

**NEW ORLEANS**



**Recovery School District**

**Rebuilding Public Education in New Orleans  
after Hurricane Katrina**

**Presentation to the American Youth Policy Forum**

**December 12, 2008**

**Agenda**

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- New Orleans Schools—Pre-Katrina
- Impact of Katrina
- The State Takeover—Increasing Choice
- Financial and Infrastructure Challenges
- Building Community Confidence
- School Year 2007-2008—Stabilization
- Sustaining Momentum
- Questions



## **New Orleans Public Education Pre-Katrina**

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- Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) controlled 128 public schools and had an enrollment of approximately 63,000 students
- Private schools in New Orleans had a higher enrollment, 50,000 students in the Archdiocese alone
- In 2005, OPSB schools ranked 67<sup>th</sup> out of Louisiana's 68 parishes in student performance
- In 2007, Louisiana ranked 1<sup>st</sup> nationally in accountability, yet 45<sup>th</sup> in K-12 student achievement and 49<sup>th</sup> in student success indicators

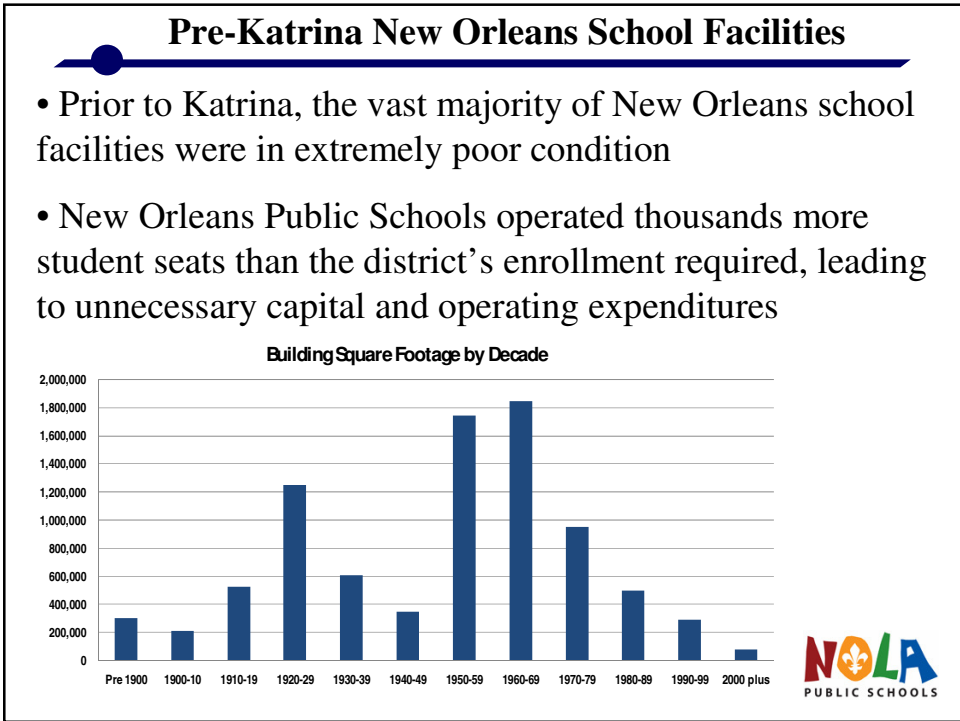
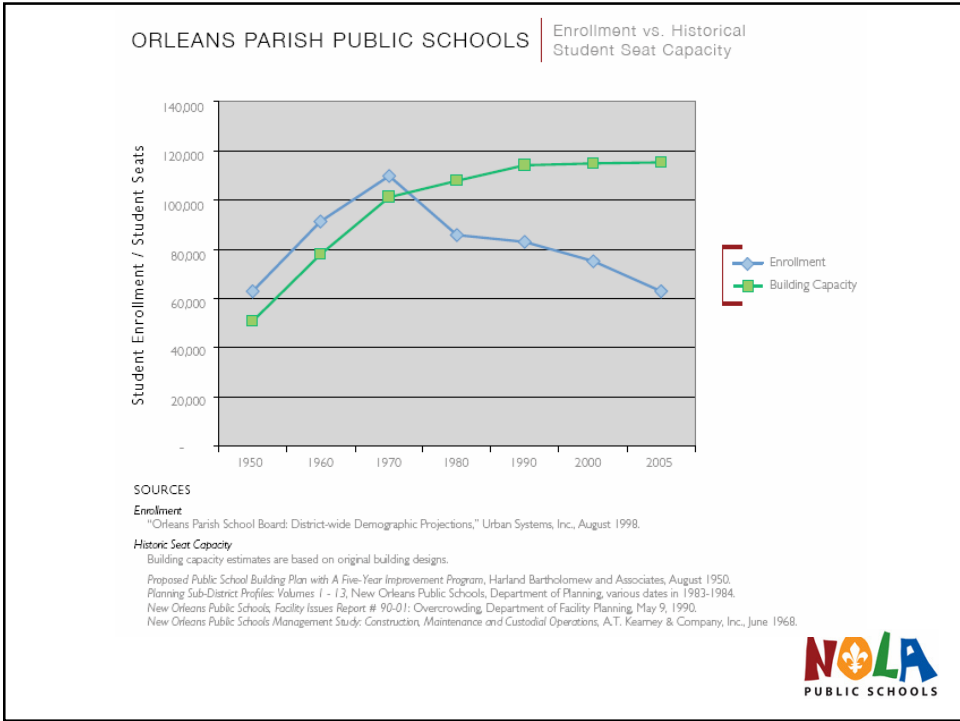


