

# The New Orleans Youth Index

— December 2015 —



THE DATA CENTER

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Many people served on the advisory committee for *The New Orleans Youth Index*, providing valuable advice and comments on the indicators selected and the report's findings and implications. For their contributions, we wish to acknowledge:

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# Background

## WHAT IS ORLEANS PARISH?

*Orleans Parish is the city of New Orleans. New Orleans and Orleans Parish are interchangeable. Their boundaries are the same and they contain the same population.*

The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. In New Orleans, how successful we are in raising that next generation is a collective concern. In early 2015, The Data Center published a widely cited report that brought attention to the issue of child poverty in New Orleans. It pointed out that more than 1 in 3 children in New Orleans live in poverty. It also highlighted scientific research that concludes that child poverty may be the single greatest threat to children’s healthy brain development.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently, *The New Orleans Index at Ten* found that New Orleans’ large-scale, post-Katrina school reform efforts had brought measurable improvements—with the share of students attending failing schools dramatically reduced as compared to pre-Katrina—but that graduation rates remain low (below 80 percent), indicating that more needs to be done to improve youth outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

This was not news to the many agencies serving the needs of youth in New Orleans. Indeed in 2012, a group of community leaders embarked on a comprehensive initiative to improve life outcomes for young people. Recognizing that it indeed takes a village to raise a child, they set out to identify opportunities to work together to strengthen supports for children/youth and their families, yielding “YouthShift”—a youth master planning effort.

An essential first step in any planning effort is the development of a baseline. *The New Orleans Youth Index 2015* provides that baseline. It is a statistical snapshot of the well-being of New Orleans children/youth, designed to inform the development of strategies that can improve the academic, social, and behavioral outcomes of children/youth age 0 to 24.

The indicators selected for *The Youth Index* are based on literature developed by the Forum for Youth Investment. The Forum organizes youth outcomes by age level (from birth to young adulthood) and development domains, which include:

- \* children/youth succeeding in school;
- \* children introduced to the concepts of work, youth and young adults ready for work;
- \* children/youth making healthy choices;
- \* children/youth having positive relationships with peers and adults;
- \* children/youth contributing to their community.

The Forum asserts that leaders should review baseline data to define their goals for children/youth and then review indicators that measure progress against these goals over time.

To assist leaders in selecting goals, *The Youth Index* provides comparisons between the city, the state, and the United States wherever possible. Because this is a baseline report, longitudinal measures are limited. Most of the indicators are drawn from publicly available datasets, such as the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) and the State of Louisiana Kids’ Dashboard, which are updated over time. Where appropriate, we indicate the need to develop more and better data. As regional leaders select goals and strategies, future reports will measure progress overtime.

The indicators in *The Youth Index* are organized into six priority areas—as identified by YouthShift—in which children/youth experience barriers to success. Those six priority areas are Health and Wellbeing, Economic Stability, Learning, Space and Place, Safety and Justice, and Youth Voice.

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# Health and Well-Being

# Immunizations

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

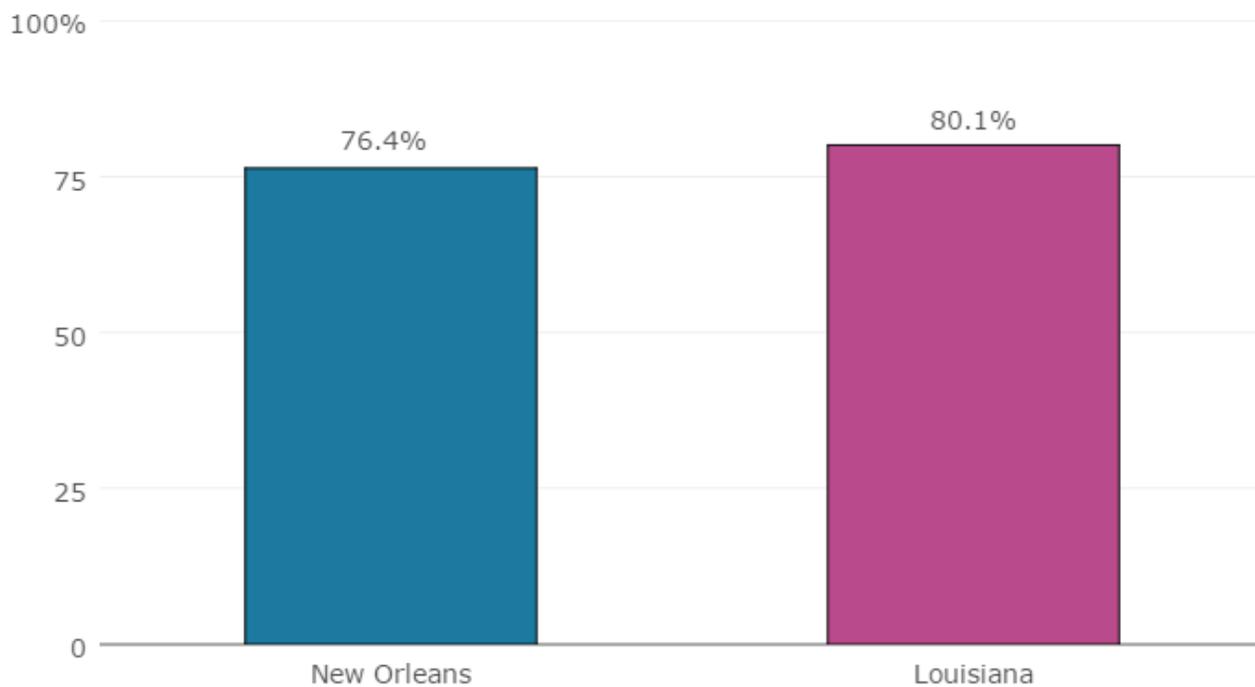
One of the best ways to protect children from harmful diseases is to make sure they have all of their vaccinations so that they become immunized against diseases.<sup>1</sup> There are 16 potentially harmful vaccine-preventable diseases that could lead to hospitalization or even death of infants, children, or teens.<sup>2</sup> Immunization reduces the vulnerability of all children to catching diseases and improves the health of all children.

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

According to the most current data available, 76.4 percent of children in New Orleans were immunized compared to 80.1 percent in Louisiana. The state's target is 90 percent.<sup>3</sup> Both New Orleans and the state as a whole were below the state's target percentage during the first quarter of 2014.

Source: State of Louisiana: Children's Cabinet. (2015). Louisiana kids dashboard: Health care: Immunizations: 19-35 months.

### CHILD IMMUNIZATION RATES 2014 QUARTER 1



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

This data was obtained from the Louisiana Kids' Dashboard.<sup>4</sup> The data is reported on a quarterly basis. The immunization rate is a measure of the percent of children vaccinated with Diphtheria-Tetanus Toxoids-acellular Pertussis vaccine (DTaP) (4 or more doses) and Measles-Mumps-Rubella vaccine (MMR) (1 or more doses). These vaccines prevent younger children from getting sick with serious but preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and more. The Department of Health and Hospitals has an Immunizations Program that works with health officials around the state to update and monitor the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids, which stores patient vaccination records in a central location.

# Obesity and Overweight

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

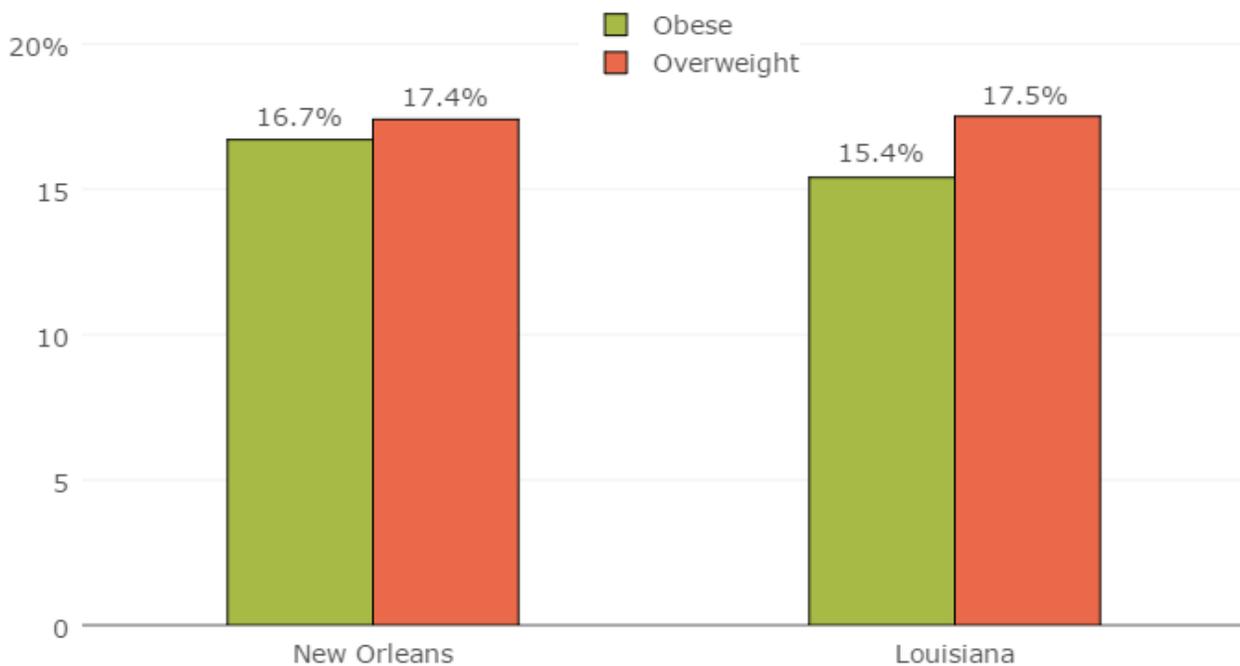
Obesity in childhood has both immediate and long-term effects on health and well-being.<sup>5</sup> Obese children are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure, prediabetes, bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.<sup>6</sup> They are also more likely to be obese as adults and subsequently more at risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.<sup>7</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

Source: New Orleans Health Department. (2013). *Healthy lifestyle in New Orleans*.

In 2007, an estimated 16.7 percent of New Orleans children were obese and 17.4 percent were overweight. In Louisiana, 15.4 percent of the children were obese and 17.5 percent were overweight.

### PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT 2007



### TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The data reported here was collected through the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), which monitors priority health-risk behaviors and the prevalence of obesity and asthma among youth and young adults.<sup>8</sup> YRBSS includes a national school-based survey conducted by The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local school-based surveys conducted by state and local education and health agencies.<sup>9</sup> In 2007, as a component of YRBSS, communities participating in the Steps Cooperative Agreement Program (Steps Program) also conducted school-based surveys of students in grades 9–12 in their program intervention areas.<sup>10</sup> These communities used a standard questionnaire that measured tobacco use, dietary behaviors, and physical activity and monitored the prevalence of obesity and asthma. Unfortunately, there has not been any local data collected for New Orleans since 2007. There is no indicator that is based on publicly available data that more accurately provides a picture of how well kids in New Orleans are faring in this area.

