

News Release
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Louisiana Education Group Releases New Research Findings on High School Graduation Best Practices

BATON ROUGE, LA – A study of the best practices of Louisiana high schools that have achieved and sustained high graduation rates has been released by Education's Next Horizon, a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to improving pre-kindergarten to 12th grade education in Louisiana. The study focuses on high schools that have maintained a cohort graduation rate of at least 80 percent while increasing the graduation rate by at least 10 percentage points from 2005 to 2009. Based on 2009-2010 data, 36 high schools met the criteria and participated in the research by responding to an online survey in the spring of 2011.

The research was done by the Picard Center for Lifelong Learning at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Education's Next Horizon sponsored the study as part of *Louisiana's Promise*, a statewide initiative to help solve the dropout problem.

The study identifies the characteristics and commonalities of the schools and identifies practices that worked best for them in increasing graduation rates. Study findings show that the 80/10 schools incorporated a variety of practices and methods to improve their graduation rates:

- The integration of accelerated curriculum, continuous improvement practices, community involvement, and the development and fostering of healthy adult-student relationships all helped to ultimately raise the graduation rates of these schools.
- The emphasis, whether career or technical in nature, was focused on students earning credits to advance.

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- Students who had not mastered the required standards were provided concentrated, focused, strategic remediation on those standards, and they had opportunities to earn course credit for subjects previously failed.
- The use of assessment of both students and teachers were used to evaluate student learning and improve teacher curriculum and instructional strategies.
- Schools often tried to provide a smoother and more effective transition to the 9th grade.
- The use of summer programs and increased structure within the 9th grade provided schools with the opportunity to help foster the growth of their students in one of their most critical years.
- Teachers, parents, and administrators worked together to create and use tools, including professional learning, to ensure rigor and effective instruction in each classroom and caring environment.
- Community role models and mentors were often brought in to provide more adult role models for students.

Overall, the most prominently used strategies to improve graduation rates were (1) creation of rigorous coursework and curriculum, (2) the addition of higher level coursework, (3) increased utilization of school data to modify curriculum and instruction, and (4) use of benchmarks and assessments. Additionally, enabling students to remediate courses when struggling and to obtain grade and credit recovery contributed significantly to increased graduation rates in the 80/10 schools.

“There are a number of success stories here in Louisiana that we can all learn from,” said Steven Scheurich, president and chairman of Education’s Next Horizon, and vice-president of customer service and external affairs for Entergy Louisiana, LLC and Entergy Gulf States Louisiana, LLC. Scheurich further notes, “The goal of this research is to capture success stories in Louisiana schools and share best practices in increasing and sustaining graduation rates.” John Warner Smith, Education’s Next Horizon CEO, said, “State and local education leaders reading the report should view the findings in the context of state and district policies and procedures, and whether those policies are helping or hindering school efforts to increase graduation rates.”

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Graduation Rates of the 80/10 High Schools

Site Name	Parish	Principal	Cohort Rates 2005-06	Cohort Rates 2009-10	Percent Change
Midland High School	Acadia	J. Clyde Briley	70.6	89.8	27.20%
Bienville High School	Bienville	Billy Rodgers	84.2	100	18.76%
Ringgold High School	Bienville	Eric Carter	68.9	84.6	22.79%
Saline High School	Bienville Parish	Scott Herrington	70.0	95.5	36.43%
Westlake High School	Calcasieu Parish	Lee Crick	76.3	90.2	18.22%
Caldwell Parish High School	Caldwell	Sherry Jones	63.9	81.5	27.54%
Johnson Bayou High School	Cameron	Robert Kimball	66.7	100	49.93%
Sicily Island High School	Catahoula Parish	Marguerita Krause	80.0	100	25.00%
Haynesville Jr./Sr. High School	Claiborne Parish	William Kennedy	64.4	90.4	40.37%
Logansport High School	DeSoto Parish	Lillie P. Giles	73.5	86.8	18.10%
Pelican All Saints High School	DeSoto Parish	Tamekia Smith	77.8	100	28.53%
Basile High School	Evangeline Parish	Georgie Courville	69.2	92.7	33.96%
Delcambre High School	Iberia Parish	Cory Bourque	66.7	88.7	32.98%
Loureauxville High School	Iberia Parish	Karen Bashay	77.8	91.3	17.35%
Fisher Middle/High School	Jefferson Parish	George Hebert, Jr.	67.8	80.0	17.99%
Grand Isle High School	Jefferson Parish	Richard Augustin	71.4	83.3	16.67%
Dubach High School	Lincoln Parish	Judy Mabry	62.5	94.1	50.56%
Ruston High School	Lincoln Parish	Mike Milstead	73.0	83.2	13.97%
Plainview High School	Rapides Parish	Sonia Rasmussen	73.7	87.5	18.72%
Ebarb High School	Sabine Parish	Darrin Dyess	72.2	84.2	16.62%
Zwolle High School	Sabine Parish	Chad Crow	68.6	80.3	17.06%
Chalmette High School	St. Bernard Parish	Wayne Warner	12.9	81.7	533.33%
North Central High School	St. Landry Parish	Jerome Robinson	59.4	84.3	41.92%
Centerville High School	St. Mary Parish	Mike Galler, III	65.9	81.6	23.82%
Northshore High School	St. Tammany Parish	Michael Peterson	76.2	86.4	13.39%
Erath High School	Vermilion Parish	Francis Touchet	75.6	95.5	26.32%
Kaplan High School	Vermilion Parish	Laura LeBeouf	63.9	90.1	41.00%
Evans High School	Vernon Parish	Mike Kay	77.4	90.5	16.93%
Rosepine High School	Vernon Parish	Steve Thomas	69.0	81.5	18.12%

Graduation Rates of the 80/10 High Schools

Site Name	Parish	Principal	Cohort Rates 2005-06	Cohort Rates 2009-10	Percent Change
Shongaloo High School	Webster Parish	Cyndi Hair	60.0	91.3	52.17%
Neville High School	City of Monroe/ Ouachita	Brent Vidrine	73.2	87.8	19.95%
South Cameron High School	Cameron Parish	Zeke Wainwright	50.0	85.0	70.00%
Warren Easton Senior High	Orleans Parish	Alexina Medley	33.3	95.9	187.9%
Edna Karr Secondary School	Orleans Parish	John Hiser	50.0	91.0	82.00%
McDonough #35 Senior High	Orleans Parish	Delores Winfield	50.0	93.0	86.00%
Eleanor McMain Secondary	Orleans Parish	Bridgette Frick	50.0	90.7	81.40%

Copies of the 64-page report are being distributed to all Louisiana high schools and middle schools, and are available at www.ednexthorizon.org.