

Lafayette Parish School System Achieves the Largest Single-Year Gain in District Performance Score

Lafayette Parish
School System
Lafayette, LA

District Statistics

Number of schools: 43

Number of students: 30,500

Grades: K–12

Website:

<http://www.lpssonline.com>

Student Population:

42.9% African-American

2.5% Asian

47.5% Caucasian

6.8% Hispanic

0.3% Native American

69.8% Economically disadvantaged

4.8% English language learners (ELLs)

12.9% special education



Challenge:

- Lack of district growth on state accountability measures

Solution:

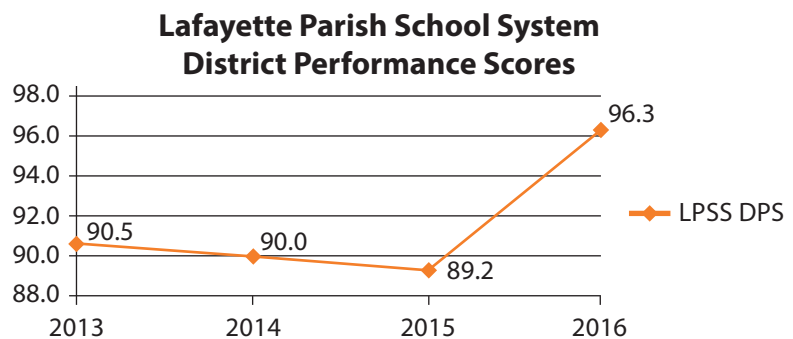
- Fast ForWord®

Populations served:

- Grades K–12 including:
 - Struggling students
 - English language learners (ELLs)
 - Special education


Results:

- Increased District Performance Score (DPS) from 89.2 points in 2015 to 96.3 points in 2016 — **the largest single-year gain in the district's performance since accountability testing was established in Louisiana in 2001**
- Increased the number of "A" rated schools
- 3 schools recognized as "Top Gains Schools" by the Louisiana Department of Education
- Reduced the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing subgroups in grades 3–8



"Because of the large number of students using Fast ForWord across the district, we know that it has played a role in raising achievement and in closing the achievement gap. Seeing our results, our district and our community are embracing the idea of Fast ForWord as an accelerator of student achievement."

— Dr. Donald W. Aguillard, Superintendent of Schools



One of Dr. Donald W. Aguillard’s unwavering core beliefs is that school improvement is achievable through deliberate action. He put this belief into practice during nearly 11 years as superintendent for the St. Mary Parish School Board, where students achieved remarkable gains.

As superintendent of schools for the Lafayette Parish School System (LPSS), Aguillard has established a data-driven, results-oriented culture of best educational practices to strengthen teaching and learning. His vision is that all will work tirelessly to transform LPSS into an “A” rated district — and the district is well on its way.

“We made the bold decision that Lafayette needed to be an ‘A’ rated district and that literacy would be the strategy we’d use to get there,” he said.

Achieving fast change and lasting results

When Aguillard began his tenure as superintendent of schools in May 2015, he discovered that LPSS held 13 Fast ForWord licenses that were not being utilized. He immediately reactivated the licenses and implemented the Fast ForWord program in a total of 16 schools.

Upon implementing Fast ForWord across the district, LPSS saw rapid results. In fall 2015, 1,770 students used at least one Fast ForWord product, and then took a follow-up Reading Progress Indicator (RPI) assessment. On average, students showed a one-year improvement in their reading skills in only four months.

“In my previous district, we saw phenomenal results with the Fast ForWord program, and early on we were excited about the results in Lafayette Parish,” said Aguillard. “We now have 25 schools using Fast ForWord, and the pre- and post-test data show that these students are accelerating their language and reading proficiency.”