# Physical Activity

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

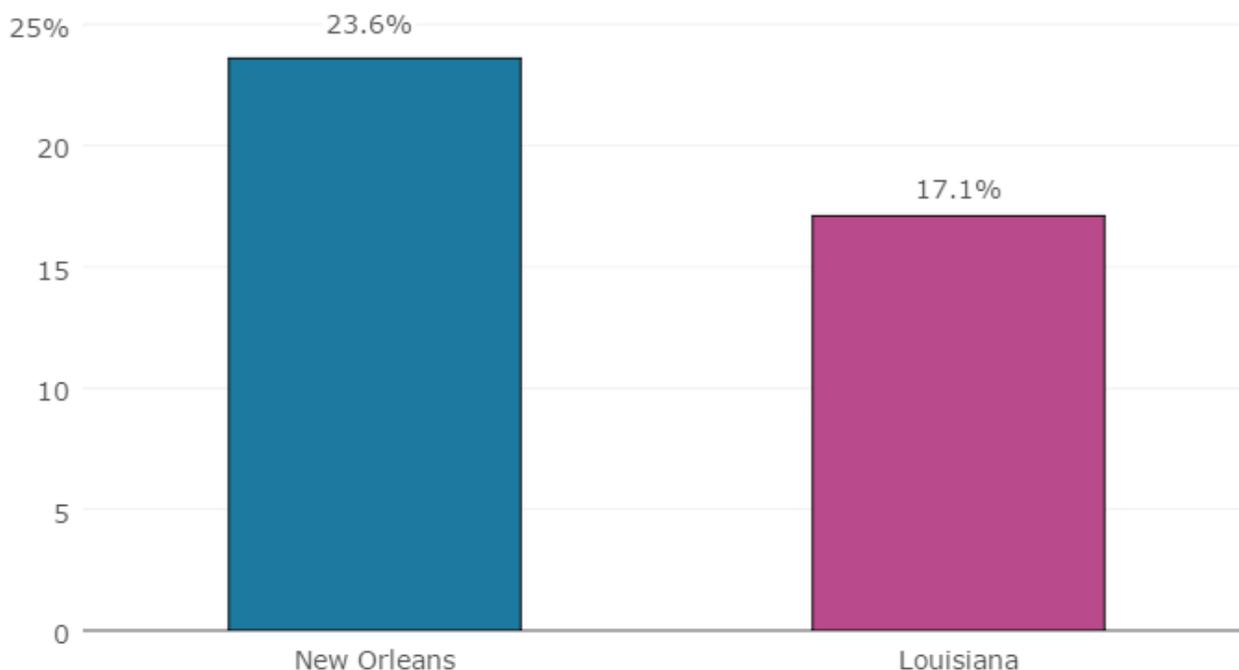
Regular physical activity increases physical health and psychological well-being. It helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles, helps reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and colon cancer.<sup>11</sup> Research has also shown that it reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological well-being.<sup>12</sup> On the flip side, physical inactivity and poor diet, can increase children's risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, and arthritis.<sup>13</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

According to the most current data available, 23.6 percent of New Orleans high school students did not participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on at least 1 day in the last 7 days compared to 17.1 percent in Louisiana.

Source: Shanklin, S., Brener, N. D., Kann, L., Griffin-Blake, S., Ussery-Hall, A., Easton, A., & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2008). Youth risk behavior surveillance—selected Steps communities, United States, 2007. *MMWR Surveill Summ*, 57(12), 1-27. And Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). Youth online: High school YRBS.

## PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN AT LEAST 60 MINUTES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS, 2007



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The data reported here was collected through the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), which monitors priority health-risk behaviors and the prevalence of obesity and asthma among youth and young adults.<sup>14</sup> YRBSS includes a national school-based survey conducted by CDC and state and local school-based surveys conducted by state and local education and health agencies.<sup>15</sup> In 2007, as a component of YRBSS, communities participating in the Steps Cooperative Agreement Program (Steps Program) also conducted school-based surveys of students in grades 9–12 in their program intervention areas.<sup>16</sup> These communities used a standard questionnaire that measured tobacco use, dietary behaviors, and physical activity and monitored the prevalence of obesity and asthma. Unfortunately, there has not been any local data collected for New Orleans since 2007.

# Infant Mortality

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

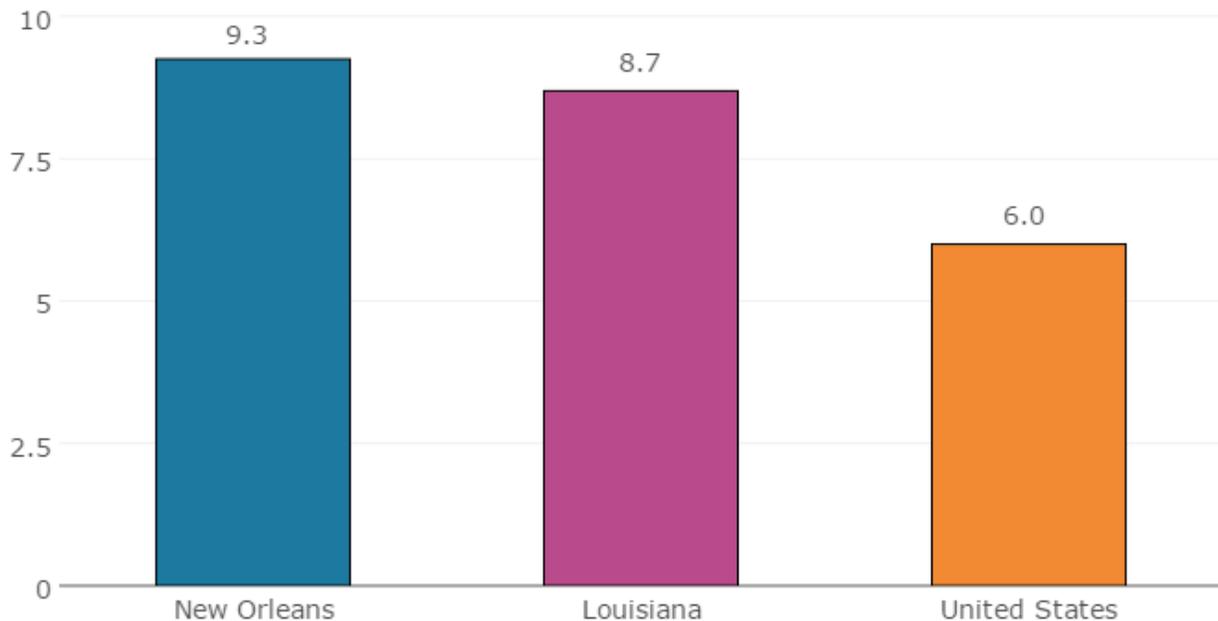
Infant mortality is commonly used as an indicator of population health and well-being.<sup>17</sup> Growing evidence suggests that infant mortality within a population is linked to that population's overall health and development across the lifespan.<sup>18</sup> Factors affecting the health of entire populations such as maternal health, access to medical care, socioeconomic status, and public health practices can also impact infant mortality rates.<sup>19</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In 2013, the New Orleans infant mortality rate was 9.3 per 1,000 live births compared to 8.7 for Louisiana. Both of those rates were higher than the national rate of 6.0 per 1,000 live births in 2013.<sup>20</sup>

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), and Division of Vital Statistics (DVS).

### INFANT DEATH RATES PER 1,000 BIRTHS, 2013



### TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Infant mortality refers to the death of a child within the first year of life. Center for Disease Control and Prevention Wide-ranging OnLine Data for Epidemiologic Research (CDC WONDER) data collection provides counts and rates for deaths of children under 1 year of age, occurring within the United States, to U.S. residents. To produce the data, information from death certificates has been linked to corresponding birth certificates.

# Low Birthweight

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

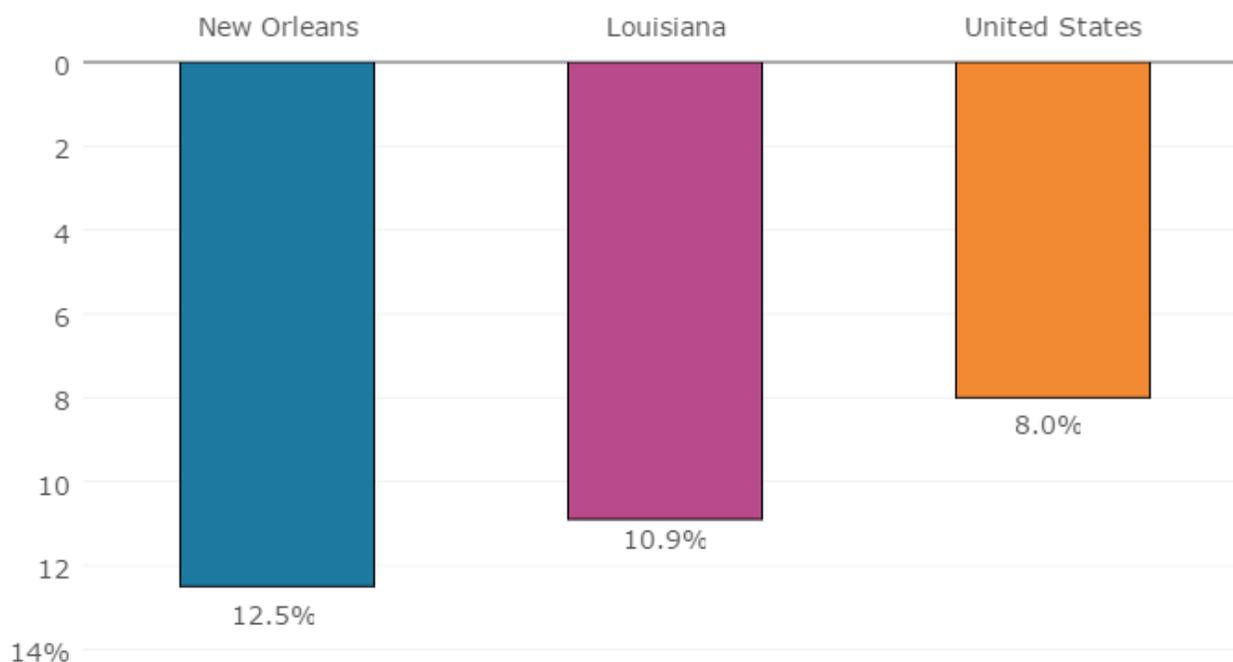
An indicator related to infant mortality is low birthweight. Infants born with low birthweights, weighing less than 5.5 pounds, are more likely to experience developmental and health problems and are more likely to die in the first year of life.<sup>21</sup> Babies born at low birthweight are also more likely than babies at normal weight to have health conditions later in life such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, and obesity.<sup>22</sup> Preterm birth, birth before 37 weeks, is the leading cause of low birthweight and infant mortality in the United States.<sup>23</sup> According to researchers at the National Academy of Sciences, "Preterm birth is a complex cluster of problems with a set of overlapping factors of influence. Its causes may include individual-level behavioral and psychosocial factors, neighborhood characteristics, environmental exposures, medical conditions, infertility treatments, biological factors, and genetics. Many of these factors occur in combination, particularly in those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged or who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups."<sup>24</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In 2013, New Orleans had a higher share of infants born low birthweight than the state of Louisiana and the United States. In New Orleans, 12.5 percent of infants born were low birthweight compared to 10.9 percent for the state and 8.0 percent for the United States.

Source: March of Dimes. (2015). National Center for Health Statistics, period linked birth/infant death data.

### PERCENT OF LIVE BIRTHS WITH LOW BIRTHWEIGHT 2013



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The data was obtained from the March of Dimes' PeriStats website.<sup>25</sup> PeriStats provides free access to maternal and infant health-related data at the U.S., state, county, and city level.

# Births to Teen Mothers

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

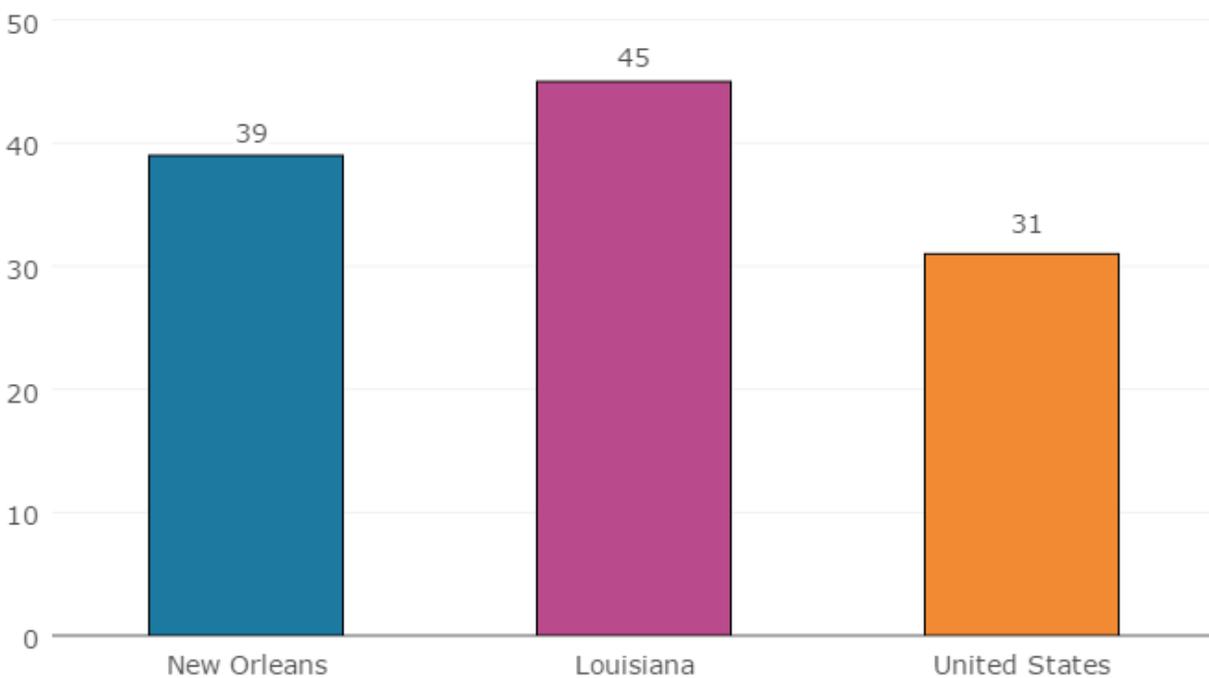
A number of negative outcomes are associated with teen childbearing. Teen parents are less likely to finish high school, are more likely to be poor as adults, and are more likely to rely on public assistance.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, children of teen mothers are more likely to have poorer educational, behavioral, and health outcomes.<sup>27</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

In 2011, 39 per 1,000 females between the ages of 15-19 in New Orleans gave birth compared to 45 per 1,000 teens across Louisiana. New Orleans fares better than Louisiana as a whole on this indicator. However, both New Orleans and Louisiana had teen birth rates higher than the national rate of 31 per 1,000.

