

Rebuilding Louisiana through EDUCATION

Frequently Asked Questions Senate Bill No. 49 Recovery School District

1. Why is this legislation being proposed?

This legislation will provide an opportunity for the state to gain national resources and support in developing a strong infrastructure for the rebuilding of New Orleans' schools. These schools can then be returned to the local community once the reforms have been well established in the schools and the community has had the opportunity to rebuild.

2. What will be different about the schools if this legislation passes?

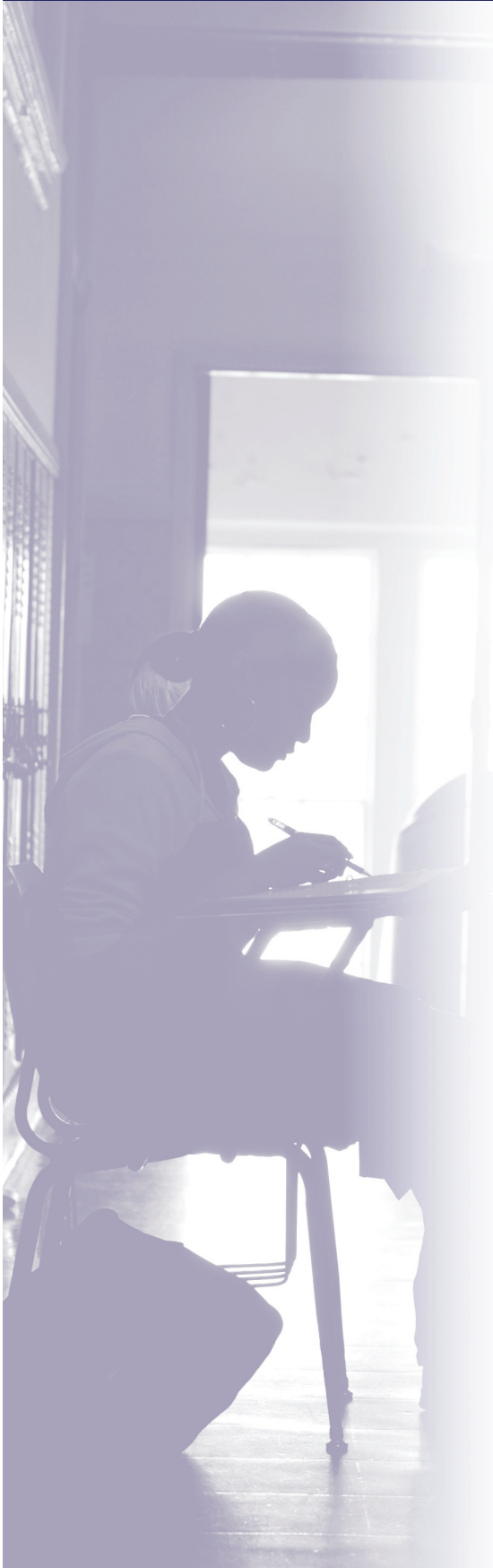
These schools will be designed specifically for the student population they will serve. The curriculum and other facets of each school will be developed to specifically address needs of the students served in the school. They will use the most current research and practice on successful schools to provide a strong basis for success. The planning process for the development of these schools will encourage the involvement of community members in the design of each school to ensure that the school is the center of community life.

3. What happens to the existing local school board?

The local school board maintains all of its current authority under the Louisiana Constitution and State Laws and continues to operate any schools that have School Performance Scores above the state average.

4. What is a Recovery School District?

The Recovery School District was established in 2003 by the Legislature to oversee the operation of failing schools. The purpose of the Recovery School District is to ensure that the operation of the schools leads to improved student achievement.



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5. Who oversees the Recovery School District?

The Louisiana Department of Education is the administering agency for the Recovery School District, and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education serves as the oversight board.

6. How many schools are currently in the Recovery School District?

The Recovery School District currently operates five schools.

7. What types of schools are currently in the Recovery School District?

All five schools are operated as Type 5 Charter Schools.

