

Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000

LOUISIANA

*This profile was verified by the staff of the Louisiana Department of Education in July 2000.
All information was current as of that date.*

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.

Louisiana is in the process of implementing a new assessment program – the **LEAP 21 tests** – as part of its Reaching for Results initiative. The standards-based tests were field tested in spring of 1998, and the implementation process began in the spring of 1999. By spring of 2002, the LEAP 21 tests will be fully implemented at grades 4, 8, and the secondary level in the subject areas of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)* The LEAP for the 21st Century test (or LEAP 21) is the state's new criterion-referenced testing program, the CRT at the high school level is the Graduation Exit Examination (GEE 21). The Iowa Tests (ITBS and ITED) constitute the norm-referenced component. Louisiana also has a kindergarten screening program and participates in the NAEP assessment.
- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

- The LEAP 21 tests are administered to students in grades 4 and 8 in the following subjects: English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. The high school CRT is commonly known as the Graduation Exit Exam (GEE 21). Not yet administered in its new format, the current GEE will continue to be administered at grades 10 and 11 until the new format is phased in, beginning Spring 2001.
 - Students in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 take the ITBS test in the following areas: Reading, Language, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Sources of Information. Students in grade 9 take the ITED test in the following areas: Vocabulary, Ability to Interpret Literary Materials, Correctness and Appropriateness of Expression, Ability to Do Studies Materials, Analysis of Social Studies Materials, Analysis of Science Materials, and Use of Sources of Information.
- *Norm or Criterion Referenced Both*
 - *Matrix or Census Testing Census*
 - *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.* The LEAP 21 tests consist of multiple choice, open-ended, short written answer, constructed response, and essay questions. The English test consists of approximately 50% open ended items (or points), and the Math, Science, and Social Studies tests consist of approximately 20% open ended items (or points).
 - *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window):* March
 - *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*
Louisiana does administer a high school exit examination - the Graduation Exit Exam (GEE). The exam became a requirement for high school graduation beginning with the 1991 graduating class. All regular education and special education students who are in specially designed regular instructional programs are required to take the GEE. Students in the 10th grade take the Written Composition, English Language Arts, and Mathematics tests, and students in the 11th grade take the Science and Social Studies tests. Retest administrations are offered twice during the 11th grade and three times during the 12th grade. An additional retest opportunity for non-graduating seniors is offered in June. Remedial assistance is provided by the local school district for students who fail one or more parts of the exam. The new GEE 21 will be phased in beginning Spring 2001.
 - *Other Assessments* ACT, SAT, Developmental Reading Assessment, Kindergarten Developmental Readiness Screening Test
 - *Transitional or Final Assessment System* Implementing final assessment system.

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*

The tests were developed through a three-way collaboration between committees of teachers, a commercial testing vendor, and the Department of Education staff. The initial development of the assessment was completed by Advanced Systems (now renamed Measured Progress). Subsequently, the test questions were reviewed by committees of Louisiana teachers and subjected to their approval. A bias committee also reviewed all potential test items.

4. What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?

There are no state requirements for local assessments, although districts may choose to administer their own assessments.

5. Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?

The LEAP tests were developed to be directly aligned with the content standards. Some LEAP 21 tests are still being implemented, but the system will be fully implemented in Spring of 2002.

6. What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?

The LEAP 21 and GEE 21 are aligned with state standards. The tests were developed based on the state curriculum, and each question was reviewed by a committee of Louisiana teachers to ensure alignment to the standards.

7. How is the data included in the state assessment system used?

- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification.*
- *Teacher, School and/or District accountability*
- *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)*
- *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.*
- *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers*
- *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)*

The data from the state assessment system has several uses. Beginning in the fall of 2000, Louisiana will retain 4th and 8th grade students based on their LEAP 21 scores. After the initial Spring test, summer school is offered, and a retest is given in July. In addition, assessment data is used for school accountability and Title I evaluation. As part of the school accountability program, school that are in Corrective Action must use assessment data in preparing a revised School Improvement Plan. Finally, data is used for the identification of students for special programs and for instructional guidance.

8. Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what

is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

No changes are anticipated, aside from the continued process of implementing the new assessment and accountability system.

9. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.

One issue that Louisiana officials highlighted is the practical matter of ensuring a quick turnaround from the time of testing to the time that assessment results are released to the public. There is a good deal of pressure on the Department to get results out quickly, and they have done so, but with considerable effort from the staff and vendors.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?

According to Louisiana policy, all students in Louisiana must participate in district and statewide assessments. Louisiana school systems were strongly encouraged to submit a Transition Assurance Plan to the Louisiana Department of Education. This plan provides an assurance that at least 80% of students with disabilities would participate in LEAP 21.