## **New Orleans Public Education Pre-Katrina**

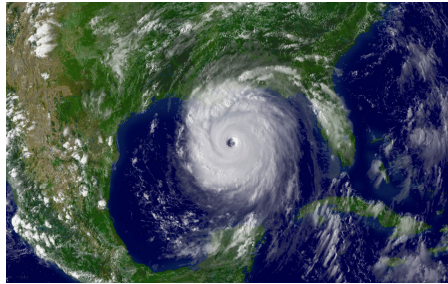
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- Five New Orleans schools were academically managed by the Recovery School District (RSD), an office of the Louisiana Department of Education
- Objective was to seek private managers of these schools and guide their academic improvement
- OPSB was also a district in financial crisis, mandated by the state to bring in outside financial management services
- Approximately **\$1 billion** in deferred maintenance costs to district facilities





## Impact of Hurricane Katrina



## Katrina's Impact on New Orleans Schools

- All schools closed, most for the entire 2005-2006 school year
- Students dispersed throughout the state and country
- Approx. **\$1 billion** in storm-related damages to facilities
- More than **50 school campuses** were completely destroyed
- Approx. **\$89 million** in damages incurred by facilities due to vandalism and theft following Katrina
- Approx. **\$133 million** in termite and mold related damages incurred both before and after Katrina



## The State Takeover—Increasing Choice

- During the 2005 Extraordinary Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the RSD's role was significantly amended
- RSD scope of responsibilities was increased to include the management of failed districts, rather than merely individual schools
- 107 of 128 Orleans Parish School Board schools fell into the control of the RSD based upon their School Performance Scores (SPS)
- Charter management organizations were invited from throughout the country to apply for charters in New Orleans



## The State Takeover

- RSD given responsibility of rebuilding school facilities within the district's control
- Orleans Parish School Board Schools: **16**
- Recovery School District Schools: **107** (three became operational in April 2006)
- Charter Schools, authorized by the OPSB (12) and the RSD (33): **45**
- Many campuses house multiple schools



## Financial and Infrastructure Challenges

- Extremely high costs to do business in New Orleans
  - The RSD currently pays approx. \$1,100 per student per year in transportation costs
- All disaster-related costs, while statutorily reimbursable by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), require substantial documentation and time to liquidate
- In December 2005, the Hurricane Education Recovery Act (HERA) was signed by the president, bringing millions of dollars in flexible aid to school districts impacted by Katrina and Rita



## Financial and Infrastructure Challenges

- During the 2006-2007 school year, the RSD remained in great need of teachers, with student/teacher ratios at the high school level surpassing 1/35 in many cases
- Operable facilities were limited, leading to a waiting list for public school admittance of more than 300 students in early 2007
- New Orleans community members cited poor restrooms and inferior school lunches as major indicators of the RSD's failure to manage schools



## Building Community Confidence

- March 2007: Paul Pastorek appointed State Superintendent of Education, immediately focuses on stabilizing the Recovery School District
- June 2007: Paul Vallas appointed Superintendent of the Recovery School District
- Between fall 2006 and into late 2007, **15-25 new students registered per day in the RSD**
- Objectives: Hire teachers, build facilities, serve hot lunches, repair broken restrooms, solicit input from community on all major initiatives, work aggressively to improve the financial condition of the district, improve education