8. Are charter schools the only type of school in the Recovery School District?

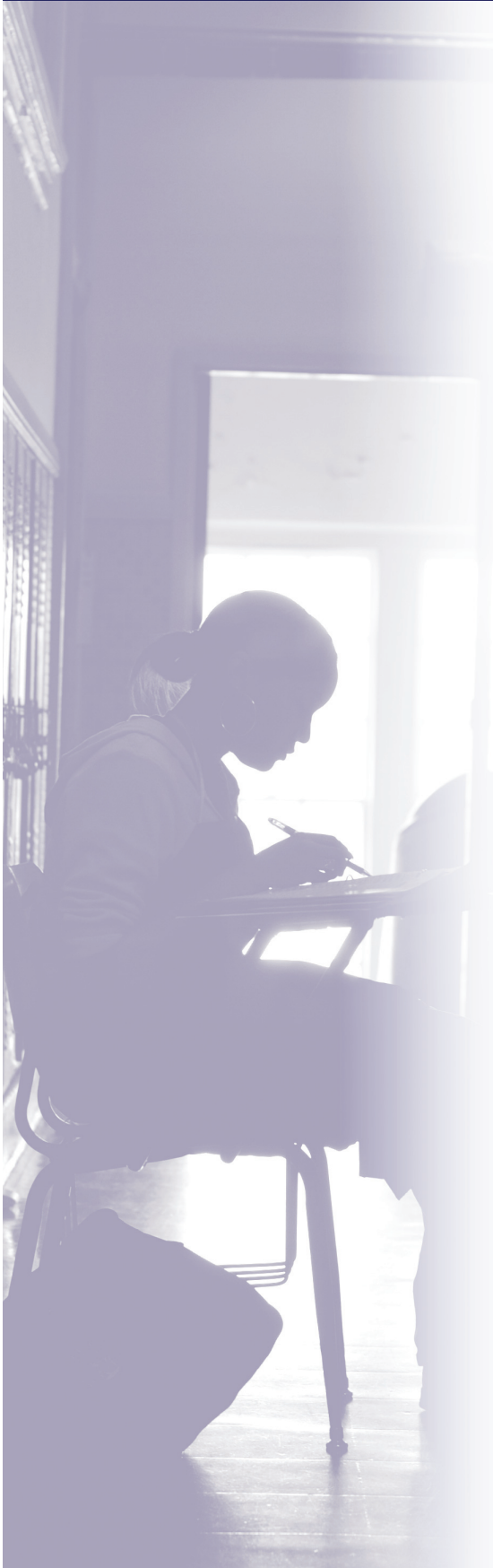
No, there can be several kinds of schools in the Recovery School District, including independent public schools under a director or superintendent, or the Recovery School District could directly manage some schools.

9. How is this legislation different from the previous law?

This legislation changes the definition of a failing school in a district that is in academic crisis and that has at least one school eligible for transfer to the Recovery School District under the current law. In districts that meet these requirements, the new definition designates any school with a school performance score below the baseline state average as a failing school. Under the new law, these schools will be transferred to the Recovery School District.

10. Why include all schools below the state average as failing schools in a district in academic crisis?

When a district is in academic crisis, this assistance in the operation of all schools below the state average is needed so that the district can focus on overall system improvement and be prepared to have these schools re-enter the district in future years.



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11. How is the Recovery School District funded?

The Recovery School District receives both the state and local portions of the MFP and any federal funding that would follow the children who attend the schools in the district. In addition, grant funding and the support of national foundations with expertise in educational reform will further support the efforts to reform the schools in this district.