An IEP team must make a decision about the type of statewide assessment in which a student will participate (on level, out-of-level, or LEAP Alternate Assessment) in order to appropriately design a student's IEP. Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria and criteria for out-of-level testing have been developed. On an annual basis, IEP committees should use these criteria to determine if students are eligible to participate in Alternate Assessment. It is important to note that, even though a child may participate in Alternate Assessment one year, the IEP committee may determine in a subsequent year that the student should participate in LEAP 21.

The LEAP Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria are as follows (for each item, IEP committee members should indicate "agree" or "disagree"):

- The student cannot address the content assessed in statewide assessments, even with extensive accommodations.
- The results of the statewide large-scale assessments will not provide or have not provided an accurate assessment of the student's progress in the student's educational program.
- The student requires extensive instruction in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, and generalize skills necessary for application in school, work, home and community environments.
- Current longitudinal data (e.g., classroom observations, task analyses, progress on IEP objectives, evaluations, and parental information) indicate the student should participate in alternate assessment.
- The student's demonstrated academic/cognitive ability limits his/her capability to complete the FULL requirements of the general education curriculum.

- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is not solely based on the student’s disability according to Bulletin 1508.
- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is not solely based on the student’s visual and/or auditory disability.
- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is not solely based on the student’s emotional-behavioral disability.
- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is not solely based on the student’s physical and/or motor disability.
- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is not solely based on the student’s learning disability.
- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is not solely based on the excessive or extended absences.
- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is not solely based on social, cultural, and/or economic differences.
- The decision for LEAP Alternate Assessment is an IEP Committee decision, rather than an administrative decision.

With regard to Limited English Proficiency students, Louisiana allows a deferment for students who have been enrolled in an English speaking school fewer than two consecutive academic school years. The Department is currently considering changes to the deferment policy. The students must also have parental permission to be deferred.

2. What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?

Louisiana policy states that **all** students with disabilities are to participate in statewide assessments. To accommodate these students, test accommodations are permitted provided that they are used in the students’ classroom instruction and classroom assessment and are documented on either their IEP or Section 504 plan. In addition, at least 60 days prior to test administration, a Verification of Section 504 Disability form must be completed for each Section 504 student using accommodations and submitted to the District Test Coordinator, who must forward the forms to the Louisiana Department of Education prior to testing. A check mark indicates that the accommodation may be used if the above requirements have been met. Other accommodations may be used if the above requirements have been met and they do not provide an unfair advantage over other students or invalidate the purpose of the test.

Accommodations	LEAP 21	ITBS	ITED	GEE
Extended/Adjusted Time	✓	✓	✓	✓
Repeated Directions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Large Print	✓	✓	✓	✓
Braille	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transferred Answers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Answers Recorded	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual/Small Group Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓

Communication Assistance Exception: Passages, questions and distractors must not be signed on the indicated tests:	✓ Exception: Reading & Responding	✓ Exception: Reading Comprehension	✓ Exception: Ability to Interpret Library Materials	✓ Exception: Reading Comprehension
Test Read Aloud Exception: Passages, questions, and distractors must not be read on the indicated tests:	✓ Exception: Reading & Responding	✓ Exception: Reading Comprehension	✓ Exception: Ability to Interpret Library Materials	✓ Exception: Reading Comprehension
Student reads test to test administrator	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assistive Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multiplication or Addition Grid	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student highlights in test booklet	✓	✓	✓	✓
Word processing for written responses	✓			✓
Spell check on written responses	✓			✓

The following accommodations are allowed for Limited English Proficiency students:

- ✓ Extended time,
- ✓ Individual/small group administration
- ✓ Repeated directions
- ✓ Provision of English-native language word-to-word dictionary with no definitions
- ✓ Test administered by an English as a second language teacher or an individual providing language services.

Louisiana is currently considering the addition of tests read aloud as an accommodation.

3. Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?

No, Louisiana does not offer assessments in languages other than English.

4. Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?

Louisiana is in the process of developing an alternate assessment, which will be in place no later than July 1, 2000. It was field tested in Spring 2000 and is currently undergoing minor revisions. Until the alternate assessment is fully implemented, LEAs are to continue to use their current assessment procedures (e.g., behavior charting, task analysis, progress reports, and portfolios) for students participating in Alternate Assessment.

5. Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?

Yes, Louisiana has the goal of full inclusion of students with disabilities and LEP students on statewide tests. Also, students with disabilities and LEP students are included in the determination of the School Performance Scores, the measure used for the School Accountability Program.

6. Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

As the high stakes assessments are implemented, the Louisiana Department of Education will continue to review policies regarding assessment and ensure their appropriateness.