Source: Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center. (2015). *Teen Mothers Ages 15 to 19*.

### BIRTHS TO TEEN MOTHERS PER 1,000 FEMALES AGE 15-19, 2011



### TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Teen birth rate data was obtained from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center.<sup>28</sup>

# Alleged Abuse and Neglect

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

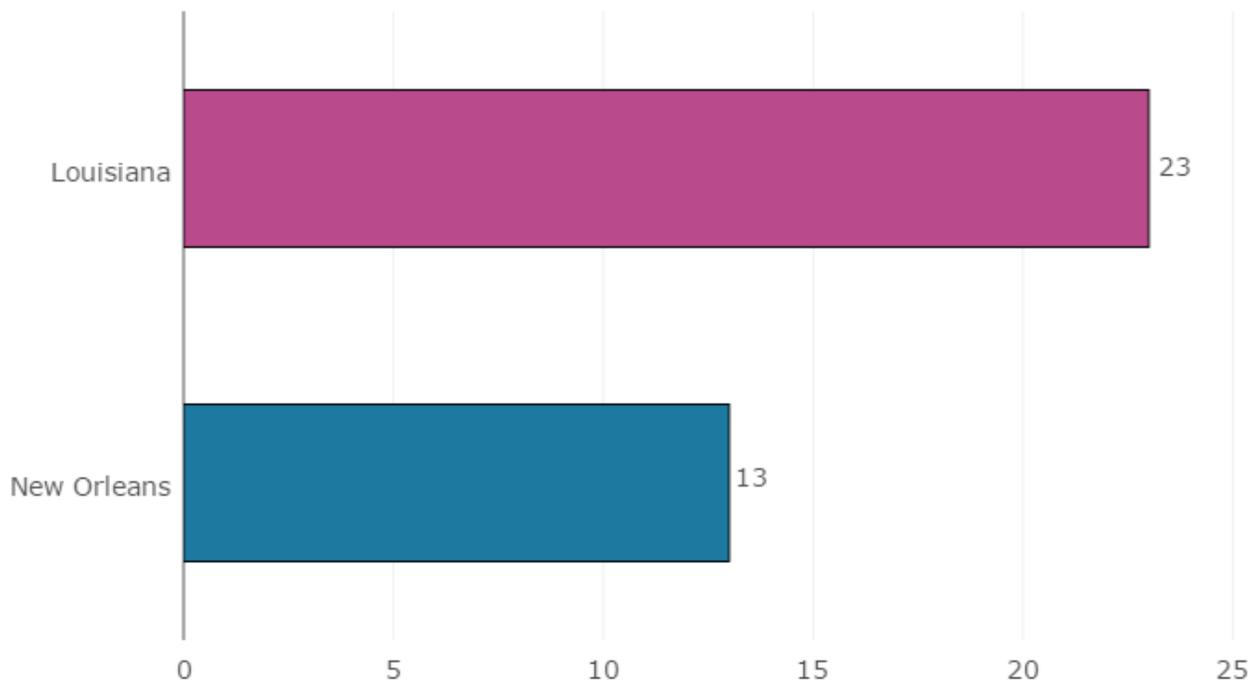
Studies have shown there are a variety of long-term consequences of child abuse and neglect.<sup>29</sup> These long-term effects include chronic health conditions, disrupted brain development, cognitive delay, language difficulties, behavioral problems, juvenile delinquency, alcohol and other drug abuse, low self-esteem, depression, relationship difficulties, anxiety, and other psychiatric disorders.<sup>30</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In 2010, 13 allegations of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children were reported in New Orleans compared to 23 per 1,000 children in Louisiana. New Orleans fares better than the state overall on this indicator.

Source: Kids Count Data Center. (2015). Children alleged to have been victims of abuse or neglect by type of abuse.

### CHILDREN ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT PER 1,000 CHILDREN, 2010



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The number and rates of allegations do not reflect the number or rates of abuse and neglect. Some allegations were confirmed as valid and others were not. However, an investigation that leads to an invalid or other finding only indicates that there was insufficient evidence to make a valid confirmation. In addition, experts argue that child abuse and neglect is underreported, and standards for reasonable suspicion of abuse and neglect are not always clear-cut. As a result, official reports do not capture all cases in which child abuse and neglect is suspected or even is detected or acted upon.<sup>31</sup> A non-Child Protective Services (CPS) study suggested that an estimated 1 in 4 U.S. children experience some form of child maltreatment in their lifetimes.<sup>32</sup>

# Economic Stability

# Child Poverty

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

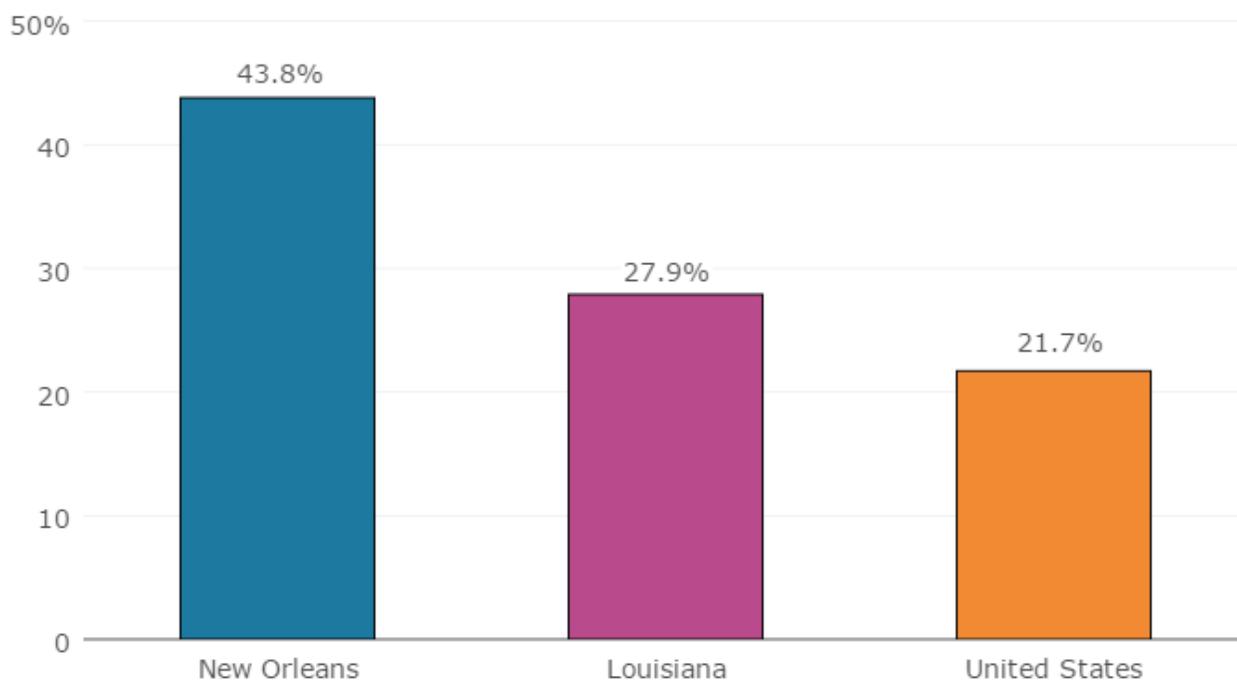
Scientific research has shown that child poverty can lead to chronic, toxic stress that disrupts the architecture of the developing brain.<sup>33</sup> Children in poverty are much more likely to experience exposure to violence, chronic neglect, and the accumulated burdens of economic hardship. This kind of chronic stress causes prolonged activation of the stress response system, which in turn can disrupt the development of brain architecture, leading to lifelong difficulties in learning, memory, and self-regulation.<sup>34</sup> In short, scholars argue that poverty may be the single greatest threat to children's healthy brain development.<sup>35</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In 2014, 43.8 percent of New Orleans children under 18 were in poverty. That percentage is much higher than the percentages for the state of Louisiana at 27.9 percent and 21.7 percent for the United States.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2014.

### PERCENT OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 BELOW POVERTY LEVEL 2014



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

*In 2013, the child poverty rate for New Orleans was 39 percent. Although the 2014 percent is higher than the 2013 percent, it is not a statistically significant difference.*

*By definition, poverty for children is a function of their family's household income. In other words, the wages of adult family members determine whether children live in poverty. Poverty status is determined by comparing a family's annual income to a set of poverty thresholds (in dollars) that vary by family size, number of children, and age of householder.<sup>36</sup> If a family's pre-tax income is less than their given poverty threshold, then that family and every individual in it are counted as living in poverty.*

# Kindergarten Readiness

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

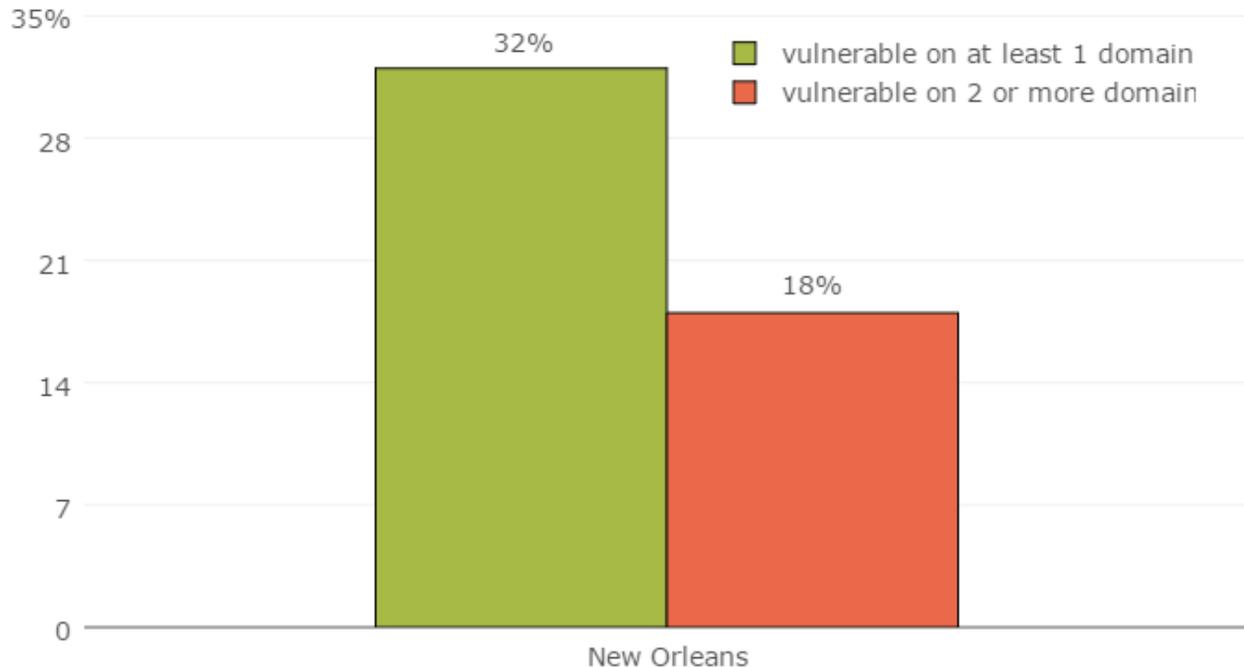
The achievements of the young adults of tomorrow can be shaped by the academic and nonacademic skills they possess at the time they enter school. School readiness has been shown to predict later school achievement, high school completion, and employment.<sup>37</sup> Children that lag behind their peers at school entry may have challenges that prevent them from reaching their full potential. It is important to remember that children who start school lagging behind others could have been helped by early intervention.<sup>38</sup> For this reason, it is imperative to determine which children can benefit from increased prevention and intervention efforts in all communities.

