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### **Why is it called “simulated SPS?”**

Pursuant to the receipt of a federal waiver for accountability in our ESSA plan, for the 2020-2021 school year, BESE waived all of its policies related to the production of school performance scores. 2020-2021 was a year unlike any other, and results cannot be accurately compared. Also, by not producing official school performance scores, the Department and BESE is able to make good on its commitment to not utilize this data for evaluative purposes.

### **Why does this year’s score have C19 appended to it?**

By utilizing a C19-###.# format, the Department can increase the likelihood that future analyses of this data will include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as a consideration.

### **What’s actually different in this year’s results methodology?**

- Assessment results may not accurately reflect student learning due to higher than usual rates of non-participation in addition to the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and hurricanes.
- Graduation Requirement Waivers: the high school formula, which is heavily weighted toward graduation outcomes, may not reflect accurate representations due to the impact of waivers on graduation requirements and other factors related to the interruption of the 2019-2020 school year.
- Modified student growth methodology: with the lack of testing in Spring 2020, there is not an immediate “prior year” to use in the predictive component of the state’s value added measure; the Department modified the methodology to use data that skips the year without test results.
- Although there were four state contract administrations offered for ACT, in addition to national testing dates, some students may have declined participation in testing due to concerns related to COVID-19. The state spring 2020 grade 11 administration scheduled for March was cancelled by the Department .

### **What are the statewide trends?**

Given the already released statewide LEAP data, school performance scores were expected to be impacted. The majority of schools and districts would have seen a decrease in their performance score this year had official letter grades been produced and new scores assigned.

- Overall the state's SPS would have declined 1.8 points
- 71% of districts had a simulated DPS that was lower than their 2019 DPS
- 70% of schools had a simulated SPS that was lower than their 2019 SPS
- High-poverty schools, high-minority schools and schools where virtual learning was more prevalent saw more of a decline than non-similar schools

The larger the # of students who attended most of the school year virtually, the larger the decline in scores the school would have seen:

- Less than 25% of students were virtual 50% or more of the year: -2.8 points
- 25-49.9% of the students were virtual 50% or more of the year: -5.3 points
- 50-100% of the students were virtual 50% or more of the year: -5.9 points

As we saw in the LEAP results, the pandemic had an outsized impact on minority and economically disadvantaged populations:

- >= 85% minority population schools: -4.8
- <85% minority population schools: -2.7
- >=85% economic disadvantage schools: -4.2
- <85% economic disadvantage schools: -2.6

#### **What will simulated SPS be used for and where will it be posted?**

Simulated School Performance Scores are not official results and should not be considered comparable to other years. Simulated School Performance Scores do use actual data that are verified by school systems. They are provided for informational and planning purposes only and should be interpreted with caution while also considering the many other factors that may have influenced them. Official letter grades, School and District Performance Scores, and intervention labels will be carried over from the 2018-2019 school year.

The Department will post data to the Louisiana Believes [Data Center](#) as well as many other files that were provided in prior years. Additionally, the Department will develop a new page on [School Finder](#) that summarizes and shares, in context, the 2020-21 COVID-19 impacted school year.

#### **Why produce this data?**

The Department values the data that is collected using valid and reliable measures, and believes that they should be used to inform recovery strategies as applicable. Lastly, the Department believes that transparent data that measures the effects of learning in the context of the unique 2020-2021 academic year, is important to answer the questions that communities will have about the current state of their schools after two years with no official scores and significant disruptions to student learning.

#### **Will there be simulated Letter Grades?**

No, the Department will not post simulated letter grades to School Finder, nor in the spreadsheets of simulated school performance scores. School Performance Score-to-letter grade conversion tables can be found in [Bulletin 111](#) for individuals interested in determining letter grades for simulated SPS or DPS.

**Will schools have to offer choice for simulated SPS below 50?**

Schools that have not previously been identified as academically unacceptable in prior SPS and letter grade releases will not have to offer choice. However, schools that are currently required to offer choice based on official 2019 SPS and letter grades must continue to offer choice.