Performance Standards

1. How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?

Louisiana has established the following achievement levels:

Achievement Level	Definition	Estimated Percent of Points Needed
Advanced	A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the proficient level of mastery	About 85-100%
Proficient	A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling	About 70-84%
Basic (Louisiana's 10-year goal)	A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling	About 50-69%
Approaching Basic (Minimum to proceed to next grade)	A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.	About 40-49%
Unsatisfactory (Failing grade)	A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.	About 39% and below.

The percentage of points needed for each level varies, depending on the test (English or math) and grade (4 or 8). These percentages are based on the 1999 LEAP 21 test results.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, dropout rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

- *Target level*
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required*

The following table presents Louisiana’s 10-Year and 20-year Education Goals

	10-Year Goal (Score = 100)	20-Year Goals (Score = 150)
CRT - LEAP Tests	Average student score at Basic	Average student score at Proficient
NRT – The Iowa Tests	Average composite standard score corresponding to the 55th percentile rank in the tested grade level.	Average composite standard score corresponding to the 75th percentile rank in the tested grade level.
Attendance	95% grades (K-8) 93% (grades 9-12)	98% (grades 7-8) 96% (grades 9-12)
Dropout Rate	4% (grades 7-8) 7% (grades 9-12)	2% (grades 7-8) 3% (grades 9-12)

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

The state calculates the K-8 School Performance Scores based on the following four indicators:

- LEAP 21 Tests: 60%
- The Iowa Tests: 30%
- Student Attendance: 10% (K-6) 5% (7-8)
- Dropout Rate: 5% (7-8)

The state will calculate the 9-12 School Performance Scores based on the following five indicators:

- GEE 21 Tests: 50%
- The Iowa Tests: 20%
- Graduation Index: 20%
- Student Attendance: 5%
- Dropout Rate: 5%

School Performance Scores range from 1 to beyond 100. A score of 100 indicates that a school has reached the 10-Year Goal; a score of 150 indicates the school has reached the 20-Year Goal. For more detailed information, please refer to the section on *State Accountability*, below.

The state has formulas for calculating each school's CRT index, NRT index, attendance index, and dropout index. These scores are then multiplied by the relevant percentage (i.e. 60% for the K-8 CRT) and summed to reach the School Performance Score.

4. Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?

The scores of every student who is eligible to take the LEAP 21 and the Iowa Tests will be included in the calculation of the School Performance Score. During the summer of 1999 for K-8 schools and summer of 2001 for 9-12 schools, each school will receive two School Performance Scores:

- A score including only regular education students (including gifted, talented, speech-impaired only, and 504 students)
- A score including regular education students AND students with disabilities (only those students eligible to participate in the LEAP 21 and the Iowa Tests).

For purposes of determining Academically Unacceptable Schools, during the summer of 1999 for K-8 and during the summer 2001 for 9-12 schools, the School Performance Score that includes only regular education students will be used.

Other exceptions may be made for schools with a high proportion of highly mobile students. For more details, please refer to the section on *State Accountability*, below.

5. Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

No changes are anticipated at this time.

6. What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?

The statewide results for 1998-99 data revealed the following:

- 1 school received a "school of academic excellence" label, with an SPS of above 150.
- 14 schools received "school of academic distinction" labels, scoring between 125 and 149.9
- 95 schools received "school of academic achievement" labels, scoring between 100 and 124.9
- 524 schools received "above average" labels, scoring above the state's average score of 69.4 but below 99.9
- 497 schools received "below average" labels, scoring between 30.1 and the state's average score of 69.3
- 57 schools received "unacceptable" labels, scoring between zero and 30.

Reporting Performance Data

1. Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:

- *Student reports*

The state produces individual student reports which are sent to district offices, who in turn send them to parents. The student reports include LEAP 21 results for each content area and Iowa test results.

- *School reports*

Louisiana produces School Report Cards and School Accountability Reports

School Report Cards contain information on:

- ✓ Enrollment (regular and special education)
- ✓ Class size
- ✓ School performance score and performance category
- ✓ Accountability index scores (10-Year Goal, LEAP 21, Iowa Tests, Attendance, Dropout Index)
- ✓ Explanation of SPS weights
- ✓ Proficiency levels by grade and by subject
- ✓ Graph of necessary improvements

School Accountability Reports include the following information:

- ✓ School Performance Score and Performance Category
- ✓ ITBS and ITED test takers and results
- ✓ LEAP 21 test takers (including those exempted and not exempted)
- ✓ LEAP 21 results by proficiency level and subject
- ✓ Attendance and dropout rates

- *District reports*

The **District Composite Report** includes information on:

