | 1%                           |
| 8  | 376001: Pride College Preparatory Academy             | RSD      | Charter | 132                   | 15           | 11%        | 4                          | 3%                           |
| 9  | 379001: Crocker Arts and Technology School            | RSD      | Charter | 174                   | NR           | 0%         | NR                         | 0%                           |
| 10 | 380001: The Intercultural Charter School              | RSD      | Charter | 296                   | 21           | 7%         | 21                         | 7%                           |
| 11 | 381001: Akili Academy of New Orleans                  | RSD      | Charter | 166                   | 14           | 8%         | 14                         | 8%                           |
| 12 | 382001: N.O. Charter Science and Math Academy         | RSD      | Charter | 151                   | 24           | 16%        | 24                         | 16%                          |
| 13 | 383001: Sojourner Truth Academy                       | RSD      | Charter | 183                   | 22           | 12%        | 22                         | 12%                          |
| 14 | 384001: Miller-McCoy Academy                          | RSD      | Charter | 388                   | 27           | 7%         | 27                         | 7%                           |
| 15 | 385001: NOLA College Prep Charter School              | RSD      | Charter | 441                   | 43           | 10%        | 26                         | 6%                           |
| 16 | 386001: A.D. Crossman-Esperanza Charter School        | RSD      | Charter | 332                   | 21           | 6%         | 21                         | 6%                           |
| 17 | 387001: Langston Hughes Academy Charter School        | RSD      | Charter | 488                   | 43           | 9%         | 27                         | 6%                           |
| 18 | 388001: Andrew H. Wilson Charter School               | RSD      | Charter | 525                   | 52           | 10%        | 29                         | 6%                           |
| 19 | 389001: Abramson Science & Technology Charter Sch     | RSD      | Charter | 491                   | 22           | 4%         | 22                         | 4%                           |
| 20 | 390001: James M. Singleton Charter School             | RSD      | Charter | 617                   | 38           | 6%         | 26                         | 4%                           |
| 21 | 391001: Dr. M.L.K. Charter School for Science & Tech. | RSD      | Charter | 700                   | 39           | 6%         | 19                         | 3%                           |
| 22 | 392001: McDonogh #28 City Park Academy                | RSD      | Charter | 372                   | 19           | 5%         | 19                         | 5%                           |
| 23 | 393001: Lafayette Academy of New Orleans              | RSD      | Charter | 778                   | 83           | 11%        | 62                         | 8%                           |

|    |                                                      |     |         |               |              |           |              |           |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| 24 | 394003: McDonogh #42 Elem Charter School             | RSD | Charter | 527           | 24           | 5%        | 24           | 5%        |
| 25 | 395001: Martin Behrman Elementary School             | RSD | Charter | 613           | 48           | 8%        | 30           | 5%        |
| 26 | 395002: Dwight D. Eisenhower Elem School             | RSD | Charter | 594           | 49           | 8%        | 33           | 6%        |
| 27 | 395003: William J. Fischer Elementary School         | RSD | Charter | 451           | 26           | 6%        | 26           | 6%        |
| 28 | 395004: McDonogh #32 Elementary School               | RSD | Charter | 569           | 56           | 10%       | 37           | 7%        |
| 29 | 395005: O.P. Walker Senior High School               | RSD | Charter | 857           | 87           | 10%       | 87           | 10%       |
| 30 | 395006: Harriet Tubman Elementary School             | RSD | Charter | 471           | 49           | 10%       | 24           | 5%        |
| 31 | 395007: Algiers Technology Academy                   | RSD | Charter | 347           | 27           | 8%        | 27           | 8%        |
| 32 | 396005: John Dibert Elementary School                | RSD | Charter | 358           | 42           | 12%       | 32           | 9%        |
| 33 | 396013: Laurel Elementary School                     | RSD | Charter | 533           | 74           | 14%       | 44           | 8%        |
| 34 | 396014: Live Oak Elementary School                   | RSD | Charter | 488           | 68           | 14%       | 55           | 11%       |
| 35 | 396030: Harney Elementary School                     | RSD | Charter | 419           | 50           | 12%       | 37           | 9%        |
| 36 | 396036: Excel Academy                                | RSD | Charter | 68            | NR           | 0%        | NR           | 0%        |
| 37 | 396040: Gentilly Terrace Elementary School           | RSD | Charter | 416           | 23           | 6%        | 23           | 6%        |
| 38 | 396042: International High School                    | RSD | Charter | 115           | NR           | 0%        | NR           | 0%        |
| 39 | 397001: Sophie B. Wright Inst.of Academic Excellence | RSD | Charter | 348           | 24           | 7%        | 13           | 4%        |
| 40 | 399001: Samuel J. Green Charter School               | RSD | Charter | 460           | 53           | 12%       | 35           | 8%        |
| 41 | 399002: Arthur Ashe Charter School                   | RSD | Charter | 241           | 50           | 21%       | 38           | 16%       |
|    | <b>TOTAL</b>                                         |     |         | <b>16,748</b> | <b>1,418</b> | <b>8%</b> | <b>1,050</b> | <b>6%</b> |

