



Jefferson EDGE 2020 Strategic Implementation Plan: PUBLIC EDUCATION REVISED JUNE, 2012

Prepared by JEDCO and GCR Inc.

JEDCO
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission



Introduction

In the spring of 2008, as part of the *Jefferson EDGE 2020* initiative, JEDCO completed a “strategic implementation plan” for the Jefferson Parish Public School system (JPPS). The fundamental goals of the plan were straightforward: to improve the overall quality of public education in Jefferson. A stronger public education system would have the byproducts of ensuring a quality workforce and enticing businesses and residents to locate in Jefferson. The plan was crafted by JEDCO, the Parish’s official economic development agency, but also in close partnership with the JPPS administration and School Board.

Since the plan was completed, there have been a number of changes in the landscape of public education in Jefferson and in the New Orleans region in general. In Jefferson Parish, there has been a major shift in the school system’s leadership. In the fall of 2010, a number of new school board members were elected who pledged to take a particularly aggressive approach to improving school performance. Included within their reform “toolbox” were a number of tools that had long been eschewed—welcoming additional charter schools to Jefferson Parish and closing down and consolidating underperforming schools, for example. The changes on the School Board were accompanied by a change in the school administration with longtime superintendent Dr. Diane Roussel stepping down and being replaced by Dr. James Meza, the former dean of UNO’s College of Education.

Another noteworthy development has been a growing dissatisfaction with the academic performance of JPPS and a growing impatience with the pace of progress. These concerns were highlighted in a report prepared for the non-profit Jefferson Community Foundation in the summer of 2010 entitled: “Jefferson Parish Public Schools: A Comparative Assessment¹.” The report was sympathetic to the challenges that Jefferson Parish Public Schools face, such as a high percentage of students com-

¹This report was prepared by GCR Inc. and the Jefferson Community Foundation. Along with JEDCO, GCR is the author of this report as well.



A 2010 report by the Jefferson Community Foundation highlighted the fact that academic performance in Jefferson lags behind that of other economically disadvantaged school systems.

ing from a disadvantaged background. But the report also highlighted just how low performing Jefferson's test scores had been, as well as the fact that other school systems with similar demographic challenges had managed to produce better test scores in recent years. The result of this heightened focus on JPPS' lackluster performance has been a call for more forceful, more aggressive measures to improve the quality of public education in Jefferson.

Partially as an outgrowth of the report that the Jefferson Community Foundation commissioned and partially as a result of the changing education landscape within the New Orleans region, demographics have become a less compelling explanation for JPPS' academic struggles. Over the past several years, New Orleans Public Schools have experienced a dramatic turnaround in academic performance. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, only 28% of public school students in New Orleans attended schools that met basic standards established by the Louisiana Department of Education. By 2010, that percentage had skyrocketed to 68%². These meteoric gains occurred in spite of the fact that the system is still overwhelmingly comprised of low income students. A range of ambitious reforms undertaken by the Orleans Parish School Board and Recovery School District—such as the widespread introduction of charter schools—are generally credited for this progress in the face of persistent poverty.

The experience of New Orleans has resonated with the leadership and the citizens of Jefferson Parish, as has the fact that other high poverty school districts have produced stronger scores than Jefferson. Consequently, the long cited data on the socio-economic profile of Jefferson Parish Public Schools is no longer a sufficient explanation for school performance. Indeed, this is one of the major reasons for this revision to the *EDGE 2020* education plan. The original 2008 report placed a heavy emphasis on the importance of attracting new middle class families to the public school system. This remains a worthy goal, but it should not be seen as the only means to higher quality public schools. Indeed, the on-going lesson from Orleans Parish and from numerous other schools is that major academic gains are possible even with a largely disadvantaged student body. Attracting additional middle income and wealthy students to JPPS may therefore be the *end result* of stronger public schools, rather than the *mechanism* to improve public schools.

The on-going lesson from Orleans Parish and other schools is that academic gains are possible even with a disadvantaged student body.

²Source: Greater New Orleans Community Data Center and Brookings Institution, "The New Orleans Index at Six," August, 2011. Data are for 2003 (pre-Katrina) and 2010.

This addendum to the Education plan is divided into four sections. The first is a brief overview of student achievement in Jefferson Parish in comparison to 2008 when the first plan was crafted. The second provides a synopsis of some of the major reforms that have been enacted over the past year and a half. The third section is a narrative description of the action items that this plan recommends. The final section is an implementation matrix that outlines specific roles, responsibilities, and an approximate timeline for implementing the action items.



Educational Achievement in Jefferson and Other Communities

The original *EDGE 2020* Education report examined a number of educational performance metrics. The ineluctable conclusion from these measures was that academic performance at Jefferson Parish Public Schools was in no way satisfactory. Four years have elapsed since the *EDGE 2020* Education plan was completed. The question that this update attempts to answer is whether academic progress has occurred over the past four years³.

In short, the results are mixed. Along almost every measure, Jefferson has experienced performance gains. Over the same period, though, so has the State and so have the other local school systems in the New Orleans region. Therefore, from the standpoint of relative performance, Jefferson Parish Public Schools are in the much the same place they were in 2008 when the original Education plan was written.