- ✓ Parish socioeconomic and demographic overview
- ✓ Financial overview
- ✓ Staff characteristics
- ✓ Class size
- ✓ Attendance rates
- ✓ Suspension and expulsion rates
- ✓ Developmental Reading Assessment results
- ✓ LEAP 21 results (by grade, subject, and proficiency level at the school, district, and state levels)
- ✓ GEE results (by grade, subject, and proficiency level at the school, district, and state levels)
- ✓ Iowa tests results (by grade, subject, and proficiency level at the school, district, and state levels)
- ✓ ACT results
- ✓ First-time freshman performance

- *State reports*

The following data is available on the Department of Education website:

- ✓ Developmental Reading Assessment results (first, second, and third graders' reading abilities)
- ✓ Graduation Exit Exam results (summary of grade 10 and 11 results by state, district, and subject)
- ✓ Iowa Tests results (composite national percentile rank)
- ✓ LEAP 21 test results (by grade, subject, percentage of students at different proficiency levels, and district)
- ✓ ACT test results (by state and district).

A copy of the **State Education Progress Report** may be downloaded from the state education website and includes the following information:

- ✓ Foundations of school improvement
- ✓ Implementation of Louisiana's accountability system
- ✓ A picture of Louisiana public schools and accountability schools
- ✓ Performance Categories of 1,188 accountability schools
- ✓ 1999 accountability performance of the largest Louisiana districts
- ✓ 1998-99 ethnic composition of the public school student population,
- ✓ Economic condition of public school population by district
- ✓ Percent of student participation in free and reduced lunch program by performance category
- ✓ Performance of Title I vs. non-Title I accountability schools,
- ✓ Class size data
- ✓ Staff data
- ✓ Attendance data
- ✓ Percent student attendance by performance level
- ✓ LEAP 21 results by subject and proficiency level
- ✓ Iowa test results by percentile rank and grade level
- ✓ Developmental reading results
- ✓ ACT results
- ✓ First-time college freshman performance
- ✓ Educational attainment of Louisiana citizens
- ✓ Labor force data
- ✓ Public expenditure data.

- *Title I reports*

Louisiana produces Title I reports in accordance with federal regulations.

2. How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?

All of the above data is available on the state department of education website. In addition, all data is sent to the media; the Department of Education coordinates the release of results with schools as well as the press.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

Louisiana disaggregates based on gender, ethnicity, free/reduced lunch eligibility (SES), students with disabilities by exceptionality, and limited English proficiency. The state does not routinely release disaggregated information to the press, however, districts have the data and it is available to anyone who requests it.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?*

Louisiana is implementing a new assessment and accountability system, so trend data is not currently available.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

The reported assessment data reflects the scores of all those who were not exempted from the assessment – including those who did not take the test but were not exempted, and hence received a score of zero.

6. *What are the state’s requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

Louisiana has guidelines on the use of assessment data in school and district improvement planning, most of which are associated with the different levels of Corrective Action in the accountability system. For detailed information, please refer to the section entitled *State Accountability*.

7. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

No changes are anticipated at this time.

8. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

Louisiana is concerned with ensuring that the information they release to the public is clearly presented and understood by all education stakeholders. In the past, officials spent a good deal of time conducting focus groups with parents in order to determine the amount of information that was necessary to be clear, without providing an overload of information that could be potentially confusing.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.

Passage of the Legislative Act 478 in 1997 mandated the establishment of a statewide school and district accountability system. The new accountability system in Louisiana features the assessment of school performance, followed by an emphasis on school improvement. Rather than being punitive in nature (although there are Corrective Actions) the Louisiana model is focused on the continual growth of schools.

2. What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?

- Who is held accountable (students, schools, districts)?
- For what are they held accountable (adequate yearly progress, student achievement, processes, multiple non-cognitive indicators, etc)?
- Using what criteria (state assessments, local assessments, both state and local criteria)?
- To what targets or performance levels?
- With what consequences (promotion or graduation, program improvement, additional planning, state takeover, rewards, assistance, etc.)?

Organize the response into the following subsections:

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Beginning in the spring 2000, no 4th or 8th grade student can be promoted if he or she receives an “unsatisfactory” score on the Math or English Language Arts LEAP 21 tests. Intensive summer school must be offered for these students – including transportation - with a retest at the end of the summer.

Students who pass the LEAP 21 tests are not automatically promoted, however. They must also meet any other criteria set by the school district, including grades, attendance, and other factors. Parents of students at risk of failing will be required to sign a student-parent-school compact (or contract) that identifies the responsibilities of each party.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Louisiana’s accountability program has a number of components that focus on the school level:

10- and 20-Year State Goals

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) has set 10- and 20-Year State Goals which depict the minimum education performance expected of all schools. Louisiana schools which meet the state’s 10-year goal will be performing at about the current national average. Those meeting the 20-year goal will be performing on par with an average school in the nation’s higher performing states.