**Table 6F: Recovery School District – Traditional Schools**

|    | School Code and Name                         | District | Type        | Enrollment includes K | Special Educ | %Spec Educ | Spec Educ Excluding Speech | % Spec Educ Excluding Speech |
|----|----------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | 396001: Joseph A. Craig School               | RSD      | Traditional | 539                   | 65           | 12%        | 48                         | 9%                           |
| 2  | 396002: Joseph S. Clark Senior High School   | RSD      | Traditional | 284                   | 48           | 17%        | 48                         | 17%                          |
| 3  | 396003: Benjamin Banneker Elem School        | RSD      | Traditional | 504                   | 75           | 15%        | 52                         | 10%                          |
| 4  | 396004: Walter L. Cohen High School          | RSD      | Traditional | 409                   | 59           | 14%        | 59                         | 14%                          |
| 5  | 396006: Booker T. Washington High School     | RSD      | Traditional | 160                   | 29           | 18%        | 29                         | 18%                          |
| 6  | 396007: Fredrick A. Douglass High School     | RSD      | Traditional | 291                   | 46           | 16%        | 46                         | 16%                          |
| 7  | 396008: Dr. Charles Richard Drew Elem School | RSD      | Traditional | 317                   | 45           | 14%        | 32                         | 10%                          |
| 8  | 396009: Paul B. Habans Elementary School     | RSD      | Traditional | 366                   | 38           | 10%        | 20                         | 5%                           |
| 9  | 396010: Murray Henderson Elementary School   | RSD      | Traditional | 238                   | 24           | 10%        | 14                         | 6%                           |
| 10 | 396011: John McDonogh Senior High School     | RSD      | Traditional | 591                   | 80           | 14%        | 70                         | 12%                          |
| 11 | 396012: James Weldon Johnson School          | RSD      | Traditional | 307                   | 44           | 14%        | 29                         | 9%                           |
| 12 | 396016: Rabouin Career Magnet High School    | RSD      | Traditional | 295                   | 24           | 8%         | 24                         | 8%                           |



|              |                                              |     |             |       |       |     |     |     |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| 13           | 396017: Sarah Towles Reed Senior High School | RSD | Traditional | 585   | 75    | 13% | 75  | 13% |
| 14           | 396019: A.P. Tureaud Elementary School       | RSD | Traditional | 337   | 22    | 7%  | 22  | 7%  |
| 15           | 396020: Albert Wicker Literacy Academy       | RSD | Traditional | 245   | 28    | 11% | 28  | 11% |
| 16           | 396021: Sarah Towles Reed Elementary School  | RSD | Traditional | 594   | 52    | 9%  | 33  | 6%  |
| 17           | 396022: Schwarz Alternative School           | RSD | Traditional | 54    | 16    | 30% | 16  | 30% |
| 18           | 396025: Carver Elementary School             | RSD | Traditional | 257   | 36    | 14% | 36  | 14% |
| 19           | 396026: G.W. Carver High School              | RSD | Traditional | 460   | 75    | 16% | 75  | 16% |
| 20           | 396028: Fannie C. Williams Elementary School | RSD | Traditional | 534   | 68    | 13% | 41  | 8%  |
| 21           | 396029: F.W. Gregory Elementary School       | RSD | Traditional | 289   | 40    | 14% | 40  | 14% |
| 22           | 396034: H.C. Schaumburg Elementary School    | RSD | Traditional | 612   | 58    | 9%  | 40  | 7%  |
| 23           | 396037: Mary D. Coghill Elementary School    | RSD | Traditional | 529   | 53    | 10% | 33  | 6%  |
| 24           | 396041: Julian Leadership Academy            | RSD | Traditional | 317   | 27    | 9%  | 15  | 5%  |
| 25           | 396043: Greater Gentilly High School         | RSD | Traditional | 206   | 14    | 7%  | 14  | 7%  |
| 26           | 396044: Hope Academy                         | RSD | Traditional | 96    | 17    | 18% | 17  | 18% |
| 27           | 396045: New Orleans Career Academy           | RSD | Traditional | 59    | 10    | 17% | 10  | 17% |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                                              |     |             | 9,475 | 1,168 | 12% | 966 | 10% |

