

THE CHALLENGE:

The Recovery School District (RSD) in New Orleans, Louisiana, enrolls nearly 25,000 students in grades K–12 in both traditional and charter schools. With 13% of students in special education services and 88% eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the RSD faces both the challenges of an urban school district as well as those resulting from the tragic events of Hurricane Katrina. For example, in 2007, only 34% of fourth-grade students scored at the Basic level or higher on the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program English Language Arts (LEAP ELA).

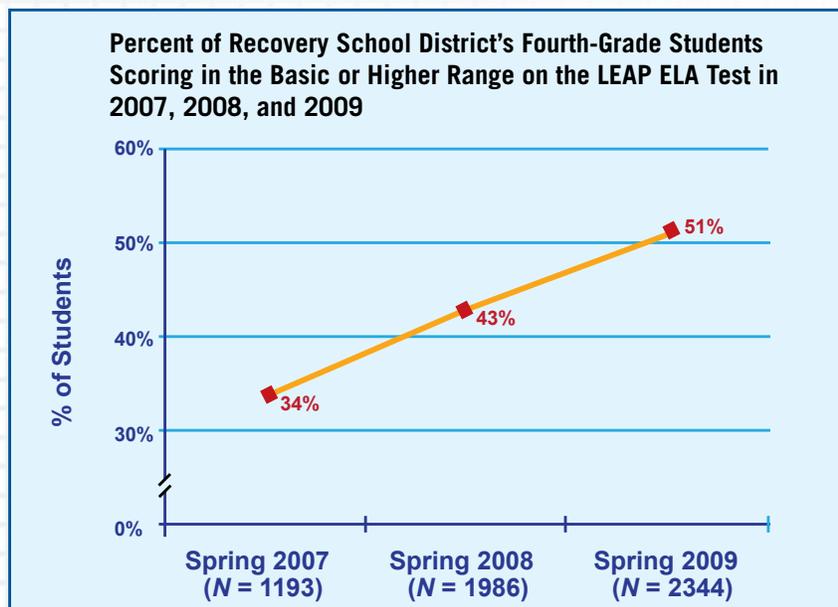
LITERACY IN ACTION:

RSD's literacy improvement plan included the following elements:

- ✓ **Assessment** that pinpoints students' literacy deficiencies and strengths;
- ✓ **Research-based literacy intervention** to accelerate students' reading achievement;
- ✓ **Data** to benchmark and monitor student literacy performance;
- ✓ **Professional development** to help educators improve reading instruction;
- ✓ **Extended time** for literacy instruction;
- ✓ **Parent engagement initiatives** to promote independent reading at home; and
- ✓ **Nonprofit and corporate partnerships** that build literacy-rich school and home environments with books and reading resources.

THE RESULTS:

Data from the LEAP ELA were examined for fourth-grade students across the RSD from 2007 to 2009. Results indicate impressive gains since the implementation of the comprehensive literacy plan.



From 2007 to 2009, the percentage of students scoring in the Basic or higher performance levels on the LEAP ELA increased 17 percentage points. While only one third of students fell in the Basic or higher range in 2007, more than half (51%) did in 2009.



LITERACY: A KEY SCHOOL TURNAROUND STRATEGY

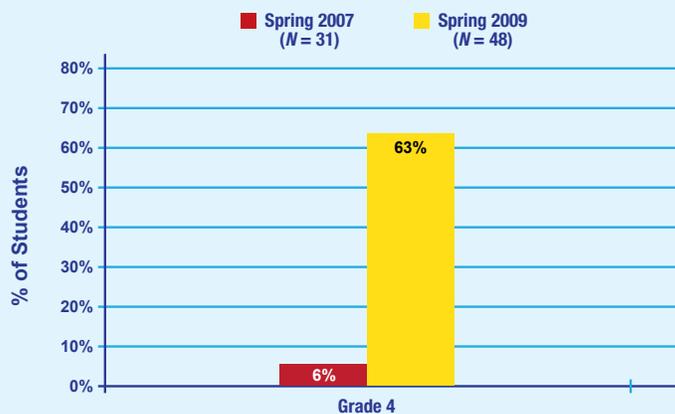
RSD, in partnership with Scholastic, accomplished the following:

- Enrolled 100% of fourth-grade students in Scholastic's READ 180® during the 2007–2008 school year in order to accelerate literacy development;
- Enlisted Scholastic and the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) to provide teachers and school leaders across the district with professional development, coaching, leadership training, and data analysis to uncover the instructional and reading skills needed to help students reach proficiency;
- Partnered with the National Urban League and RSD Division of Parent and Community Development to deliver Scholastic's Read and Rise® family engagement program to build language skills at home;
- Launched the New Orleans RSD Superintendent's Challenge—a reading challenge issued to students of all ages across the school district to help build a strong school-to-home literacy connection;
- Provided a 100-book collection of Scholastic Classroom books for use in both instruction and independent reading;
- Worked with RSD and *Weekend TODAY* to rebuild and restock school libraries district-wide;
- Placed Scholastic Classroom Magazines in classrooms district-wide as a curriculum-based current events resource; and
- Sponsored 49 Scholastic Book Fairs and family literacy events in 23 schools to seed students' home libraries.

RESULTS IN ACTION

Findings show that RSD's literacy improvement plan had a positive impact on student reading achievement at A.P. Tureaud Elementary School. Data indicate that from 2007 to 2009, the percentage of fourth-grade students performing in the Basic or higher range on the LEAP ELA increased from 6% to 63%.

Percent of A.P. Tureaud Elementary School Fourth-Grade Students at Basic or Higher on the LEAP ELA in 2007 and 2009



From 2007 to 2009, the percentage of students scoring in the Basic or higher performance levels on the LEAP ELA increased 57 percentage points. This represents nearly a tenfold increase.