
New Orleans Public Schools

March, 2007

Orleans Pre Katrina

- Academically, Morally and Financially Bankrupt
 - Largest School District
 - Worst performing in state
 - Last in performance of black students
 - 1 in 5 attended schools in Orleans
 - 75% of Schools Failed or Academic Warning
 - Valedictorian of local high school failed exit exam 6 times
 - FBI opened office to investigate rampant corruption
 - District could not account for, nor manage finances
 - “Someone Must do Something”
 - LA constitution does not allow takeover of a district, removal of school board members, etc.
 - Can take over failing schools
-

Orleans: Post Katrina

- State took over all but 17 schools
 - Any school below the state average
 - Orleans retained high performing, mostly selective admission schools
 - Less special education; discipline problems, etc.
 - Pre-Katrina: 62,000 students
 - Expect 28,000 students by end of school year
 - Enrolling 100-200 new students weekly
-

Recovery School District

- Three Challenges: any one hard; combined monumental
 - Start-up:
 - No staff; no policies; no procedures
 - Serve thousands of students
 - Recovery:
 - Fix buildings, replace textbooks; transportation
 - Pre Katrina Issues: Cold lunches; title 1
 - Diaspora; Housing Shortage; Crime
 - Critical shortage of Educators
 - Reform:
 - Make it significantly better
 - Other state-mayoral takeovers: play at the margins
-

Public Schools in New Orleans

- 55 schools (2/1 count)
 - 31 charters; 19 RSD Operated; 5 OPSB operated
 - 57% of students attend charter schools
 - Highest percentage in nation
 - The Algiers Charter School Assn has more schools and students than OPSB
 - Mind Shift: not a school system, but a system of schools
 - No longer a “top-down” model; no centralized decision making
 - Part of Reform strategy
-

“Portfolio of Governance”

Orleans Parish
School Board

Board of Elementary and
Secondary Education

(OPSB)

(BESE)

Operate
School

Charters
Types 1-5

Operate
School

**Individual
Charter School**
(ex: Math & Science)

**Charter Management
Operator (CMO)**
(ex: KIPP)

Emerging CMO
{ex: UNO (2)}

“Charter District”
(ex: Algiers Charter
School Association)

Most Market Driven System in the US

- **Public School Choice**
 - No student is assigned to a school
 - Schools must provide transportation if more than one mile
 - **Money Follows the Student**
 - Charters getting 98% per pupil spending
 - **Competition in Governance Models**
 - RSD operated; OPSB operated; assortment of charter models
 - **Competition for Employees**
 - Schools set own salary and benefit schedule; work conditions; hours of operation
-

More Money to the School Site

- Smaller Class Sizes
 - Higher salaries
 - More school site administration
 - Little growth (10%) in the per pupil
 - 2004-05: \$5952
 - 2006-07: \$6565
-

Most Market Driven System in the US, Part 2

- Elimination of Employee Protections
 - Employer at Will
 - No tenure (charters); no Collective Bargaining Agreement
 - Service Providers compete for business from the Charter Schools
 - Total Transparency
 - Every school subject to Louisiana's School Accountability System
 - This summer the state will publish performance data on every school
-

What is a Charter School?

Most don't know!

- Independent Public School
 - More Freedom:
 - Control over time, people and money
 - No daily management from School board
 - More Risk; More Work
 - School is responsible for the non-academic operations
 - Charter can be revoked or non-renewed for failure to perform
 - BESE set definitive standards in its contracts
 - Operated by a non-profit organization
 - The non-profit can hire a “for profit” to run school
-

Successful Charters: Part of the Long Term Solution

- Charters operational independence
 - More immune to ultimate Governance resolution
 - More nimble
 - Bringing new Talent, New Expectations: The BRAIN GAIN
 - KIPP, Educational Entrepreneurs
 - New Leaders for New Schools
 - Re-engaging the community
 - Diverse boards
 - Boards focused on Performance
 - Recent test score release
 - Important they Succeed
 - BESE erring on the side of caution
-

Challenges

- **Designing, Building and Flying the plane simultaneously**
 - Starting from scratch in a devastated area
 - Creating a new national model
 - **The Student**
 - Many did not attend school; attended multiple schools
 - Emotional trauma and mental health needs
 - **Establishing school culture**
 - New students, new faculty, new principal
 - Mixing neighborhoods
-

Quality Educators

- Problem pre-Katrina; critical issue post-Katrina
 - Kids are returning; teachers, social workers, principals are not
 - 30,000 students: we get better; 40,000 students: overwhelmed
 - Need time to build a new generation of educators:
 - Teach for America
 - The New Teacher Project
 - Quality Charter School Operators
-

Support for Schools in Absence of Central Office

- State created a shared service center
 - Charters can purchase services
 - Transportation; food service, etc.
 - Looking to create new NGOs or increase capacity of existing ones to provide services usually housed in Central Office
 - Continuity no matter the final governance model
 - *New Schools for New Orleans* created to help
 - Recruitment of teachers and principals
 - Charter board members
 - Educational quality
 - General support
-

Building Support

- **Xavier: Provider of Professional Development**
 - Leverage math and science expertise
 - Could become a provider of alternative certification
 - TNTP; Xavier graduates
 - Training of existing teachers
 - **CDL:**
 - Literacy
 - **School Leadership Center/ BCM**
 - Special Education Center
 - Principal Professional Development
 - Back office support for Charters
 - **Math and Science Resource Center**
 - Funded with grant from Shell
-

Interacting in absence of “system”

- Public Confusion
 - Media
 - Parents
 - Need coordinated registration; one place for information, etc.
 - Need education and training to take advantage of choice
 - Discussions underway with the *Urban League* provide this service
 - No one can make decision for all schools
 - Business Partners to vendors to social service providers
 - Working to house “one stop” with an existing NGO
-

...More challenges

- **Capacity**
 - To have real choice, need managed excess of spaces
 - Not enough schools
 - Not enough charters
 - **Divided Public**
 - **Must have Quality Schools**
 - Need “Anchor Tenants;” Schools that excel educating poor, minority youth
 - Recruiting High Quality Charter operators from outside of state
 - KIPP’s results
 - Must change the mindset of New Orleanians
-

Facilities: A Challenge Unto Itself

- The state has “usufruct” of the facilities
 - Terrible condition pre-Katrina
 - Grossly underinsured
 - FEMA is impossible to deal with
 - Partnering with Orleans to create a long term facility master plan
 - Needed Orleans to finish its planning process
 - Still trying to determine funds available from FEMA for rebuilding
 - Working on temporary facilities
 - 2006-07: 28,000 seats
 - Opening more schools as repairs are completed
 - 2007-08: 40,000 seats
-

The Good News

- **More students attending better schools**
 - Better High Schools
 - Math and Science High School
 - Early College High School
 - O Perry Walker Turnaround
 - Lusher High School
 - Will build more small high schools
 - **Significant Improvement Middle Grades**
 - Move to K-8 – working well
 - **Pre-Katrina**
 - 68% of schools were failing
 - Expect to have fewer failing the first year
 - Continual improvement
-

Conclusion

- Opportunity to remake one of the worst school districts in the nation
 - Create a new model for Urban education
 - Long road still to travel
 - Progress made, many challenges remain
 - RSD operated schools must improve
 - Getting it right is very important
 - For New Orleans
 - Crime, Economic Growth, Poverty
 - For national discussion
-