School Performance Scores:

A School Performance Score will be calculated for each school, based upon that school’s performance on four indicators. These School Performance Scores will range from 0 to beyond

100. A score of 100 indicates that a school has reached the 10-year goal; a score of 150 indicates the school has reached the 20-year goal.

Each indicator will be given a weight as follows (K-8):

- LEAP 21 Tests: 60%
 - The Iowa Tests: 30%
 - Student Attendance: 10% (K-6), 5% (7-8)
 - Dropout Rate: 5% (7-8)
-
- Each indicator will be given a weight as follows (9-12):
 - GEE 21 Tests: 50%
 - The Iowa Tests: 20%
 - Graduation Index: 20%
 - Student Attendance: 5%
 - Dropout Rate: 5%

Initial baseline School Performance Scores were calculated during the Summer 1999 and released in September 1999 for K-8 schools, and will be calculated in the Summer 2001 for Grades 9-12. Subsequent School Performance Scores will be the average of two year's worth of data.

Growth Targets

Growth Targets represent the progress a school must make every two years to reach the 10- and 20-Year goals. Generally, each school's Growth Target will be the difference between that school's School Performance Score and 100, divided by the number of remaining growth cycles, OR 5 points, whichever is greater. There is also a slight adjustment made based upon the percentage of special education students within a given school. Every two years, a new School Performance Score will be calculated for each school, and a new Growth Target will be set for the next two-year interval.

Growth Labels

A school will receive a label based upon that school's success in reaching its Growth Target.

These Growth Labels are:

- Exemplary Academic Growth: A school exceeding its Growth Target by 5 points
- Recognized Academic Growth: A school meeting its Growth Target, or exceeding it by less than 5 points.
- Minimal Academic Growth: A school improving some, but not meeting its Growth Target
- School in Decline: A school with flat or declining School Performance Scores.

School Performance Categories

Louisiana has the following labels to describe school's performance:

- Academically Unacceptable School: Performance score below 30.0
- Academically Below Average: Performance score between 30.1 and 69.3
- Academically Above Average: Performance score between 69.4 and 99.9

- School of Academic Achievement: Performance score between 100.0 and 124.9
- School of Academic Distinction: Performance score between 125.0 and 149.9
- School of Academic Excellence: Performance score of 150.0 or above

When schools reach the 10-year goal (i.e. have a SPS of 100 or above) they must still show growth each cycle in order to receive recommended monetary rewards and the growth labels of Exemplary or Recognized Academic Growth. If they fail to meet their Growth Targets, however, they are no longer subject to Corrective Actions (as long as their score remains above 100). In addition, the labels of Minimal Academic Growth and School in Decline will no longer be used for these schools.

Rewards/Recognition

A school shall receive recognition and possible monetary awards when it meets or surpasses its Growth Targets and when it shows growth in the performance of students who are classified as high poverty.

Corrective Actions

Three levels of Corrective Action are as follows:

Level I: All Louisiana schools were required to have a School Improvement Plan in place by May of 1998. Those schools falling within the category of Academically Unacceptable and placed in Corrective Action I shall be required to review and either revise or completely rewrite their plan, with the assistance of a District Assistance Team, and submit it to the Division of School Standards, Accountability, and Assistance. The plan shall contain the following essential research-based components.

- A. A statement of the school's beliefs, vision, and mission;
- B. A comprehensive needs assessment which shall include the following quantitative and qualitative data: Student academic performances (CRT and NRT) disaggregated by grade vs. content vs. exceptionality; demographic indicators; human, material, and financial resources; interviews with stakeholders; student and teacher focus groups; questionnaires with stakeholders.
- C. Measurable objectives and benchmarks
- D. Effective research-based methods and strategies
- E. Parental and community involvement activities
- F. Professional development component aligned with assessed needs.
- G. External technical support and assistance
- H. Evaluation strategies
- I. Coordination of resources and analysis of school budget
- J. Action plan with time lines and specific activities.

Each school in Corrective Action I shall be required to provide assurances that it worked with a District Assistance Team to develop its School Improvement Plan, and that the plan has the essential components listed above.

An Annual Evaluation of the Level of Implementation of the School Improvement Plan: This evaluation shall be designed by the Louisiana Department of Education through the services of a

contracted evaluator and mailed to the schools as soon as they are identified. It shall be required on an annual basis, with the first year's data pertaining to implementation of services. The evaluation for the second year shall contain some implementation data, but shall pertain particularly to student performance as determined by the School Performance Score.