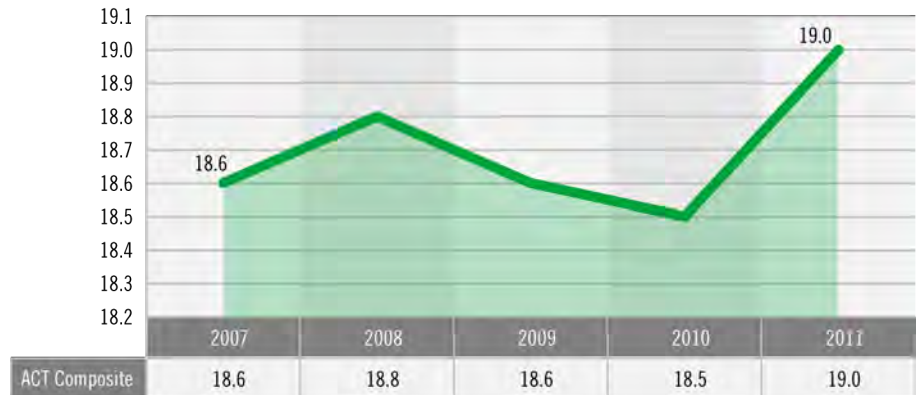
This fact should not obscure the academic gains that Jefferson has made. Nor should they obscure the fact that Jefferson is still a below average school system in Louisiana, a state that is in the bottom half of the country in academic achievement. Given the size of the economy and tax base of Jefferson, the school system should be performing at a higher level.

³All data presented in this section are from the Louisiana Department of Education.

Average ACT Scores

- From 2007⁴ to 2011, the average composite ACT score for JPPS students rose from 18.6 to 19.0. The scores went up and down over the four year period, so it is difficult to determine whether the most recent score marks the start of an upward trend or whether it is simply an anomaly. In previous years (2008 – 2010), scores were holding steady. These prior year data suggest that, at a minimum, scores are not declining.

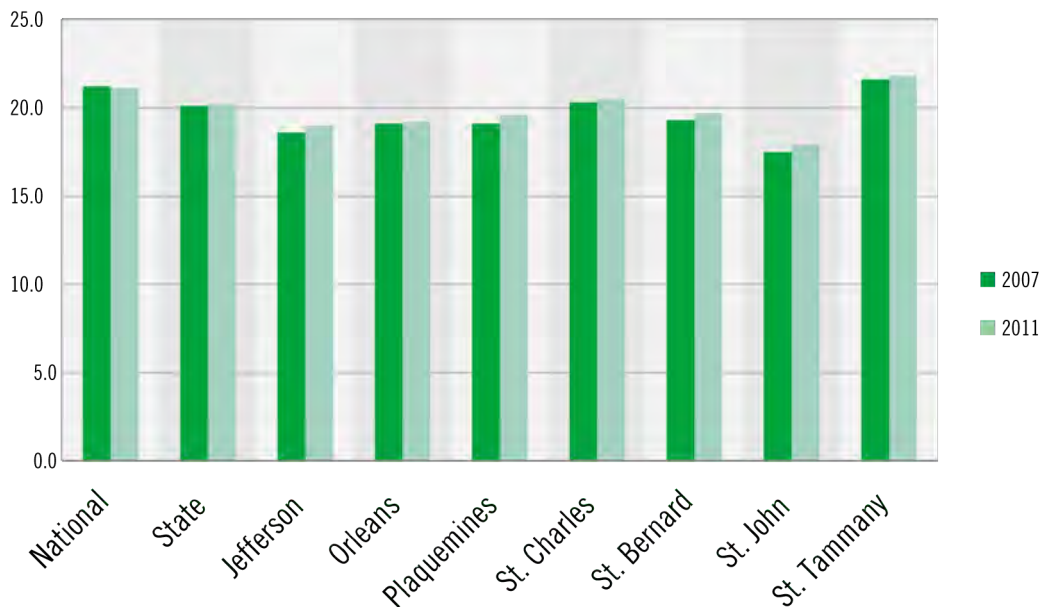
Jefferson Parish ACT Composite, 2007 - 2011



The best case interpretation of the 2011 data is that there have been meaningful improvements in achievement, which are now manifesting themselves in the most recent ACT scores. Data for the next several years will provide a more definitive explanation.

- Despite the growth in scores in Jefferson between 2007 and 2011, average ACT scores remain the second lowest in the metropolitan area⁵. Of the traditional public school districts in the region, only St. John Parish has a lower average composite score.

Average Composite ACT Scores



⁴2007 was the most recent year for which ACT data were available when the original Education plan was completed in 2008.

