Academic Facts: Desoto Parish School District

The State education system as a whole has made real progress in the past 15 years (more students at basic grade level, fewer dropouts, better school performance) with the implementation of the top-rated School & District Accountability System and other major state policies. But, significant gaps in student achievement remain. While many local school districts have made improvements, we have a long way to go in others. What remains is a state with a quarter-million kids below minimum basic grade skills (standards which are actually lower than national proficiency), yearly dropouts still in the thousands, and many graduates underprepared for careers or college. While the State continues to pursue more recent programs that support instructional quality and school choice for at-risk kids, it’s clear that local education officials and educators make the difference in student learning. Below is a snapshot of some key district academic indicators.

- **“B” District Performance Grade** (2011-12)  
  105.0 DPS compared to 100.5 State Performance Score (0-200 point scale); based on state LEAP, iLEAP, dropouts and graduation index. The district ranked #29 out of 69 local school districts.

- **71%** of the district’s 3rd graders at or above Basic grade level in reading/language arts knowledge and skills (iLEAP 2012)

- **68%** of the districts 4th graders at or above Basic grade level in reading/language arts knowledge and skills; and **61%** at or above Basic grade level in math (LEAP 2012)

- **66%** of the districts 6th graders at or above Basic grade skills and knowledge in English/language arts; **54%** at or above Basic grade level in math; and **61%** at or above Basic grade skills and knowledge in science (LEAP 2012)

- **57%** of high school students scored at or above Basic skills and knowledge in science on (Graduate Exit Exam, all initial test takers 2012).

- **National Percentile Ranks** (2010-11): 48th for third graders, 47th for fifth graders, and 53rd for seventh graders.

- **619 students dropped out** (7-12th graders) in the past five years on record (2006-2010)

- For 9th grade freshmen, **76.4%** graduated four years later (2011).

- **42%** of college freshmen who graduated from this district’s high schools had to take non-credit remedial courses (2010)

- **18.5** Average ACT score compared to 20.3 State Average and 21.1 National Average (2012)

Note on State LEAP/iLEAP tests: Grade-level skills and knowledge students achieve on these tests are rated as Advanced, Mastery, Basic (minimum needed), Approaching Basic, and Unsatisfactory. The State’s goal has been to educate all students to at least the minimum Basic grade level - not a mastery of skills and knowledge, just Basic. How many kids in your district have not been educated to this minimum level? In addition, LA’s Basic level is considered a lower standard than national levels of Proficiency. The good news is that LA is raising standards and transitioning from LEAP to “Common Core” tests (consortium of 45 states) in

Additional district information:
- 65.6% of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch (2011)
- $17,816 was spent per pupil in this district compared to the $10,622 state average (2010)
- 4,923 students were enrolled in 2010-11 compared to 4,968 in 2005-06

This Information was compiled by the Council for A Better Louisiana and can be found at www.cabl.org