Level II: A highly trained Distinguished Educator (DE) will be assigned to schools by the state. These DEs will work in an advisory capacity to help the school improve student achievement. The DE will make a public report to the school board on his/her recommendations for school improvement. Districts must then publicly respond to these recommendations. For any Academically Unacceptable Schools within Level II, parents will have a right to transfer their children to a higher performing public school.

Level III: The Distinguished Educator will continue to serve in an advisory capacity. All parents of schools in Level III now have the right to transfer their children to a higher performing public school. Districts must develop a Reconstitution Plan by Spring of the first year in this level, and submit the plan to BESE for approval. If a Corrective Actions Level III school has achieved at least 40% of its Growth Target or 5 points, whichever is greater, during its first year, then that school may proceed to a second year in Level III. If such minimum growth is not achieved during the first year of Level III, but BESE has approved its Reconstitution Plan, then the school shall implement the Reconstitution Plan during the beginning of the next school year. If BESE does not approve the Reconstitution Plan AND a given school does not meet the required minimum growth, the school shall lose state approval and all state funds.

Corrective Action Level Movement

A school initially enters Corrective Actions Level I if:

- It has a School Performance Score of less than 30
- It fails to reach its Growth Target and has a School Performance Score of less than 100.

A school moves into more intensive levels of Corrective Actions if it does not demonstrate adequate growth (in any two-year cycle) as follows:

- A school with a School Performance Score of 30 or less (i.e. Academically Unacceptable School) will move to the next Corrective Actions level as long as its score is 30 or less.
- A school with a School Performance Score of 30.1 to 50.0 will move to the next level of Corrective Actions if its score increases less than 5 points. If its School Performance Score increases 5 points, but less than its Growth Target, the school may remain in Corrective Actions Level I for up to two cycles and Level II for one cycle.
- A school with a School Performance Score of 50.1 to 99.9 will remain in Corrective Actions Level I as long as its growth is at least its Growth Target minus 5 points but not less than 0.1 points. There is no maximum number of cycles during the first 10 years that such a school can stay in Level I as long as some growth is shown each cycle.

A school exits Corrective Action (a) if an Academically Unacceptable School's SPS moves above 30 and it achieves its Growth Target, or (b) if an above-30 SPS school achieves its Growth Target.

Student Transfer Policy

As part of Correction Actions, parents will have the right to transfer their children to another public school when:

- An Academically Unacceptable School begins Level II Corrective Actions. Or
- Any school begins Level III Corrective Actions.

Reconstitution

Districts must develop and submit a Reconstitution Plan to BESE for each school during its first year in Level III Corrective Actions. This Reconstitution Plan indicates how the district will remedy the school's inadequate growth in student achievement. The plan must specify how and what reorganization will occur, and how/why these proposed changes will lead to improved student achievement.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The District has various responsibilities at the different levels of Corrective Action; otherwise, there are no specific district accountability policies currently in effect.

3. What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?

- *Relative growth* Louisiana has established growth targets, based on the necessary growth for a school to achieve the 10- and 20-year goals.
- *Absolute target* Louisiana has established two absolute targets: the 10-year goal (Louisiana students should be at the current national average, or SPS 100) and the 20-year goal (Louisiana students should be on par with an average school in the nation's higher performing states, or SPS 150).
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*

4. Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?

A test score will be entered for all eligible students in every school, regardless of how long that student has been enrolled in that school. However, if a school has 10% or more of its students enrolled from outside the district after October 1, it may request the Department of Education calculate what its School Performance Score would have been if these out-of-district enrollees had not been included. If there is more than a five point difference between the two School Performance Scores, then the school may appeal any negative accountability actions taken by the state (Corrective Actions).

For any eligible student who does not take the test (including those who are absent during testing), an index score of "0" will be entered. The only exception is a students who was sick during the testing and re-testing periods AND has formal medical documentation for that period.

The scores of every student who is eligible to take the LEAP 21 and the Iowa Tests will be included in the calculation of the School Performance Score. During the summer of 1999 for K-8 schools and summer of 2001 for 9-12 schools, each school will receive two School Performance Scores:

- A score including only regular education students (including gifted, talented, speech-impaired only, and 504 students)
- A score including regular education students AND students with disabilities (only those students eligible to participate in the LEAP 21 and the Iowa Tests).

For purposes of determining Academically Unacceptable Schools, during the summer of 1999 for K-8 and during the summer 2001 for 9-12 schools, the School Performance Score that includes only regular education students will be used.