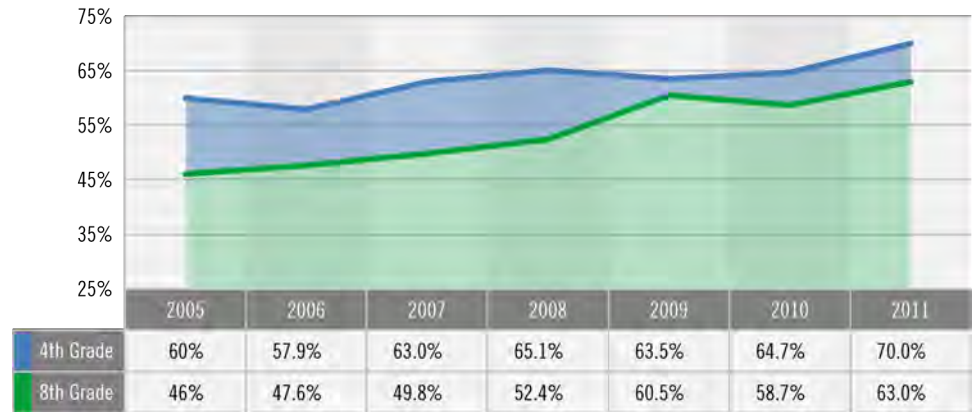
⁵When one includes the Recovery School District – New Orleans in the analysis, JPPS has the third lowest scores in the region. RSD – New Orleans is not presented within the comparative graph of ACT scores, as scores are only available for 2011.

- It should also be noted that Jefferson’s average ACT score in 2011 (19.0) was still below the averages for the nation (21.1) and the state of Louisiana (20.2).

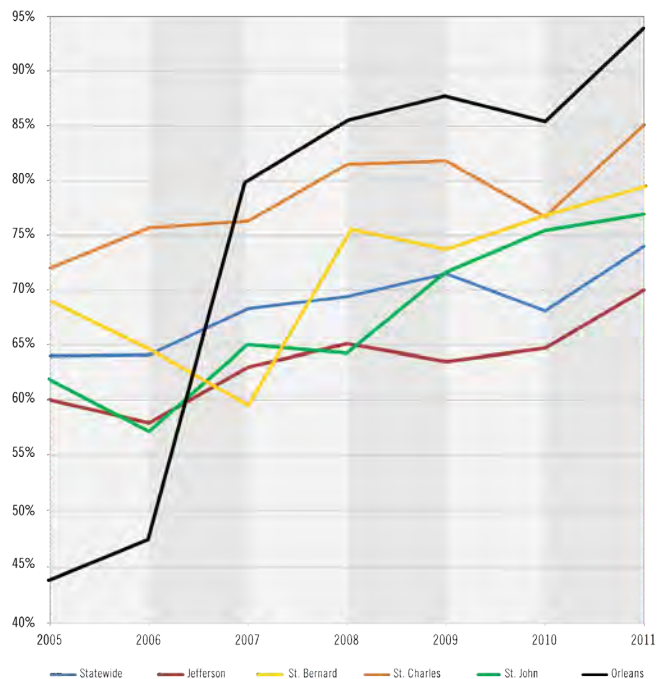
LEAP and GEE Scores

- From 2005⁶ to 2011, Jefferson Parish did experience steady gains in the percentage of students scoring basic or above on the LEAP tests. GCR examined at the 4th and 8th grade level the percentage of students scoring basic or above on the English Language Arts and Mathematics tests. As shown in the below graph, the gains were substantial in English Language Arts.

Jefferson Parish LEAP Test - English Language Arts % at basic or above, 2005 - 2011



Jefferson and Other Selected Parishes: 4th Grade LEAP Test - English Language Arts, % at Basic or Above, 2005 - 2011



⁶All years correspond to the spring semester. Thus "2005" corresponds to spring 2005.

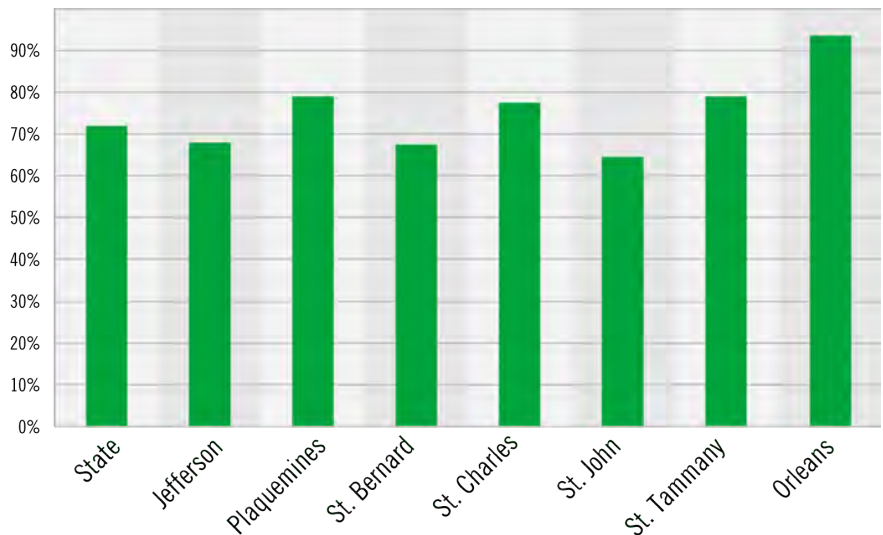
- The improvement in Mathematics was also noteworthy. In the spring of 2005, 56% of 4th graders in JPPS scored basic or above on the Mathematics LEAP test. In 2011, that percentage was 66.2%. Over the same period, the 8th grade passage rate on the Mathematics LEAP test increased from 43% to 56%.
- The only exception to the trend for Jefferson Parish was the GEE test for high school students. While the passage rate (i.e. scoring basic or above) increased for the Mathematics portion of the test, it declined slightly for the English portion of the test⁷. For the Mathematics portion, the percentage scoring basic or above increased from 52% to 68% between the spring of 2005 and the spring of 2011. Over the same period, the percentage scoring basic or above on English declined from 56% to 54%.
- Despite these increases, Jefferson still lags behind the state average on all of these test scores. In many cases, the gap has narrowed somewhat, but there is still a pressing need for improvement.
- Within the metropolitan area, Jefferson still lags behind other area school systems. On both the 4th grade and 8th grade English Language Arts test, Jefferson was last within the metro area.

