## RSD Skews Its Performance Score By Omitting Nearly 20% of Schools

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The 2010-11 school year is the most recent year for which the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) released the District Composite Reports, and the Recovery School District's Composite Report omits the accountability information for twelve (12) of the seventy (70) RSD schools, thus skewing the RSD's performance score. The District Performance Score is calculated using the School Performance Scores of the schools within the district. This is not the first time the RSD has manipulated the data, but this time it is even more blatant because it was done through changes in the data reporting format by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). In 2010-11, the LDOE changed its reporting format, removing certain databases from its website, and removing enrollment data (which had been available for years) from its District Composite Reports. With the changes in the reporting format, it is not readily noticeable that the accountability data is omitted for twelve (12) schools. If these schools had been included in the calculation, the Recovery School District's Performance Score would have declined.

While returning to the former corrupt and underachieving Orleans Parish School Board system of governance is not an option, neither should remaining with the state-takeover form of governance be an option. When Orleans Parish was in control of the public schools, the LDOE could report on Orleans Parish School Board failures, but now that the state's governance system is in control (in the form of RSD) the state can hide its failures by manipulating the data.

### <u>Creative Data Manipulation Through Changes in LDOE Reporting Systems</u>

A "District Composite Report (DCR)," customized for each school district in Louisiana, is produced by the LDOE on an annual basis. Between the school years 1995-96 and 2009-10, each District Composite Report contained an individual school report for each school in the district, which included both the school's enrollment count and the school's performance score.

In the 2010-11 school year, the format of the District Composite Report changed. There is no longer a one page report for each school in the district that contains both the school's enrollment and accountability information. The LDOE has divided this information into two separate pages, or Sections, one for each type of information.<sup>ii</sup> This, in itself, is not a problem. However, it becomes a problem when the Accountability Section of the report lists a different number of schools than are listed in the Enrollment Section of the report. Previously, with just one page, the information on all schools open during the specific year was provided.<sup>iii</sup> (An open school is defined as a school with an official enrollment count on October 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year.)

There are three problems inherent in this new reporting format. (1) The new Accountability Section lists schools that are closed in that specific reporting year. For example, in the 2010-11 year, the Accountability Section of the Recovery School District's report listed seventy schools, four of which were closed. (2) The new Accountability Section lists schools that are open, but fails to list any accountability data. For example, in the 2010-11 year, the Recovery School District's report listed eight open schools and gave no accountability information even though these schools had performance scores the prior school year. (3) The new Accountability Section fails to list all of the open schools in the district. There are schools that are open in the district whose data can only be accessed through other sections of the report.

The Recovery School District in New Orleans benefited from this new LDOE reporting format, which manipulates data and excludes schools, as presented in the tables below.

Table 1 lists the RSD Schools that were closed in 2010, but which were included in the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report.

Table 1: RSD schools that were closed in 2010-11, but were listed in			
the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report			
Code	School		
386001	A.D. Crossman-Esperanza Charter		
396006	Booker T. Washington High School		
396020	Albert Wicker Literacy Academy		
396041	Julian Leadership Academy		

Table 2 lists the RSD schools that were open in the 2010-11 year, which were in the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report, but had no accountability data.

Tab	Table 2: RSD schools that were open in 2010-11 year, which were in						
the	the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report, but						
had	had no accountability data, containing only the tilde symbol (~)						
where the data would have been reported.							
	School Code	School Name					
1	385006	Harriett Tubman Elementary School					
2	396002	Joseph S. Clark Senior High School					
3	396016	Rabouin Career Magnet High School					
4	396021	Sarah Towles Reed Elementary School					
5	396025	Carver Elementary School					
6	396028	Fannie C. Williams Elementary School					
7	396029	F. W. Gregory Elementary School					
8	396043	Greater Gentilly High School					

All of the schools in Tables 1 and 2 were reported in the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report and all had tilde symbols (~) in the place of accountability data. There is no problem with this for the schools in Table 1 as they were closed in the 2010-11 year. However, for the schools in Table 2, this is a problem as these schools were open in 2010-11 and each had a performance score for the prior year, 2009-10. These schools, which are listed again in Table 3 along with their School Performance Scores from the 2009-10 year, are: Harriett Tubman Elementary, Joseph S. Clark Sr. High, Rabouin Career Magnet High School, Sarah Towles Reed Elementary, Carver Elementary School, Fannie C. Williams Elementary, F. W. Gregory Elementary, and Greater Gentilly High School. By omitting the School Performance Scores for these schools for the 2010-11 year, they were not included in the RSD's District Performance Score, thereby skewing the RSD's District Performance Score.