For all other purposes, including establishing each school's Growth Target, the School Performance Score inclusive of students with disabilities will be used as the baseline. However, with the acknowledgement that the percentage of students with disabilities among schools varies significantly and that the rate of growth for such students, when compared to regular education students, may be different, two weighted factors are used in the calculation of each school's Growth Target:

- 1) The percentage of students with disabilities at that school eligible to participate in LEAP 21 and the Iowa Tests as compared to the percentage of regular education students eligible to participate in LEAP 21 and the Iowa Tests; and
- 2) The number of accountability cycles required for students with disabilities to master the same content as compared to the number of accountability cycles required for students without disabilities.

5. How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?

The general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools are aligned. In fact, many of the accountability requirements were based upon those of Title I. The Louisiana Title I system uses the Growth Targets – described above – for the definition of adequate yearly progress.

6. Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?

In general, subgroup performance is not used as a specific indicator of improvement. However, to be eligible for rewards, schools are required to show improvement in at-risk population scores.

7. Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?

University Laboratory Schools and Charter Schools are included in the state's accountability system following the same rules that apply to traditional and/or alternative schools. The only exception is those very small schools which do not have two grades levels of testing data and/or a statistically significant number of students.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Louisiana is in the process of elaborating the high school accountability system. State officials intend to develop a graduation index for each school, which would include a point system that would allocate points for different types of diplomas that graduates receive (i.e. regular diplomas, diplomas with endorsements, GED, etc.).

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

One challenge Louisiana has encountered is scheduling the release of test data and of School Performance Scores. Assessment data is available in the summer, whereas the state does not release School Performance Scores until the fall. As a consequence, some schools have begun calculating their own School Performance Scores upon receipt of assessment results (the state has provided schools with the necessary formulas), so that they may begin anticipating any action that may be required of them.

Louisiana hopes to fully integrate the accountability and school improvement processes, including the alignment of data and release of data, grant requirements and scheduling of grant proposals, and the preparation of school improvement plans. The state hopes to encourage schools to focus on needs assessments, and to emphasize that accountability should be a catalyst for improvement.

Finally, state officials note that the development of the accountability system has been helped by the fact that the state legislature is generally supportive of the Department of Education and of their efforts.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Schools in Louisiana are identified as low-performing based on their School Performance Scores (SPS) and Growth Targets. The SPS incorporates norm-referenced and criterion-referenced test results, attendance rates, and drop-out rates, and the Growth Target is the degree of annual improvement a school must achieve in order to reach the state's 10- and 20-year goals.

For example, a school is identified as Academically Unacceptable if its Performance score below 30, and as Academically Below Average: Performance score between 30.1 and 69.3. A school initially enters Corrective Actions Level if it has a School Performance Score of less than 30 or if it fails to reach its Growth Target and has a School Performance Score of less than 100.

The Title I system relies upon the Growth Targets as well, hence the identification process and criteria are aligned.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

The state is responsible for identifying schools as low-performing, through the calculation of the School Performance Scores and the determination of whether schools have achieved their Growth Target.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

Louisiana provides all of the above types of assistance, for details, please see below.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

- *School/district support teams* yes, see below
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators* yes, see below
- *SDE staff*
- *Other – Explain Resource guides*, see below

The state offers the following support to low-performing schools:

District Assistance Teams: District and other personnel, as appropriate, will be trained to become members of District Assistance Teams.

Distinguished Educators: Distinguished Educators (DEs) will be highly effective educators (teachers, administrators, principals, university personnel, retired teachers, etc.) selected and trained by the State. DEs will take a leave of absence (two years or more) from their districts to help schools in Level II and Level III Corrective Actions.

School Improvement Fund: The legislature approved a School Improvement Fund to help low-performing schools.

Effective Practices Resource Guide: The Department of Education will identify best school improvement practices and disseminate the information to schools and districts through a published report.

Furthermore, using workshops, conferences and other means, the Louisiana Department of Education works to inform and empower local education agencies to provide professional development for local instructional personnel.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

Support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts does not differ as the systems are aligned. Moreover, most schools that do receive support (i.e. those that are in Corrective Action) are Title I schools.

The support is not generally provided for all schools and districts; it is specifically designed to help those that are low performing.

6. Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?

As described earlier in the *State Accountability* section, a school exits Corrective Action (a) if an Academically Unacceptable School's SPS moves above 30 and it achieves its Growth Target, or (b) if an above-30 SPS school achieves its Growth Target.

7. Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?

During Corrective Actions Level I, a school must redevelop its school improvement plan. If a school enters Level II, the Distinguished Educator must make a public report to the school board on his/her recommendations for school improvement.