Cohort Graduation Rate

The Louisiana Department of Education defines the cohort graduation rate as a measure of high school student success based on the percentage of students who enter the ninth grade and graduate four years later.

- Like much of Louisiana, the cohort graduation rate in Jefferson has improved over the past few years, from 60.4% in 2006-2007 to 67% in 2010-2011.
- Jefferson’s cohort graduation rate is nevertheless the third lowest in the region after St. Bernard and St. John Parishes.

High School Cohort Graduation Rates, 2010 - 2011

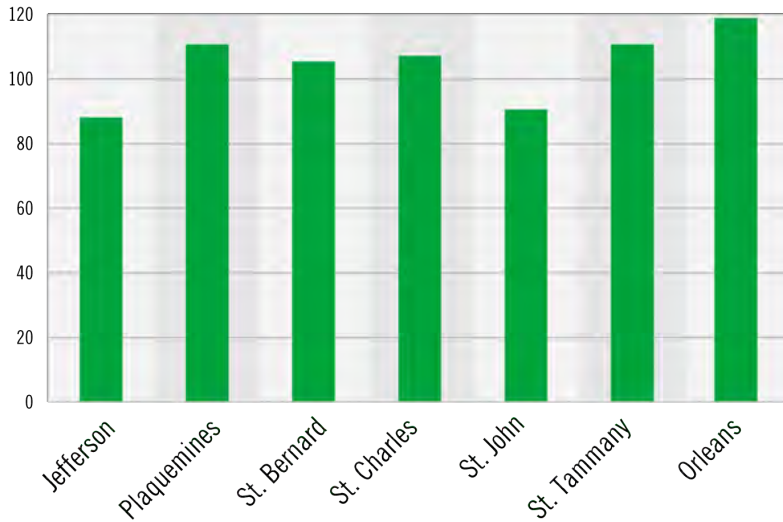


*Data for Orleans Parish only includes scores reported in schools under the jurisdiction of the Orleans Parish School Board.

⁷The GEE scores presented here are for "initial test takers."

District Performance Score

2011 District Performance Scores



*Data for Orleans Parish only includes scores reported in schools under the jurisdiction of the Orleans Parish School Board.

- The District Performance Score (DPS) is perhaps the most succinct measure of the overall academic quality of a school district in Louisiana.
- Again, as with the other measures of school performance, there has been improvement in Jefferson over the past several years; but Jefferson remains a low performing school district in comparison to others.
- While Jefferson ranks as a “D” school system according to the State’s new letter grading system, the district’s score of 88.2 places it on the cusp of gaining “C” status.

- Jefferson has the lowest DPS of the traditional school districts⁸ in the New Orleans area. With the exception of St. John the Baptist Parish, which was a slightly higher scoring “D” school district—all of the other districts in the region were in the “B” category.

Free and Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility

- The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunches—a typical measure of the socio-economic profile of a school system—increased from the 2004-2005 school year to the 2010-2011 school year. In 2004-2005, 64.6% of JPPS students were eligible; in 2010-2011, that figure was 77.4%.
- Over the same period, the percentage rose in the state overall, from 61.6% to 67.2%. Both in Jefferson and in Louisiana overall, this could be due to myriad factors: changing demographics, changing middle class attitudes about public education, and—most likely—declining incomes due to the national economic downturn.

⁸i.e. excluding the Recovery School District

In Jefferson Parish and in Louisiana overall, the increase in the free and reduced lunch population is likely a result of the national economic downturn.

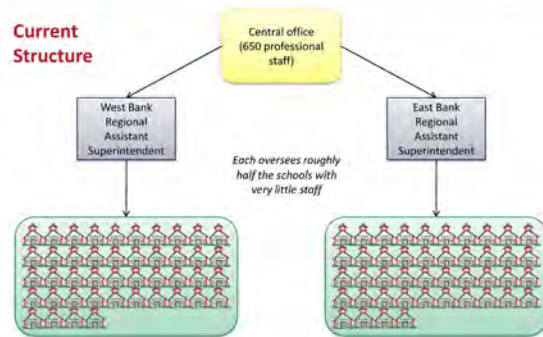
- While the free and reduced lunch eligible percentage increased statewide, it increased at a faster rate in Jefferson Parish. The share of students that are free and reduced lunch eligible statewide grew by 9.09% between 2004-2005 and 2010-2011. In Jefferson, it grew by nearly 20% over the same period.
- Within the New Orleans metro area, Jefferson has the second highest percentage of students who are free or reduced lunch eligible. Only St. John Parish has a higher percentage among the traditional school districts, at 88.7%. In 2004-2005, Jefferson had the fourth highest percentage in the metro area after Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. John.

