

A Moral Imperative and Case For Action

This is Louisiana State Senator Joe Bouie with disturbing news about the status of the New Orleans Public School system's 15-year Charter School Experiment. **Our all-Charter system experiment has not only failed, but recent audit findings confirm it is also completely flawed.**

After spending 6 Billion dollars of tax payers' money to become the only all-Charter system in the State, a staggering **73% of our children are not functioning at grade level**, compared to 63% in 2005, when the State took control of over 100 of our schools. Superintendent Henderson Lewis said, "When you look across all grade levels and subjects in Orleans Parish, just 27 percent of students tested at grade level in 2019. This is the fourth year of stagnant or declining test results."¹

A [Louisiana Legislative Audit](#) completed earlier this year states that New Orleans Public Schools and the Louisiana Department of Education do not consider whether specific practices are responsible for positive or negative outcomes. And when determining which schools should be renewed, it is not considered whether specific practices implemented at a school are responsible for the positive academic outcomes.

In other words, fellow citizens, this 15-year flawed experiment has yielded no best practices identified to improve student and school performance, no State protocol for Charter Law Compliance, and no student performance improvement. It has, however, yielded other devastating consequences for our children and our community.

According to a 72-page Stanford University report entitled "[Whose Choice? Student Experiences and Outcomes in the New Orleans School experiment](#):"

- Our schools are highly stratified by race, class, and educational advantage, operating very different types of schools to different types of children.
- School closure is the primary tool for addressing school quality, causing students to lose achievement when closing schools displace them.
- 26,000 New Orleanians between the ages of 16 and 24 are counted by the census as "disconnected" because they are neither working nor in school.

I submit that many of those 26,000 citizens were students subjected to the New Orleans flawed and failed Charter experiment and are now victimizing the community with carjacking's and various violent crimes. A condition that makes our youth both victims and perpetrators. This flawed and failed experiment has created a steroid effect on the school to jail pipeline.

¹ <https://www.wwno.org/education/2019-07-15/orleans-parish-schools-see-another-drop-in-test-scores>

Another critical consequence of the flawed and failed experiment is the destruction of our neighborhood schools. In local communities, a school is more than brick and mortar; it is a support system for strengthening and enhancing teaching and learning and for neighborhood development as well.

And this is why we must demand that our mayor, council members, other state legislators, and congressman join us and work together to create a quality public school system for our children. The evidence is overwhelmingly clear and demand action from responsible parents and a responsible community. I urge you to contact your elected leaders with the following:

1. **Demand a moratorium on Chartering or ReChartering anymore of our schools.** We must demand that our School Board and our existing and soon-to-be new Superintendent begin doing what the other 63 parishes in Louisiana do to create good schools: They Run their schools! They employ a competent Superintendent, certified teachers, implement an Evidence-Based Curriculum, and create an environment of parental involvement and community support.
2. **Return to Neighborhood Schools.** Stop busing of our children. They are transported pass a neighborhood school to attend a failing school across town.
3. **Eliminate the ineffective One App Central Intake System. It has created inequities by Race and Class and admissions by chance (lottery) and not choice.**

I have supplied links to the Legislative Audit, the Stanford University Report and additional information on my Facebook page, [facebook.com/docjoebouie](https://www.facebook.com/docjoebouie).

If we do not act now, history will reflect that we were guilty of abandoning and not protecting our children. A quality public education system is our children's primary means of realizing America's promise. That is, equal access to a quality education as a tool to support oneself, family, and the ability to positively contribute to one's community.

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." As responsible New Orleanians, we must respond to this call to action. The lives of our children and community depend on us.

In the words of John Lewis, "If not us then who, if not now, then when?"

Paid for by Senator Joe Bouie