Districts must develop and submit a Reconstitution Plan to BESE for each school during its first year in Level III Corrective Actions.

8. Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?

No changes are currently anticipated.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?

- *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
- *What targets have been established?*
- *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
- *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

The Louisiana system of determining adequate yearly progress is aligned with the general state accountability system, under which schools receive School Performance Scores based on four weighted elements: the LEAP 21 assessments, the Iowa Tests, attendance rate and dropout rate. Local assessments are not used. The state has set the same 10-year and 20-year goals (described earlier) for Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?

For K-8 Title I schools in Louisiana, the definition of adequate yearly progress is based on the school growth targets. Growth Targets represent the progress a school must make every two years to reach the 10- and 20-Year goals. Generally, each school's Growth Target will be the difference between that school's School Performance Score and 100, divided by the number of remaining growth cycles, OR 5 points, whichever is greater. Every two years, a new School Performance Score will be calculated for each school, and a new Growth Target will be set for the next two-year interval. The baseline for K-8 schools was determined in the spring of 1999, and these schools were given a growth target to reach by 2001.

High schools, grades 9-12, will be in a transitional system until 2001. Under this system, a school must score 80% passage rate (defined as the "Basic" performance level) on the LEAP in English Language Arts or Math, or 1% growth, to make adequate yearly progress.

A district would be identified as not making adequate yearly progress if more than 50% of a district's schools were in school improvement.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the district plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

The state identifies schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress, based on the School Performance Scores which are calculated by the state.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

Elementary and middle schools (K-8) enter Title I school improvement when they enter Corrective Actions under the state accountability system. Title I high schools (9-12) are currently operating under a transitional system. At the secondary level, failure to make adequate yearly progress, either in English Language Arts or Mathematics, for two years out of three places a school in school improvement.

There are no school districts currently in district improvement, which would result if 50% of a district's schools were in school improvement. Orleans Parish has the most Title I schools in school improvement, but Orleans is the largest school system in Louisiana.

All schools in school improvement (Corrective Actions under the accountability system) are required to write a comprehensive school improvement plan.

In order to exit school improvement, K-8 schools must meet their growth targets . Schools that serve grades 9-12, under the transitional system, must make at least 80% passage rate on the LEAP in English Language Arts or math or 1% growth, for two consecutive years to exit school improvement.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

Louisiana provides all of the above types of assistance. For example, with regard to evaluation and planning, professors from the College of Education at Louisiana State University and State Accountability staff have developed a matrix, rubric and guidelines for writing comprehensive school improvement plans. With regard to financial assistance, the state legislature has established a school improvement fund to help those in need of improvement.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*

Louisiana has trained District Assistance Teams (DATs) to work with schools in need of improvement. The Louisiana Department of Education has eight regional service centers throughout the state whose personnel have been trained to update current DATs and provide training for new DATs. The training includes the Title I law in addition to accountability. Moreover, the School Accountability office has contracted with two professors from the Louisiana State University to assist with school improvement planning. Finally, Distinguished Educators have been piloted in twelve school systems to aid buildings that are in school improvement.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Waivers have not played a significant role in Louisiana

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Louisiana is in the process of fully implementing their assessment and accountability systems, to which Title I accountability is aligned. As the final LEAP 21 assessments are implemented at the high school level, Louisiana will adopt a final definition of adequate yearly progress for secondary schools.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

Yes, the Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress are aligned: both are based on the School Performance Scores and Growth Targets, and systems of support are based on Corrective Actions.

10. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.

Although assistance for schools in need of improvement is available for both Title I and non-Title I schools, the majority of schools in school improvement are Title I. Only a few are non-Title I, and if they were in any other district than Orleans, they probably would be Title I. Because there is such a high concentration of poverty in Orleans, the district is unable to serve all schools that would qualify for Title I services based on the percentage of free and reduced lunch, were they in other districts.

In addition, the accountability system began with a bar that was set rather low (a School Performance Score of 30). Helping the Title I schools that are in school improvement represents a major challenge for Louisiana. Teacher pay is low, and some of the poorer-performing districts have the highest teacher turnover rates and the lowest salary schedules because there are extremely limited resources within the district.

Contact Information

Assessment

Scott Norton
Assessment Director
Louisiana Department of Education
626 North 4th. Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064
(225) 342-3406
snorton@mail.doe.state.la.us

Accountability

Margaret K. Singer
School Planning and Improvement
Louisiana Department of Education
626 North 4th. Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064
(225) 342-3514
msinger@mail.doe.state.la.us

Title I

Nancy Wagner

Title I Unit Leader

Louisiana Department of Education

626 North 4th. Street

Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064

(225) 342-9591

nwagner@mail.doe.state.la.us