Initiatives Underway

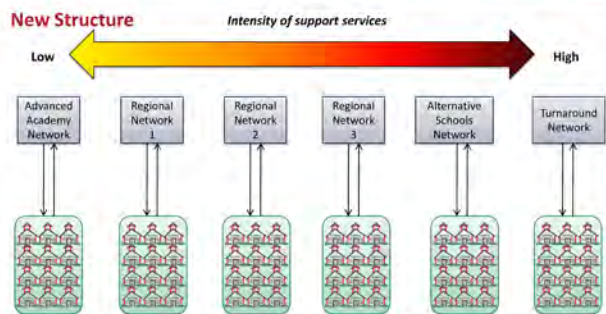
Since the beginning of 2011, the school system has undertaken a number of extremely ambitious reforms and has tackled controversial issues that had long gone unaddressed. Some of the most significant reforms that have been proposed and enacted include:

- **Closing underperforming schools.** The school system has long operated as though there had been no decline in enrollment, leaving the system with substantial operating and capital costs in service of a smaller student body. The School Board recently voted to close seven schools. This will save the system an estimated \$6 million in annual operating expenses.
- **Authorizing new charter schools.** While charter schools are not necessarily a panacea, the innovation and autonomy that they bring has been extremely effective in a number of contexts, including neighboring Orleans Parish. In December, 2011, the school system granted charters to two new schools. A third charter was also approved in June, 2012.
- **Adopting a “student-based budgeting” approach.** The administration is in the process of changing the way that the system allocates funding to individual schools. The intended outcome is to ensure that

Resource Alignment: School Management and Support



Resource Alignment: School Management and Support



"I ask that you come to these jobs as servants. As a central office, your singular goal is to clear away everything else so that magic can happen between teachers and students."

- Tim Quinn, Managing Director, Broad Superintendents Academy 15

A re-organization of the central office is underway. The old system of regional assistant superintendents (top) will be replaced by a network of administrators, each corresponding to a smaller number of schools with a similar academic profile.

school budgets are directly tied to the number of students, instead of allocating resources on a formula basis, which can lead to significant differences in total cost allocation across. This strategy will provide school principals with greater autonomy but also with greater responsibility to find savings in their schools' operating budget. Under this new system, principals will have much greater autonomy with regard to staffing, curriculum, budgeting, and operations. This will result in a network of schools that are managed in a less top-down fashion and that are, therefore, more responsive, more nimble, and more effective.

- **Downsizing the central office.** Over the years, the JPPS central office bureaucracy has grown steadily. According to the present administration, the solution to emerging problems was, for many years, to simply add positions to the central office that would address each emerging problem. Additionally, central office positions that were initially funded through outside grants often transitioned into permanent positions that came at a cost to the school system. Resources and personnel were rarely consolidated; and as a result, the size of the central office steadily grew in spite of the fact that enrollment had declined. The administration estimates that approximately \$4 - \$5 million can be saved annually by downsizing the central office and reducing bloat.
- **Re-organizing the central office.** The new administration has set in motion a reorganization plan that will reduce silos, improve communication, improve efficiency, and provide greater assistance to schools. The existing organization chart is overly convoluted and breaks the central office into too many silos. The new organization chart helps to resolve these problems. Another major change that is in motion is a reorganization in the way that schools interface with the central office. Currently, services that the central office provides are bifurcated into two assistant superintendent's offices—one for East Bank schools and one for West Bank schools. Each oversees roughly half the schools with very little staff to attend to the schools' needs. What is proposed to replace it is a network of central office administrators. Each network would correspond to certain types of schools, on a spectrum from highest performing to lowest performing schools. Schools in the highest performing network would need the fewest resources from their central office administrators; the lowest performing network would require more intensive assistance. This system would result in a more hands on, more responsive relationship between the central office and individual schools.

- **Placing a greater emphasis on teacher performance in evaluations and in lay-off decisions.** JPPS has adopted a policy whereby teacher performance—and by extension the performance of their students—plays a greater role in their overall evaluation. In the past, factors like seniority, now excluded from school district layoff decisions by state law, occupied a more significant role in performance evaluations and firing decisions. Additionally, previous policies established more procedural roadblocks and more of a burden of proof in arriving at the decision to lay off a teacher. The new policies provide the administration with greater flexibility in staffing decisions and help to create a culture of accountability.
- **Strengthening accountability measures for principals.** Increased accountability for academic performance is not just being placed upon the shoulders of teachers. New JPPS policies demand greater accountability for academic performance from school principals as well. Recently, fifteen Jefferson Parish principals were let go because their schools failed to meet academic goals for three years. While the administration is providing principals with far more autonomy, it is also expecting a greater degree of accountability and academic improvement from them.

