



**NEW SCHOOLS
FOR NEW ORLEANS**

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SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT RELEASED TO BESE

Study surveying special education services in New Orleans charter schools shows need a collaborative effort

NEW ORLEANS, LA – A recent report researching special education provision in public charter schools in the recovery school district finds local charter schools are on track in special education programming. The report, “The Special Education Project: A study of 23 charter schools in the Recovery School District”, was commissioned by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and New Schools for New Orleans and was conducted by Educational Support Systems, Inc (ESS). ESS is a national organization specializing in education services, program analysis, and service delivery design. The results of this study were presented to BESE Board Members at the Board Administration/Relations Committee Meeting this Wednesday, June 18th.

The report shows that a majority of the charter schools in the Recovery School District have hired an impressive group of experienced and qualified special educators and have established the foundation for special education programs comparable to newly developing schools across the country.

Other key findings of The Special Education Project are:

- The 23 charter schools serve approximately 700 special education students, who currently represent 7% of the overall student population of close to 9,700.
- An estimated 75% of charter schools will be at or above 10% enrollment of special education students by the end of the 2007-2008 school year based upon current numbers of students currently being identified for special education.
- Every charter school has at least one special educator, related services and evaluation services in place and is following federal, state and local regulations regarding special education requirements.

“We applaud the 23 schools who participated in this study for taking an impressive, proactive step in the improvement of special education services for New Orleans children”, stated Matt Candler, CEO of New Schools for New Orleans. “Their participation will accelerate quality improvement in special education services citywide and increase transparency regarding the provision of these services in charter schools.”

The report summarizes by recommending the design of an educational service agency or multiple agencies to support both traditional and charter schools in addressing the needs of students with disabilities.

“The opportunity to develop groundbreaking methods to serve all kids is immense”, continued Candler, “ESS has had great success with their collaborative models in DC and New York and the charter schools in New Orleans are poised and ready to create an educational service agency to support their special education needs.”

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (www.publiccharters.org) is the national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement. The Alliance aims to increase the number of high-performing charter schools available to all families, particularly low-income and minority families who currently don't have access to quality public schools. The Alliance provides assistance to state charter school associations and resource centers, develops and advocates for improved public policies, and serves as the united voice for this large and diverse movement.

New Schools for New Orleans (www.newschoolsforneworleans.org) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to achieving excellent public schools for every New Orleans child. To facilitate change and work towards our vision, NSNO concentrates its work in four key areas: 1) recruiting and placing teachers and principals through partnerships with teachNOLA and New Leaders for New Schools; 2) opening and supporting new open-enrollment charter schools; 3) providing grants to promote school quality; and, 4) informing and collaborating with the community to achieve high-quality, accountable schools.