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In the 2013 school year, 32 percent of all children in New Orleans were vulnerable on at least one domain, with 18 percent vulnerable on two or more domains of school readiness. Compared to the national norms, New Orleans children are more vulnerable. The national norm rate of vulnerable on at least one domain is 26-32 percent. New Orleans is at the high end at 32 percent. The national norm rate for vulnerable on 2 or more domains is 13-16 percent. New Orleans is above that rate at 18 percent.

Source: Orleans Public Education Network. (2013). Early development instrument: 2012-2013 New Orleans Community profile.

### PERCENT OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN VULNERABLE ON 1 OR MORE DOMAINS OF SCHOOL READINESS 2013



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

To help quantify the extent of school readiness in neighborhoods in New Orleans, the Orleans Public Education Network (OPEN) coordinated the collection of comprehensive Early Development Instrument (EDI) data on 65 percent of all kindergarten age children in both public and private schools in Orleans Parish in the 2013 school year. This data provides a comprehensive assessment of our kindergarten children's school readiness—both by the school they attend, and by the neighborhood in which they live.

The EDI is a 104-item teacher checklist that measures school readiness as an indicator of children's early development. It was developed at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, and measures children's readiness to learn at school in five recommended domains.<sup>39</sup> The five domains are physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and general knowledge.

Each student receives a score based on the teacher-completed checklist and the score determines if the child is "vulnerable," "at-risk", "on-track," or "very ready" on each domain. Across all domains, performance on the EDI predicts their performance later in elementary school. An increase in vulnerabilities across the five domains increases the likelihood that children will struggle to meet basic competencies by third or fourth grade.<sup>40</sup> OPEN has received funding to conduct the EDI in schools during the 2016 school year. However, funding in the future is in question. Therefore, this indicator may not appear in future reports.

The EDI data was selected as a measure of Kindergarten readiness instead of any statewide assessments because a statewide assessment of kindergarten readiness has not been found. This may change in the future as Louisiana Legislature passed Act 3 in 2012, requiring the creation of a unified network of early childhood care and education that would establish a common expectation for excellence among all publicly-funded providers. When fully implemented in 2016, the networks will expand access to high quality, publicly funded early childhood programs to families across Louisiana to ensure more children enter school kindergarten ready.<sup>41</sup>

**“THERE CAN BE NO KEENER REVELATION OF A SOCIETY’S SOUL  
THAN THE WAY IN WHICH IT TREATS ITS CHILDREN.”**

**– Nelson Mandela**  
*Former President of South Africa*

# Lack of High School Diploma

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Research has shown that education matters for health more than ever before. Adults without a high school diploma can expect to die sooner, have higher rates of disease, and worse health. In addition, they risk greater disability and experience psychological stress at higher rates than more educated adults, especially adults with college degrees.<sup>42</sup> Further, when compared to people who earned a diploma or more, people without a diploma earn less and are more likely to be unemployed.<sup>43</sup>

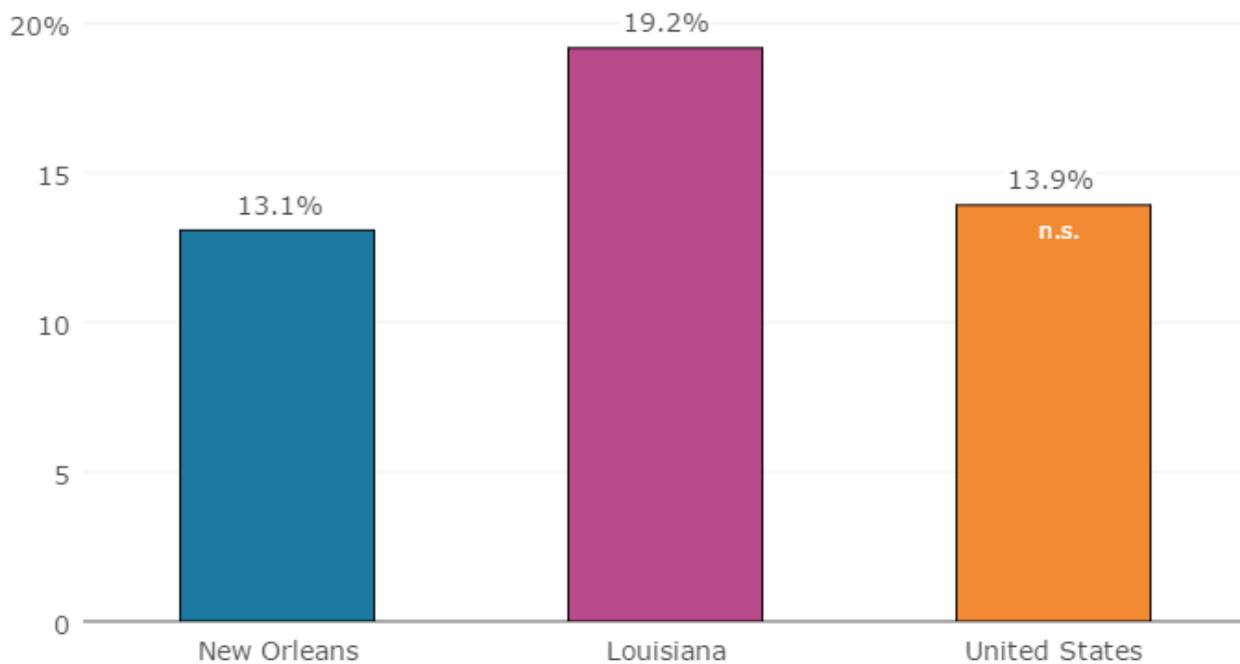
## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

In 2014, the share of young people age 18-24 in New Orleans who had completed less education than a high school diploma was 13.1 percent. New Orleans had a significantly lower share than the state of Louisiana, which was 19.2 percent. Louisiana had a significantly higher percent of young adults ages 18-24 who had not completed a high school diploma than the U.S. percent which was 13.9 percent.

*n.s.* = Difference between New Orleans and the United States is not significant at 95% confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2014.

## HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR LESS FOR THE POPULATION 18-24 YEARS OLD, 2014



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Educational attainment data is based on U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) data. Data on educational attainment was derived from answers to Question 11 on the 2014 ACS, which was asked of all respondents. Respondents are classified according to the highest degree or the highest level of school completed. The question included instructions for persons currently enrolled in school to report the level of the previous grade attended or the highest degree received.<sup>44</sup>

# Completed Bachelor's Degree or More

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Research has shown that earning a college education is a sound investment on one's future. The benefits of earning a college degree include a variety of economic well-being and career attainment benefits.<sup>45</sup> Today's college graduates earn more annually, have lower unemployment and poverty rates, and have more satisfaction with their jobs than those with only a high school diploma.<sup>46</sup> Further, when compared to people who earn an associate's degree, or some college, people who have a bachelor's degree earn more and are less likely to be unemployed.<sup>47</sup>

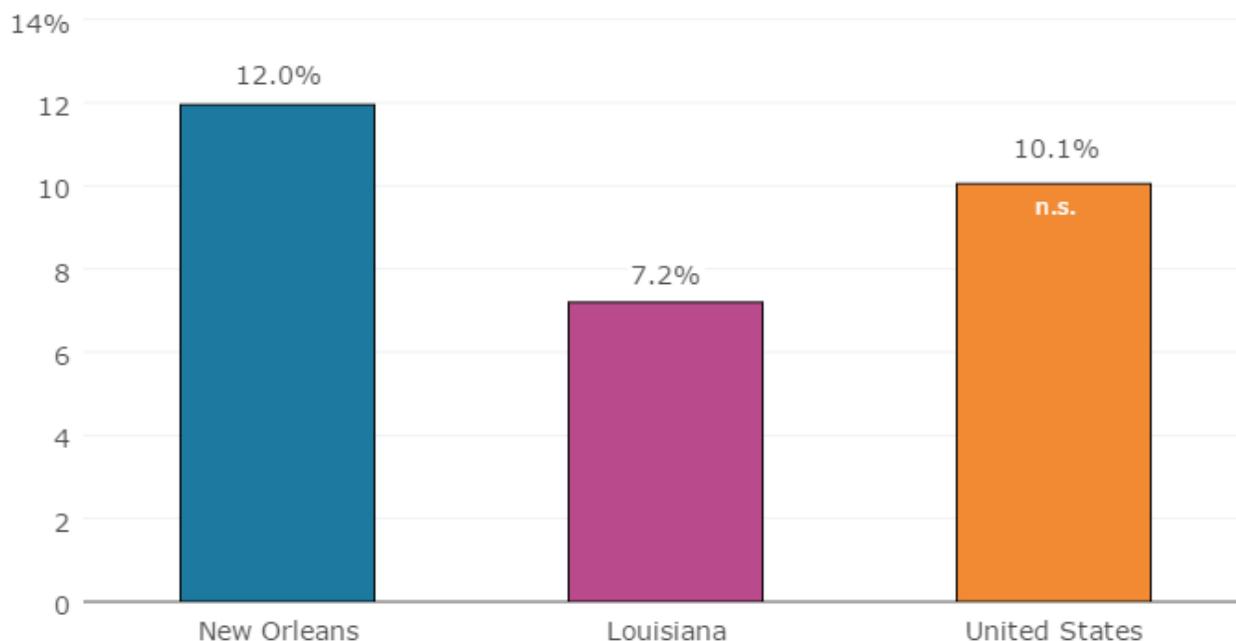
## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

In 2014, the share of young people age 18-24 who had completed a bachelor's degree in New Orleans was significantly higher than that of the state. The New Orleans share was 12.0 percent compared to the state which was only 7.2 percent.

*n.s.* = Difference between New Orleans and the United States is not significant at 95% confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2014.

### BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR MORE FOR THE POPULATION 18-24 YEARS OLD, 2014



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Educational attainment data is based on U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) data. Data on educational attainment was derived from answers to Question 11 on the 2014 ACS, which was asked of all respondents. Respondents are classified according to the highest degree or the highest level of school completed. The question included instructions for persons currently enrolled in school to report the level of the previous grade attended or the highest degree received.<sup>48</sup>

The state board of regents does provide a report on the degrees and certificates awarded by the home parish of the recipient. However, it does not provide the age of the completer. It also only includes data on the state's 34 public colleges, universities and professional schools.

# Youth Unemployment

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Most young people will be working their first jobs between the ages of 16 and 24 years old. Youths' first jobs could be critical to establishing social and economic stability for the rest of their lives. Youth employment can teach youth responsibility, help them develop organizational and time management skills, can help them form good work habits, gain valuable work experiences, and become financially independent.<sup>49</sup>

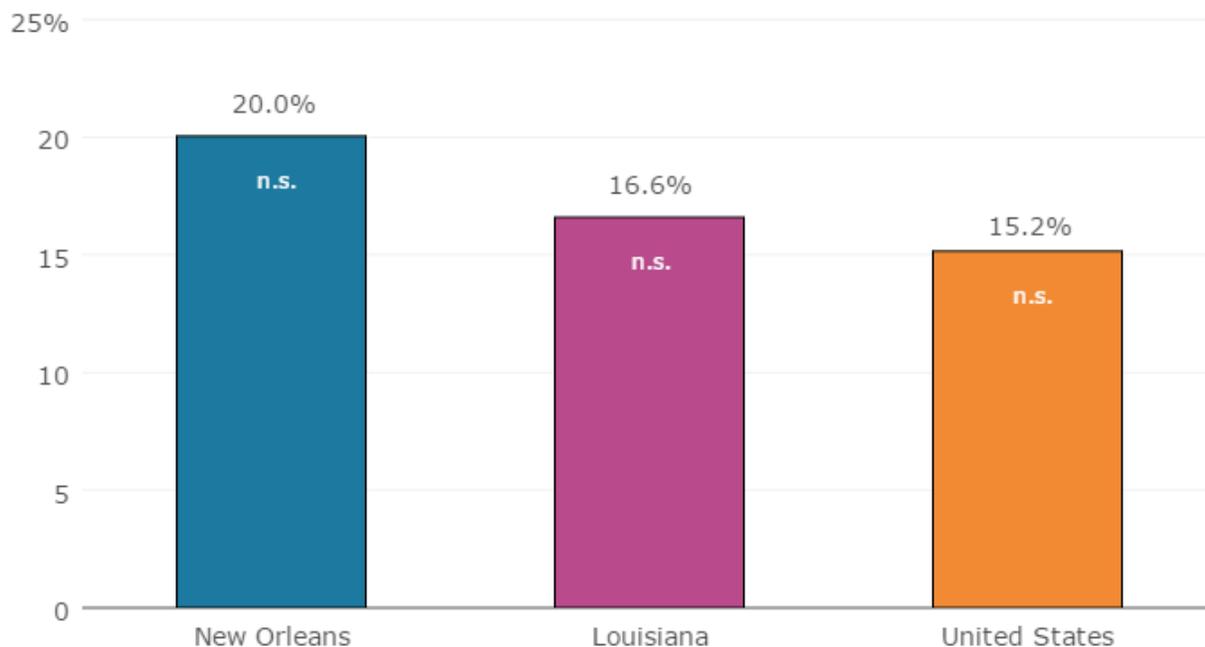
## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

In 2014, 20.0 percent of New Orleans young people age 16-24 were unemployed compared to 16.6 percent in Louisiana and 15.2 percent in the United States. New Orleans did not have a significantly higher youth unemployment rate than either the state or the United States. In addition, Louisiana's youth unemployment rate was not significantly higher than the U.S. rate.