Education Action Items

Building on the flurry of reforms that have been implemented over the last eighteen months, this revised plan for Education in Jefferson Parish recommends the following action items to further the transformation of public schools.

1. **Conduct an annual review of Jefferson Parish schools to determine whether there are additional candidates for closure or consolidation.** The recent closure of seven schools is not envisioned as a one-time occurrence. Instead, on an annual basis, the administration and School Board should conduct a systematic inventory of all open schools and determine whether there are candidates for further school closures or consolidations. In some years, no schools may be candidates; in other years, there may be several candidates. There are many reasons for this exercise. First, it will help the school system to respond nimbly to changing demographics, enrollment patterns, and budget constraints. Jefferson Parish should not have to wait ten years to consolidate a school if consolidation is warranted in the near term. Second, it will create a mechanism to close schools that are performing poorly, accommodate students within better performing schools, and ultimately create the opportunity for re-constituted schools under new

leadership. Finally, conducting this annual review will force the administration and School Board to continuously monitor the efficiency of their operations—for instance, the geographical areas that are perhaps over-served by schools, the school facilities that are falling into disrepair, etc. It is estimated that the recent closure of schools will save JPPS \$5 million in annual operating expenses. Similar savings may be possible from further consolidations.

2. **On an annual basis, review applications for charter schools.** Charter schools are not a panacea for Jefferson Parish, but their presence could introduce needed competition and a greater diversity of academic environments for students. The academic gains that certain charter schools have been able to produce in other communities is truly impressive. Just as with school closures, the most recent charter application process should not be viewed as a one-time or once-in-ten-year event. The administration envisions a near-continual process of soliciting qualified charter applicants. In some years, there may be no applicants and no opportunity for a new charter, while in other years, there may be a number of opportunities and a number of qualified candidates. This process of systematically reviewing charter school applicants will maintain a culture of accountability and will ensure that the school system has an aggressive response in place when schools fail to improve.

This approach would have the added benefit of keeping the schools under local control. In three to five years, many of Jefferson Parish's schools may be eligible for state takeover if they do not produce substantial academic gains in the interim. By converting some of these schools into charters and by establishing new charter schools, JPPS will be able to convey to the State Department of Education that Jefferson is willing to make aggressive changes to failing schools. This should allow JPPS to preserve local control, thereby ensuring that the school system remains responsive to Jefferson voters.

3. **On an annual basis, conduct an assessment of the capacity of high performing schools and the possibility for replacation or expansion of those schools.** One way for the school system to improve educational outcomes and simultaneously to realize operating efficiencies is to replicate or expand high performing schools wherever feasible. High performing schools have a track record of successful teachers, successful leadership, and a culture of academic achievement. These schools may be able to reasonably accommodate a limited number of additional students, thereby exposing incoming students to the same high quality of education that their existing students receive. This may also create an opportunity down the road for greater efficiencies and economies of scale, as low performing schools are gradually phased out.

4. Establish detailed, school-by-school academic assessments and academic targets to identify nascent problems and institute early interventions. The existing standardized testing regime across Louisiana provides a strong baseline for understanding the overall changes in an individual school’s performance. LEAP, iLEAP, and GEE scores provide a kind of headline assessment of a school’s trajectory. However, these data do not necessarily provide an “early warning system” for principals and school administrators, and the data sets are not detailed enough to inform tactical responses to emerging and long-standing problems. The administration envisions an entirely new level of granularity in data analysis and school-by-school profiles. This information could identify, for instance, a cohort of students that are performing particularly poorly in a subject area and could then deploy additional resources to help those students return to grade level.

These school-by-school standards could also go beyond the State’s performance targets in the case of certain schools in Jefferson. For instance, the Parish’s “advanced academies” are indeed high scoring schools, but they are not on the same level as the highest performing public schools elsewhere in the United States. These nuanced, school-by-school evaluations could establish goals for these schools that are more exacting than the standard metrics used by the State.

5. Aggressively develop a pool of qualified candidates for principal positions and other senior administrative positions. Every successful institution must have an adequate “succession plan” in place to ensure that transitions in leadership are handled seamlessly. Successful principals must be succeeded by successful principals, and principals whose schools are struggling must be succeeded by principals who can effectuate a turnaround. To have a robust succession plan in place, the school system must do a better job of training educators to be effective administrators. This process will involve identifying promising candidates within the system, developing the capacity of these candidates through continuing education, and ensuring that effective procedures are in place for recruiting strong candidates from outside of JPPS.

6. Develop a school facilities master plan to identify the long-term capital needs of JPPS. To date, the efforts of the administration and School Board have focused primarily on the administrative, personnel, and financial aspects of the school system. Nonetheless, there is a recognition that the physical qualities of the system—the actual campuses of the school—are in need of an eventual overhaul.



The school facilities master plan for New Orleans—completed in 2008—has guided decisions on school renovations and the construction of new school facilities.

To develop a short and long-term plan of attack, the School Board should commission a school facilities master plan. This plan would conduct a physical inventory of the schools; outline a prioritized list of capital improvements, renovations, and new construction; and assess long-term demographic trends and the future programmatic needs of JPPS. The culmination of this process would be a road-map for future capital improvements, an estimated price tag, and proposed funding mechanisms. With this plan in place, JPPS would be able to address its long term capital needs in an intelligent, coordinated, and efficient fashion.