## Pre-Repaired Restrooms



## Repaired Restroom

### Clark High School



## Pre-Repaired Kitchen

### Rabouin High School



# Repaired Kitchen

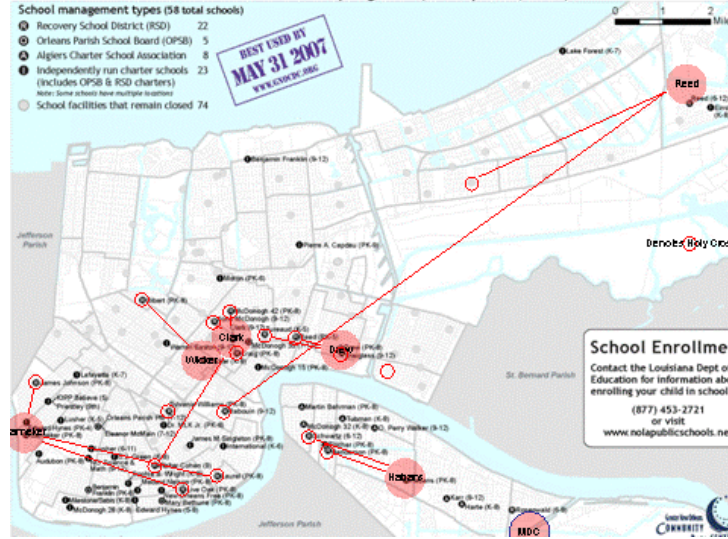
## Crossman Elementary School



# Serving Hot Food to all Schools with Only Seven Working Kitchens

STATUS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ORLEANS PARISH FOR SPRING 2007 (AS OF APRIL 30, 2007)

- School management types (58 total schools)
- Recovery School District (RSD) 22
  - Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) 5
  - Algiers Charter School Association 8
  - Independently run charter schools 23 (includes OPSB & RSD charters)
- Note: Some schools have multiple locations
- School facilities that remain closed 74



## Bringing online School Facilities

- March 2007: Louisiana National Guard brought in to assist managing facilities construction
- Between March 2007 and September 2007, the RSD brought online 10,000 student seats
- Of these seats, nearly 7,000 were in modular schools
- By the first day of school for the 2007-2008 school year, every student in the district was given a seat, regardless of their registration date
- RSD began working cooperatively with FEMA to fund school construction, increasing funding to the district by more than \$350 million in the last year



## Renovation Example: Thurgood Marshall High School



→ BEFORE



↓  
AFTER

## **Renovation Example: Booker T. Washington Annex**

**BEFORE: BTW Computer Lab, April 2007**



**AFTER: BTW Computer Lab**



## Building New Schools

- In the summer of 2007, Superintendents. Pastorek and Vallas announced the “Quickstart” initiative
- Quickstart will bring online five new schools to be opened during the 2009-2010 school year
- Quickstart sparked construction in New Orleans and began the implementation of the School Facilities Master Plan for Orleans Parish, adopted in November 2008 by the Orleans Parish and Louisiana State Board of Education
- More than \$200 million in school construction now going on in New Orleans, funding made more efficient thanks to the 2007 Omnibus bill



## Quickstart School: Lake Area High School



## Quickstart School: Wilson Elementary School



Architects: HMS Architects with Innovative Design Group

## Hiring Teachers

- Between March and September 2007, the RSD and its charter schools hired 600 teachers
- Many teachers were attracted to coming to New Orleans thanks to the 2007 RENEWAAL legislation (Renewing Education through Attracting America's Leaders), providing incentives to bring teachers to New Orleans
- Teach For America and The New Teacher Project (teachnola.org) brought more than 300 teachers to the New Orleans area



## **School Year 2007-2008: Stabilizing the RSD**

- Student/Teacher ratios brought down to 20/1 (elementary) and 25/1 (high schools)
- Extended day and summer school programs launched
- IT in schools brought to an unprecedented level
- Completed the RSD's first ever operating budget
- Double digit test score gains in pre-K-8 schools and more modest gains at the high school level
- Master facilities plan completed and approved, all facilities funding will be concentrated in bringing online fewer, but superior 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools



## **Sustaining Momentum**

- All schools now have extended day scheduling, adding more than 14 instructional days to the school year
- Implementing the master plan will require an additional \$900 million to bring New Orleans schools to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century level, by the end of the plan there will be approx. 85 schools in New Orleans
- Lessening reliance on one-time revenue within the operating budget
- Approving more charter schools and takeovers of traditional RSD schools
- Expanding the RSD's lessons throughout the state



**Questions or more information?**

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