*n.s.= Differences between all geographies are not significant at 95% confidence interval.*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2014.*

## PERCENT UNEMPLOYED FOR THE POPULATION 16-24 YEARS OLD, 2014



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The data on employment status was derived from Questions 29 and 35 to 37 in the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). All civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they (1) were neither "at work" nor "with a job but not at work" during the reference week, (2) were actively looking for work during the last 4 weeks, and (3) were available to start a job. Also included as unemployed are civilians who did not work at all during the reference week, were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off, and were available for work except for temporary illness.<sup>50</sup>

# Opportunity Youth

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Young people age 16-24 who are out of school and out of work are often referred to as disconnected youth, and in recent parlance, as opportunity youth, because of the potential value they could add to their communities.<sup>51</sup> Some of the pathways to disconnection include the following: leaving high school without a diploma, finishing high school or even college but still lacking the essential education or skills to obtain a decent job, having a criminal record that prevents or reduces the chances of employment, and having parenting/family responsibilities that impede employment or school attendance. In low-income communities, the incidence of disconnection is much more pronounced.<sup>52</sup>

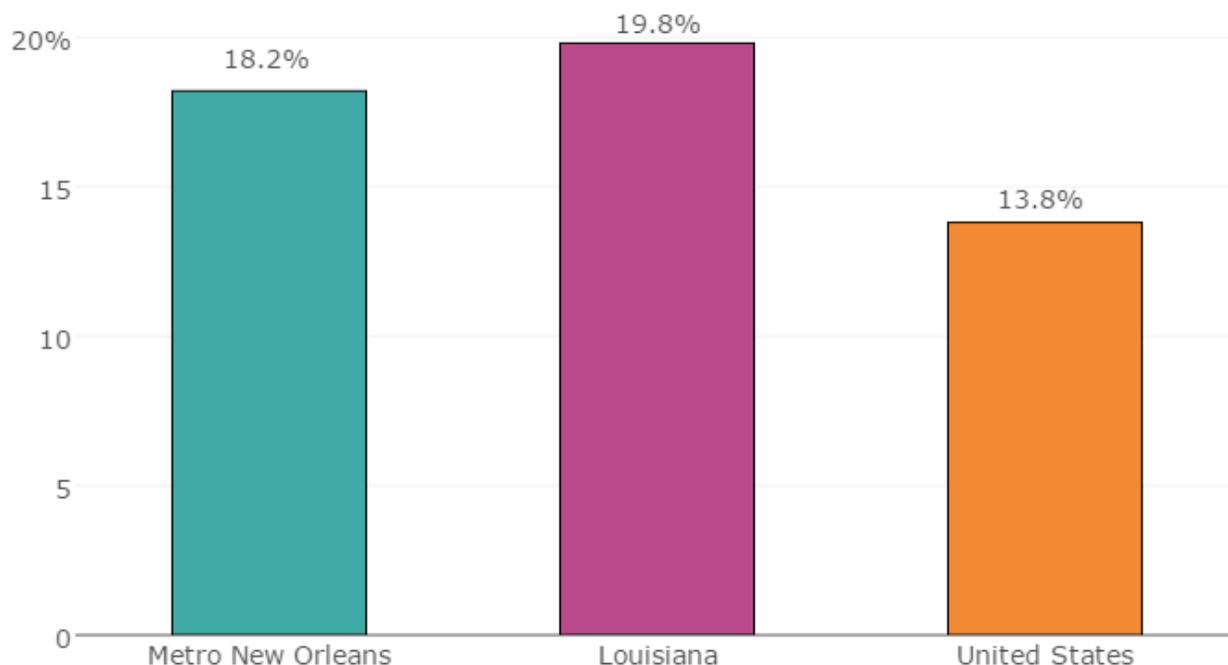
## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

In 2013, 18.2 percent of metro New Orleans youth were opportunity youth compared to 19.8 percent across the state of Louisiana and 13.8 percent across the United States.<sup>53</sup>

*Note: Metro New Orleans is made up of Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, St. Charles, St. John, St. James, and St. Tammany Parishes.*

*Source: Sims, Patrick. (2015). Reconnecting opportunity youth: Data reference guide.*

### PERCENT OPPORTUNITY YOUTH FOR THE POPULATION 16-24 YEARS OLD, 2013



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The Cowen Institute released its 2015 comprehensive examination of opportunity youth at the national, state, and metropolitan levels.<sup>54</sup> However, data is needed to understand the prevalence of opportunity youth in New Orleans, specifically. The U.S. Census Bureau dataset does not allow for analysis of this data at the parish level.

# Parental Employment

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

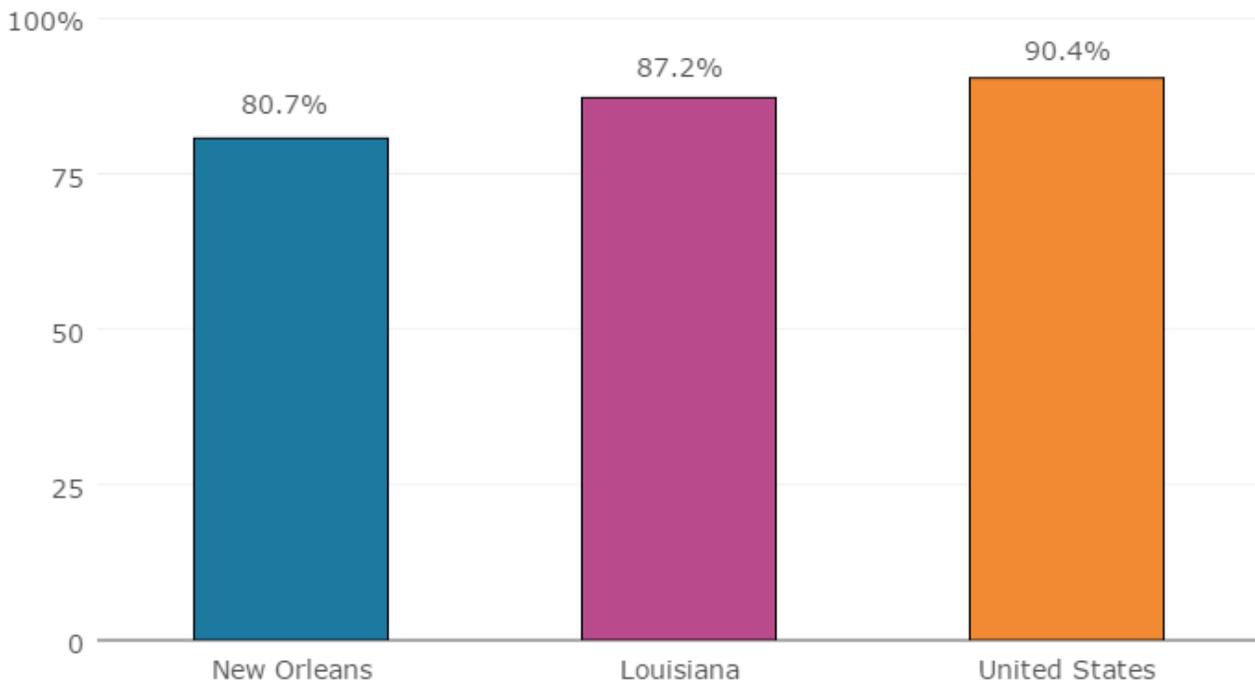
The financial stability of children in families is dependent on the parent's income, usually their income through work. Secure parental employment is associated with reduced risk for poverty, higher family income, and access to private insurance.<sup>55</sup> And higher family income is associated with positive child outcomes such as better health, behavior, academic achievement, and financial well-being as adults.<sup>56</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In 2014, the percent of children under 18 with at least one working parent in New Orleans was 80.7 percent. The percent of children with at least one working parent in Louisiana was 87.2 percent. Both rates for New Orleans and the state of Louisiana were significantly lower than the rate for the United States, which was 90.4 percent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2014.

### PERCENT OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WITH AT LEAST ONE PARENT WORKING 2014



### TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Data on employment status was derived from Questions 29 and 35 to 37 in the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS).<sup>57</sup> Employed includes part-time employment.

Learning

# Third Grade English Language Scores

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

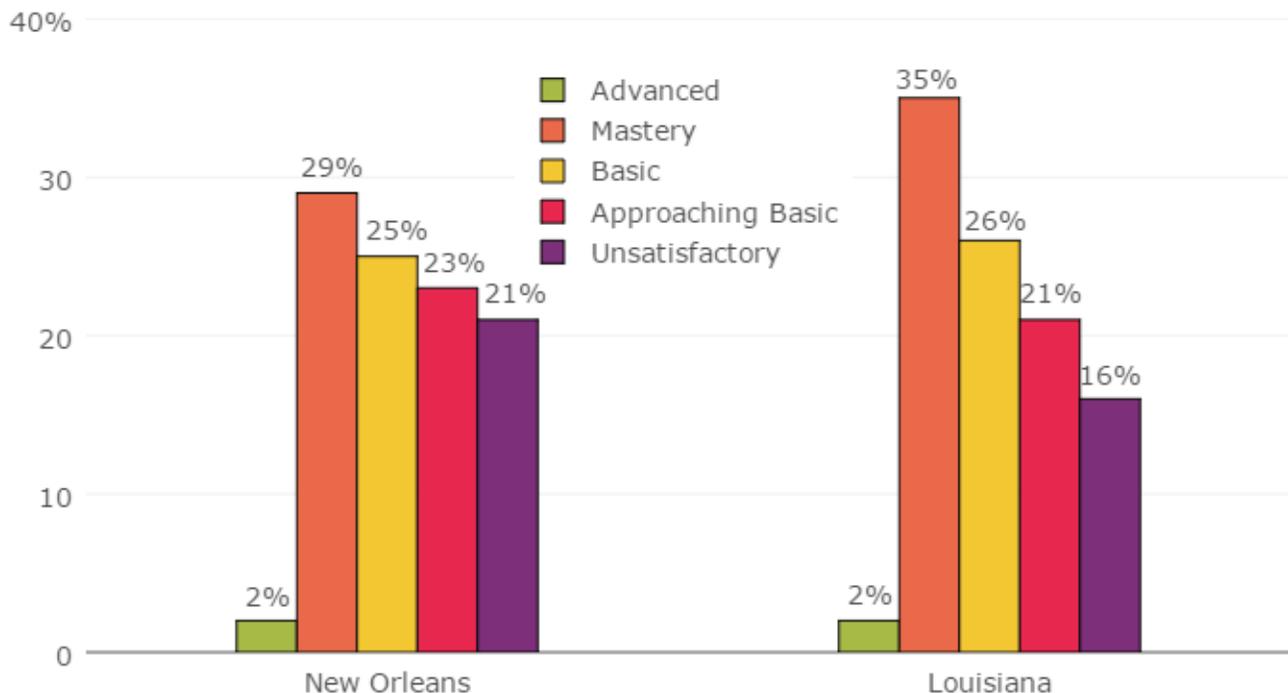
It has been widely reported that until third grade, children learn to read; after third grade, they read to learn.<sup>58</sup> For that reason, reading skills in third grade is considered an important early warning indicator of academic performance. Reading skills in third grade is highly predictive of future academic performance.<sup>59</sup> Third grade children with limited reading abilities will have a harder time keeping up with other students across multiple subjects—including math, science, and other languages.

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In 2015, the percent of New Orleans third grade students scoring at basic or above on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests of English language skills was 56 percent. The percent of Louisiana third grade students who scored basic or above on the PARCC tests of English language skills was 63 percent.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education. (2015). *State district achievement level summary report 2015*.