7. **Introduce Parish-wide accountability measures for pre-kindergarten education.** There is currently no suite of accountability measures in place for pre-kindergarten education in Louisiana. Given the grade level, standardized testing may be less feasible (or less meaningful) than the LEAP and iLEAP tests for older students. Nonetheless, there may be other means to track in a systematic, quantitative way the performance of pre-Kindergarten education. JPPS should work with the State Department of Education to craft these internal, Parish-specific metrics and benchmarks.
8. **Examine the feasibility of assuming control of Head Start education in Jefferson Parish.** This action item was included in the original Jefferson EDGE 2020 Education plan. It was ultimately shelved, though, as members of JEDCO's Education "strike force" did not see any compelling evidence that JPPS-run pre-schools would perform at a higher level than Head Start-run pre-schools. There is now an opportunity to formally revisit this concept, as the Obama administration has announced that certain Head Start programs may have to compete for funding against other potential operators. Thus far, only those Head Start programs that are deemed to be deficient would face the possibility of outside competition. It is not clear what the current status of Head Start centers in Jefferson Parish is. JPPS should monitor this programmatic change at the federal level and should start a conversation about whether JPPS should pursue this opportunity and whether JPPS could offer stronger pre-school education than the current Head Start regime.
9. **Work to establish a system of comprehensive, high quality vocational training that balances vocational opportunities with a college track curriculum.** Over the years, JPPS has offered a range of vocational training programs to high school students who are not on a college preparatory track. However, there is room for improvement in the current system. First, the offerings appear to be inconsistent across campuses. Certain high schools offer a broad range of vocational opportunities while others have far fewer. There is not necessarily a geographically even

distribution of offerings across the Parish. Secondly, there is a frequent tension between advocates of vocational training and advocates of a college track curriculum. Those who fall into the latter category sometimes express concern that students are directed toward vocational programs prematurely.

To resolve these concerns, the school system should conduct a comprehensive review of existing vocational opportunities and the necessary steps to create a model vocational curriculum. Such a program would be closely aligned with industry needs and would focus on Industry Based Certifications (IBC's); it would introduce greater accountability into the system; it would ensure access to these programs for students across the Parish; and it would strike a balance between exposure to vocational opportunities and a steadfast commitment to the college preparatory curriculum.

10. Initiate a comprehensive campaign to increase parental involvement in the school system. This is an action item that was in the original EDGE 2020 Education plan. It remains as relevant today as it was then. Parental involvement has not been a focal point of the current School Board and administration to date, as their primary focus has been on financial, administrative, and personnel matters. Nevertheless, they recognize that robust parental involvement is a feature that is common to virtually all successful public school systems. JPPS should therefore develop a comprehensive parental engagement strategy. This initiative would provide schools with specific strategies and resources for reaching those parents who have typically been unengaged. Outreach materials, recommended protocols for reaching out to parents, and the participation of social workers could be components of the effort.

11. Initiate a public outreach campaign targeted both to real estate agents and the general public. This is also an action item that was in the original *EDGE 2020* Education plan. Efforts have been made over the last several years to spread positive news about the school system and to foster a dialogue with real estate agents. These efforts must be sustained and improved upon—particularly as the very real gains in achievement begin to add up. From an economic development standpoint and from the standpoint of maintaining the Parish's middle class population, each "win" must be broadcast loudly. Through various media such as a periodic newsletter, an enhanced website, and an aggressive social media presence, JPPS can more effectively communicate academic successes, new initiatives underway, and profiles of individual schools. To the real estate community, JPPS must convey the progress that is being made and the roster of schools that have strong and/or rapidly improving test scores. This information could be communicated through printed materials to Realtors, through an annual outreach event at a real estate symposium, or through more continuous, informal channels of communication.

Summary Matrix of Action Items

The following table provides a summary of action items for improving public education in Jefferson Parish.

Action ID#	Implementation Action	Responsible Local Agencies/ Actors	Benchmarks	Local Resources/ Funding	Timeline
E1	Conduct an annual review of Jefferson Parish schools to determine whether there are additional candidates for closure or consolidation.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Procedure for annual review approved by Board - Rubric and schedule in place for conducting annual review	Administrative staff time	Approval of policy, procedures, timetable for annual review of potential school closures by end of 2013 - 2014 school year
E2	On an annual basis, review applications for charter schools.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Procedure for annual charter school review approved by Board - Rubric and schedule in place for conducting annual review of applicants	Administrative staff time	Approval of policy, procedures, timetable for annual review of potential charter operators by end of 2013 - 2014 school year
E3	On an annual basis, conduct an assessment of the capacity of high performing schools and their ability to accommodate additional students.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Procedure for annual review of school capacity approved by Board - Rubric and schedule in place for conducting annual review of capacity	Administrative staff time	Approval of policy, procedures, timetable for annual review of school capacity by end of 2013 - 2014 school year
E4	Establish detailed, school-by-school academic assessments and academic targets to identify nascent problems and institute early interventions.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS), Louisiana Department of Education	- Final methodology in place for data to be analyzed and collected - Evaluation procedures approved by Board	Administrative staff time	Approval of policy, procedures, data collection, and methodology by end of the 2014 - 2015 school year
E5	Aggressively develop a pool of qualified candidates for principal positions and other senior administrative positions	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Establishment of internal goals for the quantity and quality of individuals in this pool of senior administrators - Establishment of procedures for cultivating talent - Approval of procedures by Board	Contingent on program design, need for continuing education	Approval of goals for program by end of 2012 - 2013 school year. Completion of design of training program by the end of the 2014 - 2015 school year. Implementation at the start of the 2015 - 2016 school year.
E6	Develop a school facilities master plan to identify the long-term capital needs of JPPS.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Development of scope and desired outcomes for an RFP/RFQ - Identification of funding source(s) to pay for study - Approval and issuance of RFP by Board	Approximately \$500,000 depending on elements of scope	Develop goals for facilities master plan process by end of the 2013 - 2014 school year. Issue RFP and select consultant team by end of the 2014 - 2015 school year.