Tab	Table 3: RSD schools that were listed in the 2010-11 Accountability						
Section without SPS scores, but yet they had SPS scores the previous							
200	2009-10 year.						
	School School Name		Previous Year's				
	Code		SPS: 2009-10				
1	395006	Harriett Tubman Elementary	55.4				
2	396002	Joseph S. Clark High School	22.8				
3	396016	Rabouin Career Magnet High School	19.4				
4	396021	Sarah Towles Reed Elementary	50.7				
5	396025	Carver Elementary	41.4				
6	396028	Fannie C. Williams Elementary	62.1				
7	396029	F. W. Gregory Elementary	43.8				
8	396043	Greater Gentilly High School	47.3				

For all of the other schools reported in the RSD's Accountability Section, the following accountability data was provided on those schools: Growth SPS, Growth Label, Baseline SPS, Performance Label, and Letter Grade. The above eight schools were open and had a tilde symbol (~), rather than the accountability data. One would surmise that simply having a tilde symbol (~) would indicate the school was closed, but this was not the case; and, enrollment data is not provided in the new Accountability Section so there was no way to determine whether the school was open or not.

In summary, twelve schools were listed in the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report for 2010-11 using a tilde symbol (~) in the place of providing accountability data on any of the schools. Four (4) of those schools, Table 1, were closed in the 2010-11 year and eight (8) of those schools, Table 2, were open in 2010-11.

Table 4 lists RSD schools that were open in 2010-11, but were not listed in the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report.

Table 4: RSD Schools that were open in 2010-11, but were not listed in			
the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report			
Code	School		
398005	KIPP Renaissance High School		
368001	Morris Jeff Community School		
396044	Hope Academy		
396045	New Orleans Career Academy		

The schools that were omitted from the Accountability Section of the RSD's District Composite Report would have changed the RSD's District Performance Score, since each school's score is used to compile the district's performance score.

Of the schools in Table 4 that were omitted from the Accountability Section of RSD's District Composite Report, two were open for only one year, and the other two were open for two years. Thus, one might assume that being open only a year or two is not sufficient time to obtain a School Performance Score. But, how the LDOE calculates School Performance Scores is quite discretionary.

For example, consider KIPP Renaissance High School, which is one of the four schools in Table 4 that was open only one year and that does not have a School Performance Score. One could argue that this is plausible since the school was only open for one year. However, KIPP New Orleans Leadership Academy, which also operated for only one year, did receive a performance score of 74.9. Both KIPP Renaissance High School and KIPP Leadership Academy operated during the 2010-11 year in the same building at 3820 St. Claude Avenue, which was formerly the Frederick A. Douglass High School. KIPP Renaissance did not receive a performance score; yet, KIPP Leadership Academy did.

# Recovery School District's 2010-2011 Report Also Skews Calculations by Changing School Codes

Another way for low performing schools to evade being included in the Recovery School District's calculation is for the RSD to change the school's code. For example, in the years 2008-09 and 2009-10, Harney School's code was 396030 and this was changed to 367001 in 2010-11. Similarly, Live Oak's code was 396014 in 2008-09 and 2009-10, and its code changed to 396001 in 2010-11.

The Crossman Esperanza School is a good example of a school improving its performance score by changing its name and school code. Originally, the school, located at 4407 S. Carrollton Ave.,

opened in 2007-08 with the name of "A.D. Crossman Esperanza School." For the 2007-08 year, and for the years 2008-09 and 2009-10, the school code was 386001. Then in the 2010-11 year, the name was changed to "Esperanza Charter School" and its code was changed to 393002.

With regard to its School Performance Score, for its opening 2007-08 year, "A.D. Crossman Esperanza Charter School" did not receive a score. The next year, in 2008-09, the school had a performance score of 53.8. But, for the following year, 2009-10, it again had no performance score. However, when it changed both its name and school code in 2010-11, it received a School Performance Score of 62.1. The change of school name and school code somehow improved the school's performance score. (See Table 5)

Table 5: Crossman-Esperanza Charter School							
Year	Code	Name	Baseline SPS	Enrollment			
2007-08	386001	A.D. Crossman Esperanza Charter School	Not listed	322			
2008-09	386001	A.D. Crossman Esperanza Charter School	53.8	335			
2009-10	386001	A.D. Crossman Esperanza Charter School	Not listed	332			
2010-11	393002	Esperanza Charter School	62.1	398			

Thus, without having to consistently account for performance scores of the schools within the district, the Recovery School District is able to skew its district performance s.

### **In Conclusion**

Twelve schools that were open in 2010-11 were omitted from the calculation of the Recovery School District's performance score for that year. Thus, it is not accurate for the RSD to claim that the district is improving as nearly 20% of its schools were not included in the calculation of its performance score.

The new LDOE reporting format has burdened the accurate reporting of performance data. Rather than being able to determine a district's performance score from the performance scores of all schools within a district, the new format omits accountability data on all open schools, thus, impinging the integrity of a district's performance score.

Without adequate data, the Recovery School District's reported progress is questionable.

#### **Endnotes**

<sup>i</sup> The RSD's District Composite Report, including both the School Accountability Section and the School Enrollment Section can be accessed from the LDOE website through the link: <a href="www.laeducationresults.net">www.laeducationresults.net</a>.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

iii RSD District Composite Reports, Section 2, for the years 2007-08 through 2009-10.

iv School Level Accountability information table found at www.laeducationresults.net.

⁰ Ibid

vi School section of RSD District Composite Report found at <u>www.laeducationresults.net</u>.

vii RSD District Composite Report, 2008-09, Section 2.
viii RSD's District Composite Reports for years 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11.