### PERCENT OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS AT EACH ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL SPRING 2015, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

There have been major changes in how Louisiana has assessed early reading over the past 15 years. First, to comply with the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, Louisiana developed the Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (iLEAP). The iLEAP English language arts and math tests are administered at grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9. The iLEAP reading subscore was the official assessment of early reading. All items were specifically developed for the iLEAP according to the state content standards, benchmarks, and Louisiana Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs).<sup>60</sup> Then after 2011, the iLEAP reading subscore was discontinued as the official assessment of early reading in Louisiana. Louisiana law mandates that the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) require administration of an early reading assessment by all public elementary schools enrolling K–3 students.<sup>61</sup> The assessment that has been approved by SBESE for this purpose beginning in the fall of 2011 is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 7th Edition, (DIBELS Next). DIBELS Next is used by districts/schools to screen early literacy skills, reflect progress in reading skills, predict a student’s likelihood of future success in reading achievement, and indicate areas in which a student needs intervention.

For the 2016 school year, some districts have submitted waiver request applications to use other assessment tools besides DIBELS for students in kindergarten–third grade. These districts believe these other tools are better in supporting reading assessment and instruction.<sup>62</sup> In order to get statewide or city wide data, a common reading assessment and consolidated data is needed to determine the reading levels of students in all schools, public and private. Currently, the Louisiana Department of Education reports this data separately for individual schools in the Recovery School District.

Because some schools and districts choose to opt out of using the DIBELS, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests of English language skills were used as an assessment of reading skills instead. In the 2015 school year, the PARCC tests replaced the LEAP and iLEAP exams in English and math.<sup>63</sup>

“THE POTENTIAL POSSIBILITIES OF ANY CHILD ARE THE MOST INTRIGUING AND STIMULATING IN ALL CREATION”

– Ray L. Wilbur

Third President of Stanford University

# Third–Eighth Grade English Language and Math Scores

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

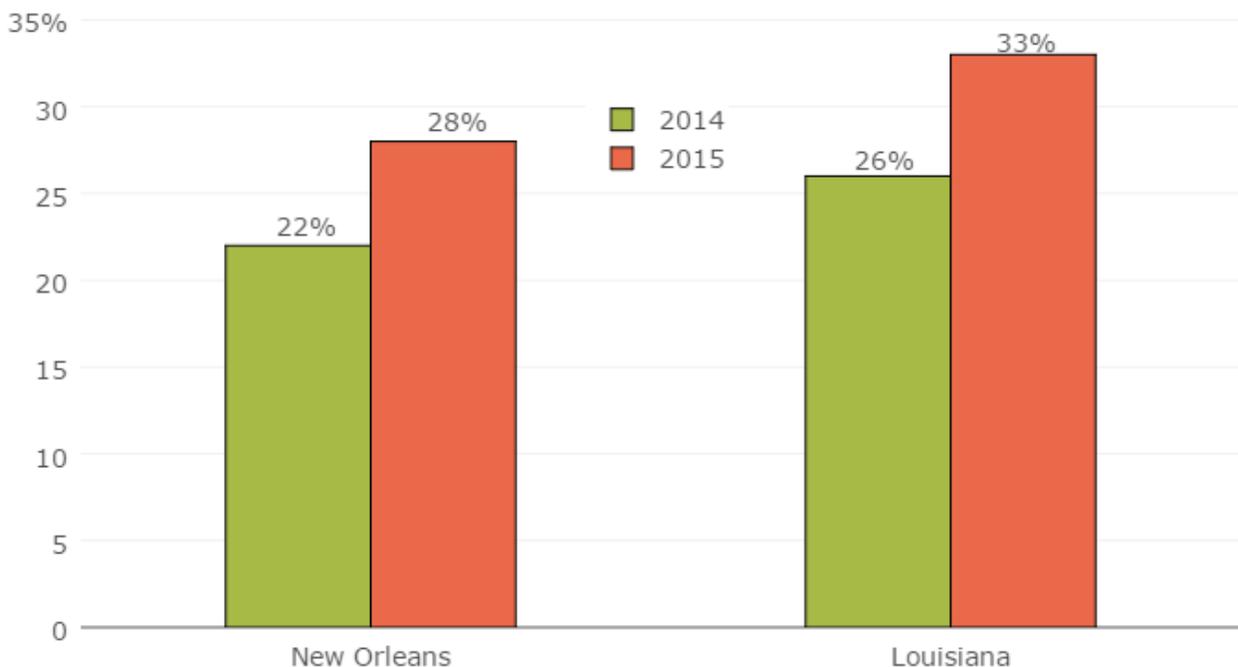
Every year, many first year college students learn that they must take remedial courses in English or mathematics, which do not earn college credits.<sup>64</sup> The problems associated with students not being college ready also apply to 2-year colleges. A study of 2-year college English language arts and math courses showed that many students are not adequately prepared for those courses.<sup>65</sup> The research showed that the math taught at 2-year colleges was almost exclusively at a middle school level. The researchers also found that instructors in applied math programs frequently devise their own materials, since students are so often not taught in elementary or secondary schools the specific skills needed to succeed in those courses. The researchers also found that English language arts introductory courses have high failure rates. In addition, students are asked to do very little writing; and when they do write, the expectations for reasoning, logic, and even grammar are quite low. Improving student performance on math and English language tests is important in order to help more students not only enroll in college, but also to increase the number who successfully complete college.

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

The percent of New Orleans third–eighth grade students scoring mastery and above on 2015 PARCC English language and math tests was 28 percent in Spring 2015 compared to 22 percent in Spring of 2014. The percent of Louisiana students who scored mastery or above on the PARCC English language and math tests was 33 percent in Spring 2015 compared to 26 percent in Spring 2014.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education. (2015). 2015 Mastery and above district percentile rankings.

### PERCENT OF THIRD–EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS WHO SCORED AT MASTERY OR ABOVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATH ASSESSMENTS



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

For the 2015 school year, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests replaced the LEAP and iLEAP exams in English and math in Louisiana. Louisiana joined the 10 other states and the District of Columbia that took the PARCC annual assessments, although not all participating states have students in all grades taking the test.<sup>66</sup> Students in the following states took PARCC assessments: Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, and Rhode Island.<sup>67</sup> Louisiana has chosen to adopt the assessments developed by PARCC, a group of states working together to develop high-quality assessments driven by the following priorities:

1. Determine whether students are college- and career-ready or “on track”
2. Assess the full range of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), including standards that are difficult to measure
3. Measure the full range of student performance, including the performance of high- and low- performing students
4. Provide data during the academic year to inform instruction, interventions, and professional development
5. Provide data for accountability, including measures of growth
6. Incorporate innovative approaches throughout the assessment system.

Louisiana can now compare it’s student performance on English and math tests with other states.

There are 5 different achievement levels that students’ test scores represent: Advanced=Exceeded expectations, Mastery=Met expectations, Basic=Approached expectations, Approaching Basic= Partially met expectations, and Unsatisfactory=Did not meet expectations.<sup>68</sup> The percent of students who scored at mastery and above on the PARCC tests represents the percent of students who have the skills they need to be prepared for college.<sup>69</sup> This data does not include achievement test scores of private school students.

“CHILDREN ARE THE WORLD’S MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE AND ITS BEST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.”

– John F. Kennedy  
35th President of the United States

# Truancy

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

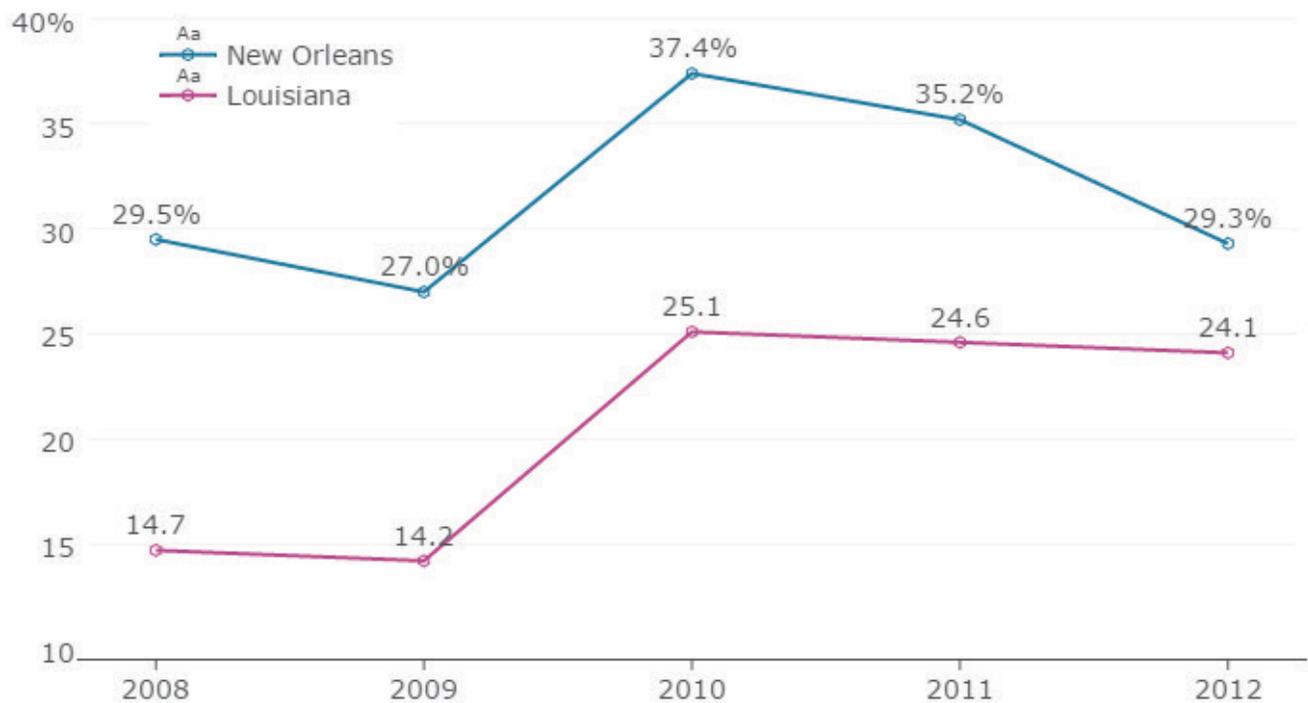
School attendance is an important factor in school achievement.<sup>70</sup> When students don't attend school, they miss lessons taught and risk academic failure due to falling behind the other students in coursework completion. Chronic truancy or absenteeism is a strong predictor of academic failure, dropping out of school, substance use, gang involvement, and criminal activity.<sup>71</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

The truancy rates in New Orleans and the state of Louisiana overall have fluctuated since 2008. In 2008, 29.5 percent of New Orleans students were considered truant and 29.3 percent in 2012. Statewide, the percent of students considered truant in 2008 was 14.7 percent and 24.1 percent in 2012.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education. (2014). 2008-2013 student truancy counts and rates site (district state-public); OPSB and RSD-N.O. data provided through direct request from Jill Zimmerman of the Louisiana Department of Education.

### PERCENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS TRUANT



### TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Louisiana tracks truancy instead of chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is usually defined as missing ten percent or more of school days.<sup>72</sup> In Louisiana, truancy is defined as any student having either 5 unexcused tardies or 5 unexcused absences within a school semester.<sup>73</sup>

# Cohort Graduation

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

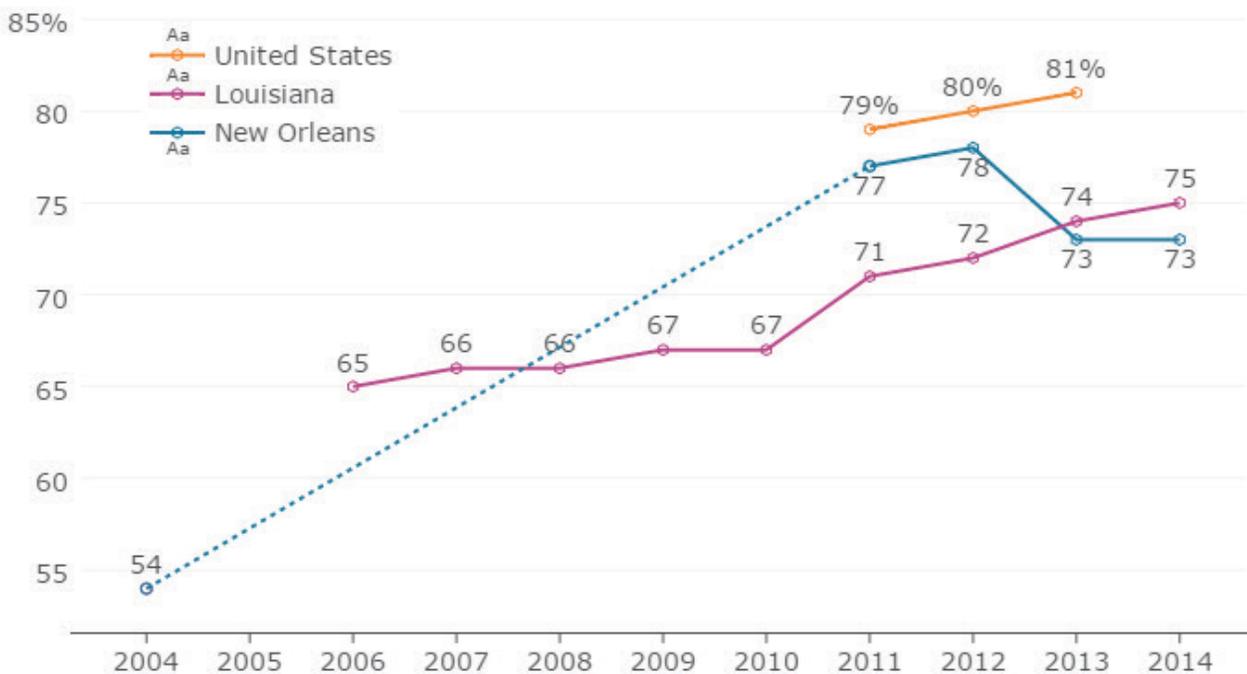
Obtaining a high school diploma is an important milestone marking a successful transition into adulthood. High school graduates tend to be healthier, earn higher incomes, vote more, and face fewer obstacles as they enter adulthood. High school graduation rates are also an important indicator of school performance for parents, policymakers, and concerned community members. According to research by the Alliance for Excellent Education, "As a result, graduation rates must be a cornerstone of high school accountability and used in decisionmaking about the targeting of resources and interventions to low-performing schools."<sup>74</sup> The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) includes high school cohort graduation rates in the calculation of high school performance scores as a means to hold schools accountable for graduating their students on-time.<sup>75</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

The available data suggests that the cohort graduation rates for New Orleans increased from 54 percent in 2004 to 73 percent by 2014.<sup>76</sup> Since the 2011 school year, high school cohort graduation rates for New Orleans students have ranged from 77 percent to 73 percent in 2014. The state of Louisiana's cohort graduation rates have ranged from 67 percent in 2010 to 75 percent in 2014.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, and Louisiana Department of Education (2015). High school performance.

### HIGH SCHOOL 4-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATES AS OF SPRING OF YEAR FOUR



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The Louisiana Department of Education did not calculate the cohort graduation rate for 2005 and the 2004 cohort graduation rate was calculated after the fact. As such, 2004 graduation rate data was not certified at the district level at the end of that year.

The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is considered the most accurate measure available for reporting on-time graduation rates.<sup>77</sup> A 4-year ACGR is defined as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for that graduating class. The term adjusted cohort means the students who enter ninth grade plus any students who transfer into the cohort in grades 9–12 minus any students who are removed from the cohort because they transferred out, moved out of the country, or were deceased. It was not until 2011 that all states used this common measure of graduation rates.

Chapter 6 of Louisiana’s Department of Education Bulletin 111—*The Louisiana School, District, And State Accountability System*, defines a cohort as all students who entered ninth grade for the first time in the state of Louisiana in a given academic year. Each cohort of students will be tracked for four years, from entry as first-time ninth graders through four academic years in order to determine cohort graduation rates.<sup>78</sup>

“SAFETY AND SECURITY DON’T JUST HAPPEN, THEY ARE THE RESULT OF COLLECTIVE CONSENSUS AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT. WE OWE OUR CHILDREN, THE MOST VULNERABLE CITIZENS IN OUR SOCIETY, A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE AND FEAR.”

– Nelson Mandela  
*Former President of South Africa*

# College Enrollment

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

College enrollment is the first major step towards completing a college degree. Most college students enroll in college immediately after finishing high school.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the percentage enrolling in college immediately after high school reflects the majority of high school graduates who will ever enroll in college and the value graduates place on attending college compared to working, entering the military, starting families, or pursuing other interests.<sup>80</sup> The benefits of earning a college degree include a variety of economic well-being and career attainment benefits.<sup>81</sup> Today's college graduates earn more annually, have lower unemployment and poverty rates, and have more satisfaction with their jobs than those with only a high school diploma.<sup>82</sup>

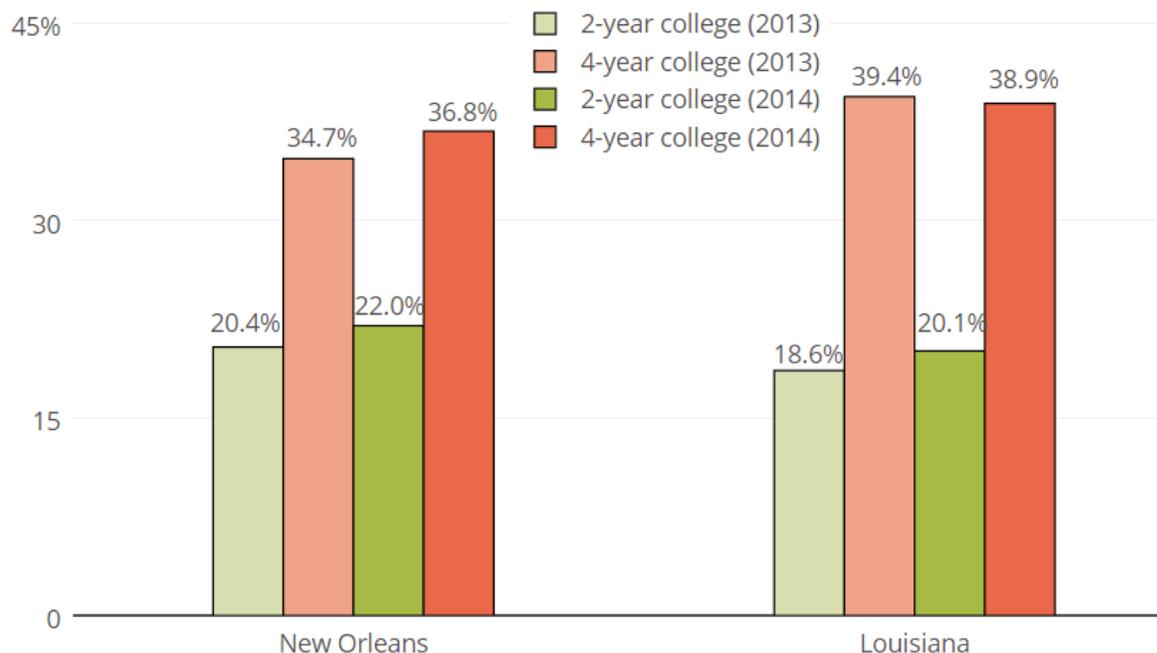
## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

The percent of New Orleans students who enrolled in a 2-year college the first fall after graduating in the 2013 school year was 20.4 percent, while the percent who enrolled in a 4-year college was 34.7 percent. For the state of Louisiana overall, 18.6 percent of 2013 graduates enrolled in a 2-year college and 39.4 percent enrolled in a 4-year college.

The percent of New Orleans students who enrolled in a 2-year college the first fall after graduating from high school in the 2014 school year was 22 percent, while 36.8 percent enrolled in a 4-year college. For the state of Louisiana overall, 20.1 percent of 2014 graduates enrolled in a 2-year college and 38.9 percent enrolled in a 4-year college.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education (2014). Louisiana college enrollment reports.

## PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO ENROLLED IN COLLEGE FIRST FALL AFTER HIGH SCHOOL



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

This indicator provides one measure along a pathway to college completion. To get a fuller picture, data on the number of students who enroll and subsequently graduate is needed. That data is missing.

# Space and Place

# Homeless Children and Youth

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

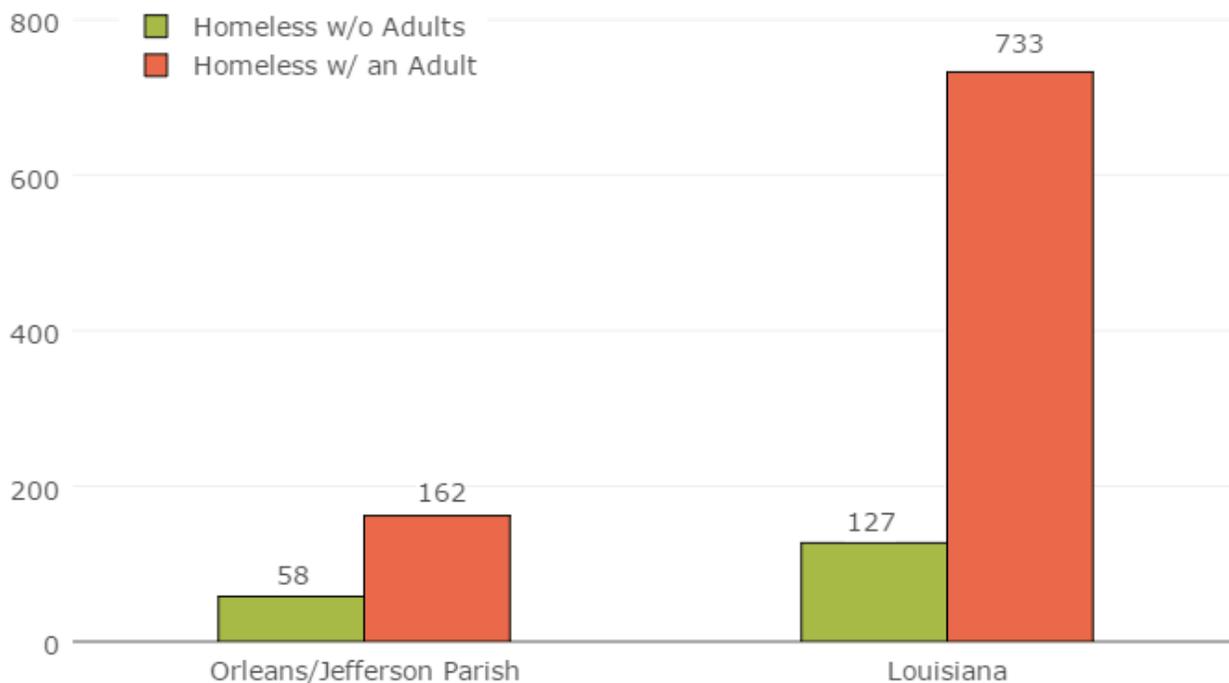
Homelessness has a number of negative effects on children and youth including hunger, poor physical and mental health, and missed educational opportunities.<sup>83</sup> Children without stable housing compared to other children with stable homes are more likely to repeat a school grade, be expelled or suspended, or drop out of school.<sup>84</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

In 2014, the count of homeless children under 18 in the New Orleans area was 220. Most of the children, 162, were living with at least one adult, while 58 were children with no adult present. Overall in Louisiana, 733 homeless children lived with at least one adult, and 127 children had no adult present.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015). HUD's 2014 continuum of care homeless assistance programs: Homeless populations and subpopulations.

## HOMELESS YOUTH 2014



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Continuum of Care (CoC) Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports provide counts for sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons by household type and subpopulation, available at the national and state level, and for each CoC. The reports are based on Point-in-Time (PIT) information provided to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by CoCs in the application for CoC Homeless Assistance Programs. The PIT Count provides a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night during the last ten days in January.