Action ID#	Implementation Action	Responsible Local Agencies/ Actors	Benchmarks	Local Resources/ Funding	Timeline
E7	Introduce Parish-wide accountability measures for pre-kindergarten education.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS), Louisiana Department of Education	- Development of metrics and methodology in coordination with State Dept. of Education - Approval of standards by the Board	Administrative staff time	Develop metrics and methodology by end of the 2014 - 2015 school year. Begin implementation at the start of 2015 - 2016 school year.
E8	Examine the feasibility of assuming control of Head Start education in Jefferson Parish.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Determination of whether Jefferson Parish's Head Start funding would be subject to competition - Determination of whether it is in JPPS' best interest to pursue funding - Development of a go forward strategy for securing funding and implementation, if deemed advisable	Administrative staff time in review stage; potential for some portion of operating revenue if Head Start is assumed by JPPS	Determine whether Jefferson is a community eligible for competing Head Start applications by end of the 2012 - 2013 school year.
E9	Work to establish a system of comprehensive, high quality vocational training that balances vocational opportunities with a college track curriculum.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS), Workforce Investment Board, Delgado Community College System	- Analysis of existing network of vocational programs - Assessment of best practices in vocational training in other communities - Development of implementation strategy and Board approval	Approximately \$30,000 - \$100,000 for study of vocational programs; Level of recurring costs for implementation hinges on recommended changes	Formulate goals and desired scope of study by end of the 2013 - 2014 school year. Initiate study by end of the 2014 - 2015 school year.
E10	Initiate a comprehensive campaign to increase parental involvement in the school system.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Development of goals of parental involvement program - Development of program design and approval of Board	Staff and direct cost needs contingent upon program design	Complete goals for program by end of the 2013 - 2014 school year. Begin implementation of program by end of the 2014 - 2015 school year.
E11	Initiate a public outreach campaign targeted both to real estate agents and the general public.	Jefferson Parish Public Schools (JPPS)	- Development of program design - Approval of program by Board - Roll-out of specific components of campaign (e.g. social media, website improvements, etc.)	Staff and direct cost needs contingent upon program design	Complete goals for program by end of the 2013 - 2014 school year. Begin program design by end of the 2014 - 2015 school year.

Conclusion

Much has changed since the original *EDGE 2020* Education plan was completed in the spring of 2008. Jefferson Parish schools have continued to improve in academic performance, but they remain mired at the bottom of the New Orleans metropolitan area and below the statewide average. Orleans Parish has experienced phenomenal gains in student performance over the past several years—gains that have exceeded even the most ambitious expectations. Also, in New Orleans and in other communities, there is growing evidence that with the right leadership, vision, and policies in place, performance gains are indeed possible even with a disadvantaged student population.

This is the single biggest shift in this new iteration of the Education plan—the idea that the socioeconomic profile of JPPS can no longer be an excuse for the system’s lackluster performance. Performance gains can and must be possible with a high percentage of free and reduced lunch students. In the past, attracting middle income families was seen as the primary means to turn around the school system. A greater middle class constituency is now seen as less of a *cause for school improvement and more of an effect*, as academic gains in Jefferson’s public schools will happen with or without the immediate presence of the middle class.

The end goals of both the original plan and this revised Education plan remain the same, though: to build a public education system that provides an exemplary education to its students and that, in so doing, makes Jefferson Parish a more compelling home for new residents and businesses.

The goal of this plan remains the same: to build an exemplary public education system that makes Jefferson a compelling location for new residents and businesses.

Acknowledgments

JEDCO and GCR would like to thank Mr. Jim Garvey for his continued stewardship of the *EDGE 2020* Education Strike Force. We would also like to thank Dr. James Meza, Superintendent of Jefferson Parish Public Schools, and Jacob Landry, Special Advisor to the Superintendent, for their contributions to this report.



700 Churchill Parkway
Avondale, LA 70094
504 875 3908 fax 504 875 3923



GCR Inc.

2021 Lakeshore Drive, Ste. 500
New Orleans, LA 70122
504 304 2500 fax 504 304 2525