**Table 6G: Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) – Open Charters**

|              | School Code and Name                           | District | Type    | Enrollment includes K | Special Educ | % Spec Educ | Spec Educ Excluding Speech | % Spec Educ Excluding Speech |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1            | 331001: International School of LA             | BESE     | Charter | 522                   | 0            | 0%          | 0                          | 0%                           |
| 2            | 339001: Milestone SABIS Academy of New Orleans | BESE     | Charter | 396                   | 28           | 7%          | 14                         | 4%                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                                                |          |         | 918                   | 28           | 3%          | 14                         | 2%                           |

## IMPLICATIONS and QUESTIONS

### Special education student enrollment and school performance scores

The Louisiana Department of Education utilizes a uniform performance design for schools. The School Performance Score, which is used only in Louisiana, is not a value added model. Thus, schools are not given a weighted advantage for educating a greater number of special education students. While other factors account for the variation, the above data supports that special education enrollment impacts school performance scores.

## **Policies and practices in charter schools that account for disparities in numbers of special education students served**

Charter schools continue to serve more and more of the population of public school students in New Orleans. The data shows that there are wide disparities in that some schools are serving fewer students with disabilities as compared to others. What policies and practices at those schools serving significantly less students with disabilities account for this disparity?

### **Choice for parents?**

If there really is choice for parents<sup>vii</sup>, why is it that more parents of students with disabilities have not chosen certain schools? Are there barriers to parents enrolling in schools with very small percentages of students with disabilities? What does this data tell us about accessibility at those schools with small percentages?

### **Louisiana charter law and at-risk students**

Louisiana's charter school law was enacted to "serve the best interests of at-risk children and youth."<sup>viii</sup> With this in mind, why are there three (3) times as many students with disabilities in traditional schools as are in schools with selective admissions? Does "selective admissions" mean discriminatory practices when it comes to students with disabilities?

## **Recommendations**

It is the purpose of this article to present research findings, and pose questions for future research, on the New Orleans special education student population. It is anticipated that this research will be used by policy makers to provide equality and access for all special education children and youth who attend the New Orleans public schools.

---

### Endnotes:

---

<sup>i</sup> No Child Left Behind, Title V, Part B: Public Charter Schools, Subpart 1- Charter School Programs, Sec. 5202, Program Authorized. (20 USC 7221a) Each state's application for a charter school grant must provide "(I) a description of how students in the community will be (i) informed about the charter school; and (ii) given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school." And, must provide "(L) a description of how a charter school that is considered a local education agency under State law, or a local education agency in which a charter school is located, will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act."

<sup>ii</sup> Louisiana Department of Education, Planning, Analysis, and Information Resources, Student Information Systems: "The SIS database is comprised of records of information about individual students enrolled in Louisiana public schools. These records contain information about students' demographic characteristics, their enrollment in particular schools, and their disciplinary and attendance history." SER: "Special Education Reporting System (SER)"

---

provides for the establishment of a statewide special education student database from which specified reports from the student record can be generated.”

<sup>iii</sup> Special Education Database obtained from Dr. Bonnie Boulton at the LA Dept of Education. The database has been posted on the website, [researchonreforms.org](http://researchonreforms.org).

<sup>iv</sup> Student enrollment data can be accessed on the LA Department of Education website from the data report entitled “Public School Enrollment.”

<sup>v</sup> Selective charters with admission requirements are: Benjamin Franklin High School, Lusher Charter School, and Audubon Charter School. Selective charters with continued admission requirements are Warren Easton: “Any student involved in a major disruptive infraction will be permanently excluded.” (Easton Student Handbook); and KIPP: “Other consequences for disciplinary problems may include, but are not limited to: Mandatory transfer (permanent removal of a student from school). . . Consistent rude or disrespectful behavior may result in mandatory transfer.” (KIPP Student Handbook)

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> No Child Left Behind, Title V, Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs.

<sup>viii</sup> La RS 17:3972 “(A) It is the intention of the legislature in enacting this Chapter to authorize experimentation by city and parish school boards by authorizing the creation of innovative kinds of independent public schools for pupils. Further, it is the intention of the legislature to provide a framework for such experimentation by the creation of such schools, a means for all persons with valid ideas and motivation to participate in the experiment, and a mechanism by which experiment results can be analyzed, the positive results repeated or replicated, if appropriate, and the negative results identified and eliminated. Finally, it is the intention of the legislature that the best interests of at-risk pupils shall be the overriding consideration in implementing the provisions of this Chapter.”

---

To comment on this article, and/or to be added to/ removed from the distribution list, please go to web page [www.researchonreforms.org](http://www.researchonreforms.org). All comments will be reviewed for posting on website. You may also email Barbara Ferguson at [bferguson@researchonreforms.org](mailto:bferguson@researchonreforms.org)