12. How long will these schools be part of the Recovery School District?

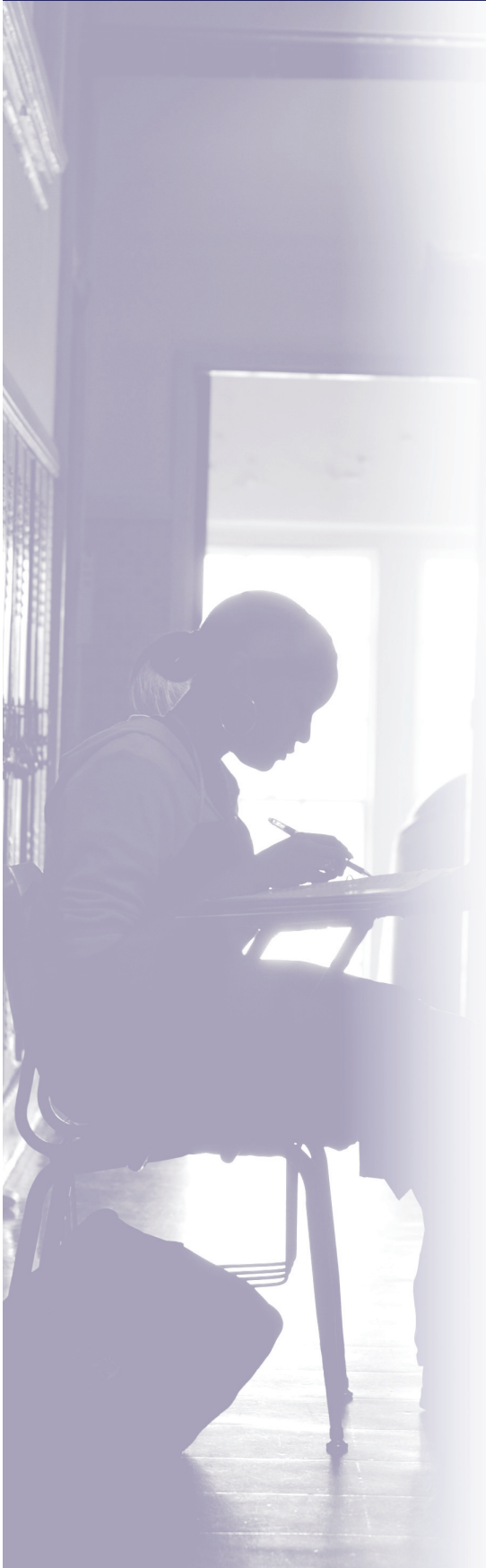
The legislation places the schools in the Recovery School District for a minimum of five years. This length of time will allow the schools to fully establish the instructional practices and expectations necessary for success prior to re-entry in to the New Orleans school system. National research shows that it takes about 5 years to turn around a failing school.

13. What happens to the buildings?

This legislation gives the Recovery School District the authority to acquire the rights and responsibilities of ownership of the land, building, facilities, and other property for those schools in a district in academic crisis that are transferred to it. The legislation does not allow the Recovery School District to sell the land or usable buildings. It does allow the Recovery School District to lease the land or property or to dispose of property other than land, including unusable buildings. Unusable buildings can only be destroyed by the Recovery School District with the approval of the Office of Facility Planning of the Division of Administration.

14. What happens to funds available for capitol outlay purposes?

If the Recovery School District opts to acquire the rights and responsibilities of ownership of the land, building, facilities, and other property for those schools in a district in academic crisis that are transferred to it, then the Recovery School District has the authority to receive, manage, and expend all state, local, or federal funding dedicated to or available for the purpose of



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repairing, renovating, rebuilding, or building a school building or facility. This includes all insurance proceeds attributable to damage done to the property, except for the portion of the insurance proceeds used to pay debt owed by the transferring school system.

15. What happens to schools that have already been approved as charter schools by Orleans Parish School Board?

All charter schools that have a School Performance Score below the state average and are transferred to the Recovery School District will be allowed to operate under their current charter for the remainder of the 2005-2006 school year. The Recovery School District staff will work with the nonprofit governing board of each charter school to develop an application to convert their school to a Type 5 charter school prior to the 2006-2007 school year.

16. How will schools be re-opened?

The Recovery School District staff will work with the Louisiana Recovery Authority, parents, the New Orleans Parish School Board, the New Orleans mayor and city planner to ensure that the re-opening of schools is coordinated with the design and redevelopment of the city as it is rebuilt and citizens return to their homes.