UNITY does an annual Point-In-Time Count of the homeless every year on January 30th. The data is reported to HUD every year by April 30th and is publicly available on the HUD website. Data is combined data for Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

Safety and Justice

# Child and Youth Homicide

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

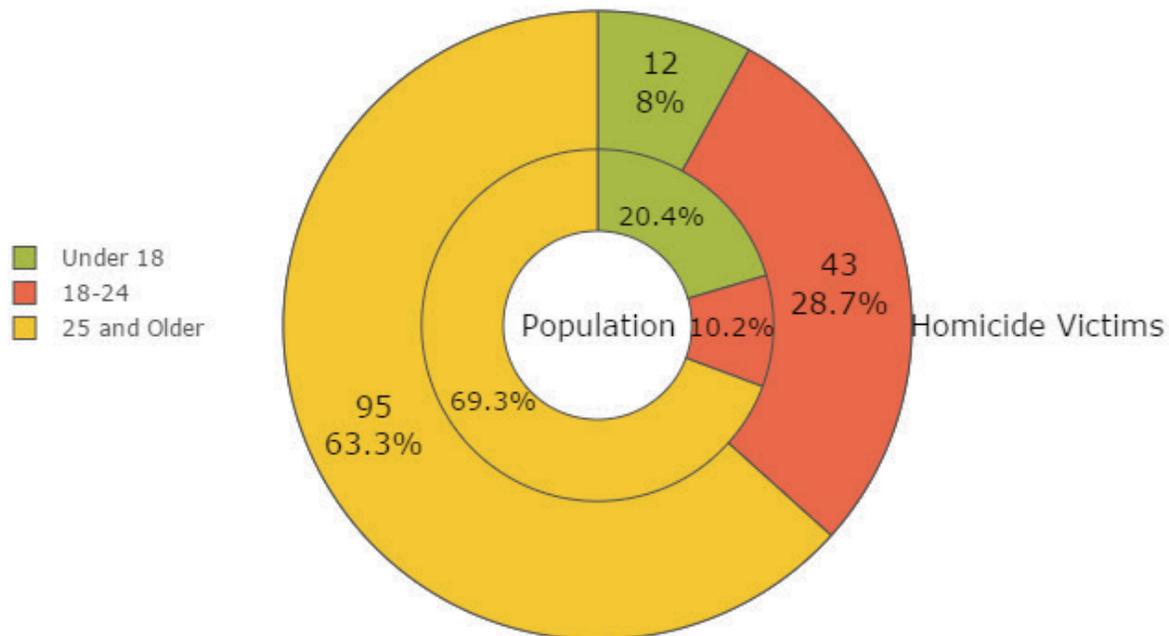
Child death rates in a community, regardless of cause can be an important indicator of general health and well-being of the community.<sup>85</sup> A high death rate can point to underlying causes such as such as poor access to prenatal care, violent neighborhoods, or inadequate child supervision.<sup>86</sup> Child murder specifically indicates the number of children who have died as a result of violence or abuse directly from another person.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, it is an important measure of child safety.

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DOING?

In 2014, there were a total of 150 murders in New Orleans; 12 of those murders were of children under the age of 18 and 43 were of young adults from 18 to 24 years of age. The 18-24 year old age group represented a disproportionate share of the homicide victims compared to its share of the population. The 18-24 year olds represent 10.2 percent of the population, but represented 28.7 percent of homicide victims.

Source: Swenson, D. (2015). *New Orleans 2014 murders: Victims and case status*. And U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey, 2014, 1-Year Estimates*.

## SHARE OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS COMPARED TO SHARE OF POPULATION NEW ORLEANS, 2014



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Homicide data was obtained from a 2014 *Times-Picayune* news article.<sup>88</sup> There is no 2014 state homicide data available from the FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). The most current FBI UCR report for the state is for the year 2013. Also, the UCR report does not include age data. The New Orleans Police Department reports data online at <http://www.nola.gov/nopd/crime-data/crime-stats/>. However, age data is not included. The FBI UCR program does report homicide data by age, sex, and race of the victim for the United States but not for the states. The latest U.S. data is available for 2013. The 2014 data is not yet available.

# Percent of Suspensions that were Out-of-School

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

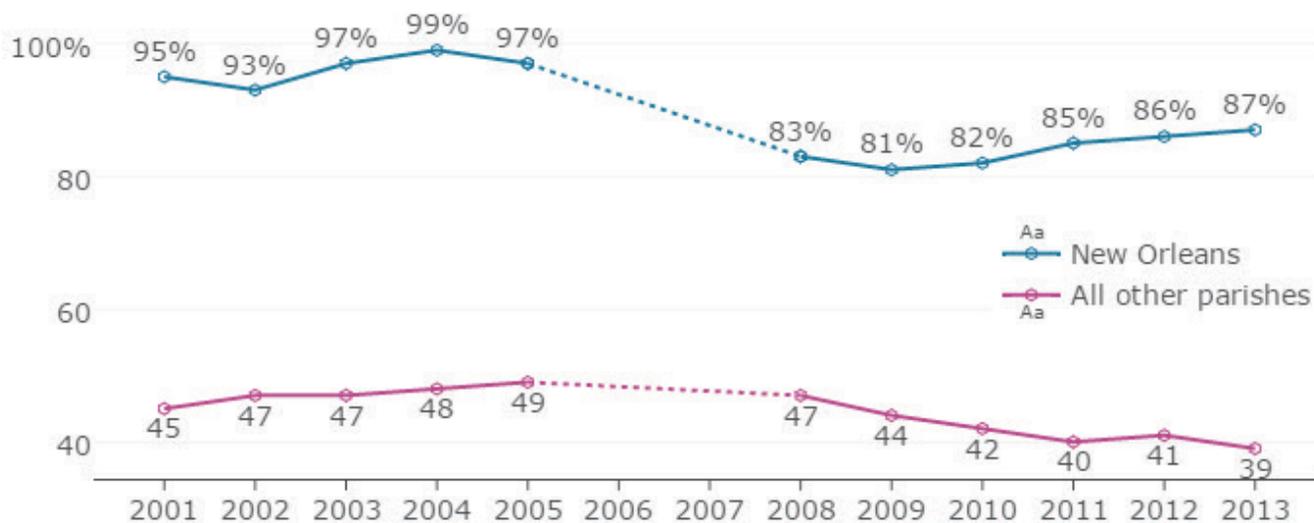
Nationally, out-of-school suspension rates have escalated dramatically since the 1970's.<sup>89</sup> The higher use of out-of-school suspension partly reflects the growth of policies such as zero tolerance, an approach to school discipline that imposes removal from school for a broad array of school code violations—from violent behavior to truancy and dress code violations.<sup>90</sup> Research has shown that suspensions do not improve overall school safety and are associated with lower academic performance, higher rates of dropout, failures to graduate on time, increased academic disengagement, and subsequent disciplinary exclusions.<sup>91</sup>

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

New Orleans schools are more likely to suspend students out-of-school compared to all other parishes in Louisiana. The higher rates of out-of-school suspensions have been consistent for several years. In 2013, 87 percent of the suspensions were out-of-school suspensions in New Orleans compared to 39 percent in all other parishes. Similarly in 2012, 86 percent of suspensions were out-of-school suspensions in New Orleans compared to 41 percent in all other parishes. It should be noted that the rates of out-of-school suspensions in New Orleans have been lower than pre-Katrina years. From 2001 to 2005, the rates of out-of-school suspensions ranged from 93 to 99 percent. In contrast, from 2008 to 2013, the rates ranged from 81 to 87 percent. Nevertheless, the rates appear to be increasing since 2009.

Source: Barrett, N. & Santillo, R. (2015). *Education Research Alliance for New Orleans. Student discipline: Outcomes, policies, and practices.*

### PERCENT OF SUSPENSIONS THAT WERE OUT-OF-SCHOOL



### TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Data was received by direct request from Nathan Barrett at the Education Research Alliance (ERA). Future data should be available online from the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE). However, ERA has a formal data sharing agreement with Louisiana DOE and may have to be the go-to source for future data and analysis.

# Percent of Suspensions by Race

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

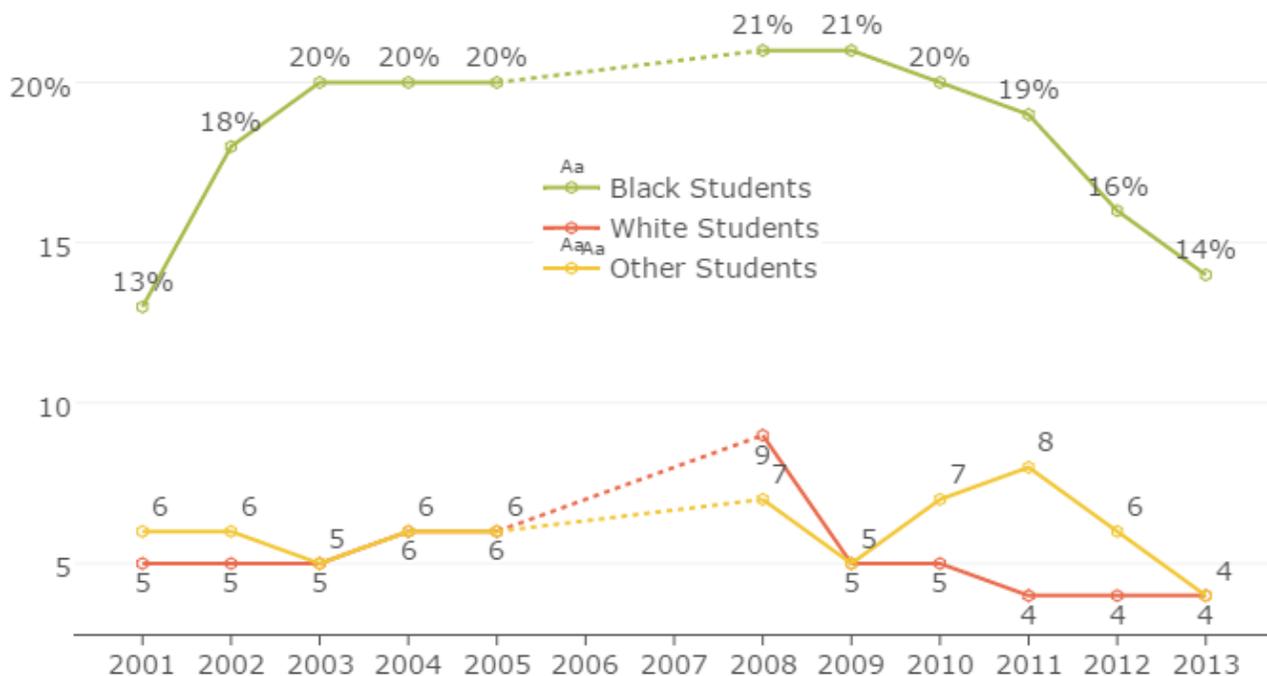
National data shows that racial disparities persist in school suspension rates. A recent study showed that the problem is worse in southern states, including Louisiana.<sup>92</sup> Black students are suspended at rates five times higher than their representation in the student population.<sup>93</sup> Research has shown that suspensions do not improve overall school safety and are associated with lower academic performance, higher rates of dropout, failures to graduate on time, increased academic disengagement, and subsequent disciplinary exclusions.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, black students suffer the negative outcomes disproportionately more than other students.

## HOW ARE NEW ORLEANS' CHILDREN DOING?

Data on suspension rates from 2001 to 2013 shows that black students consistently had higher suspension rates than white and other students. The latest data for 2013 shows the lowest suspension rate for black students since 2002, at 14 percent. However, the rate is still three times the rate for white and other students, which are at 4 percent each.

Source: Barrett, N. & Santillo, R. (2015). *Education Research Alliance for New Orleans. Student discipline: Outcomes, policies, and practices.*

### PERCENT OF STUDENTS RECEIVING AT LEAST ONE SUSPENSION BY RACE, NEW ORLEANS



## TECHNICAL NOTES AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

Data was received by direct request from Nathan Barrett at the Education Research Alliance (ERA). Future data should be available online from the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE). However, ERA has a formal data sharing agreement with Louisiana DOE and may have to be the go-to source for future data and analysis.

Youth Voice

# Missing Data

Youth Voice is the only one of the six priority areas defined by YouthShift where there was no data identified. Participants in the YouthShift movement see Youth Voice as the empowerment and support of youth to actively engage and participate in decision making processes that affect them. Assessing Youth Voice in New Orleans would require coordinating the collection of primary data from youth across the city. In addition, identifying and selecting measures of Youth Voice is a challenge as there are few options. We looked at two assessment tools that were designed to measure youth participation within youth development programs. In one, youth answer questions about their engagement, participation, and interactions with adults in their specific programs or during a youth activity.<sup>95</sup> An alternative is a 2014 youth survey conducted in cities across Canada to assess the youth-friendliness of the cities. The assessment tool has five indicators: Youth Voice, Youth Space, Cultural Identity, Social Responsibility, and Education and Learning.<sup>96</sup> Determining how to obtain the best information in order to measure the magnitude and quality of youth engagement and participation will be the challenge for New Orleans

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**The Data Center** is the most trusted resource for data about greater New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana. Since 1997, The Data Center has been an objective partner in bringing reliable, thoroughly researched data to conversations about building a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region.

The Data Center (formerly known as the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center) became the local authority for tracking post-Katrina recovery with *The New Orleans Index*, developed in partnership with the Brookings Institution.