Preparing the brain and practicing foundational skills

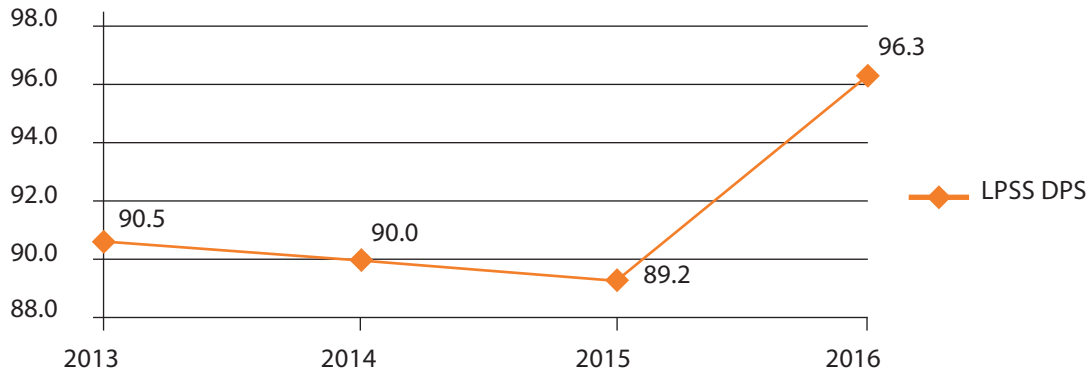
At each school, the principal decides which students will participate in the Fast ForWord program. In many schools, it is targeted to students at Tiers 2 and 3 of the district’s Response to Intervention model, and other students participate as space allows. In LPSS, students typically spend 50 minutes a day on Fast ForWord in elementary school and 40 minutes a day in middle and high school.

Fast ForWord is a neuroscience-based intervention that uses the principles of brain plasticity — the ability of the brain to rewire and improve — to target the root causes of slow academic progress in students with disabilities, struggling readers, and ELLs. Students who use the program can make fast progress, increasing their reading skill level up to two years in as little as three months. They continue to make progress long after they are done with the intervention.

Making the state's largest single-year gain in District Performance Score

From 2015 to 2016, LPSS raised its District Performance Score (DPS) from 89.2 point to 96.3 points. "This growth marks the largest single-year gain in district performance since the Louisiana Department of Education began assigning performance scores to schools and districts in 2001," said Aguillard. "We're now ranked in the top 20 districts in the state."

**Lafayette Parish School System
District Performance Scores**



LPSS rose in all six measures used to calculate a DPS. It gained 3.7 points on the Grades 3–8 Assessment Index, 3.5 points on the Dropout Credit Accumulation Index, 3.8 points on the End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment Index, 16.9 points on the ACT Index, 11.3 points on the Strength of Diploma Index, and 14.2 points on the Cohort Graduation Rate Index based on a 7.1 percent increase in the cohort graduation rate.

Lafayette Parish – District Performance Score Components

Year	DPS	Gr. 3-8 Asses. Index	Dropout Credit Accum. Index	EOC Assess. Index	ACT Assess. Index	Strength of Diploma Index	Cohort Grad. Rate Index	Cohort Grad. Rate	Progress Points
2015	89.2	77.5	126.8	74.2	74.2	76.7	87.6	68.8	10
2016	96.3	81.2	130.3	78	91.1	88	101.8	75.9	10

Improving school grades

In addition, 85 percent of schools (34 of 40) posted positive gains. “This continues to move the school system closer to our goal of achieving an ‘A’ rating,” said Aguillard.

Lafayette Parish – School Grades

Year	# of “A” schools	# of “B” schools	# of “C” schools
2015	10	8	14
2016	13	7	12

Further, the Louisiana Department of Education recognized three Lafayette Parish schools as “Top Gains Schools.” Top Gains Schools are identified as “A” schools that improved by 5 or more points in their School Performance Score (SPS), or schools graded “B” or below that improved by 10 or more SPS points.

Closing the achievement gap

According to Aguillard, LPSS has also made significant gains in narrowing the achievement gap. Comparing the highest performing subgroup (white students) and the lowest performing group (African-American students), in grades 3–5 the gaps decreased by 16.6 percent in English language arts, 15.8 percent in math, and 12.7 percent in science. In grades 6–8 the gaps decreased by 11.7 percent in English language arts and 4.6 percent in science.

Accelerating student growth

“Because of the large number of students using Fast ForWord across the district, we know that it has played a role in raising achievement and in closing the achievement gap,” said Aguillard. “In 2015, we set out on a course to become an ‘A’ rated school district in four years, growing at 2.5 points a year. Last year, we grew 7.1 points. That’s focused our community and our school system on the idea that we could be only a year away from earning an ‘A.’ That may be optimistic, but we’ve seen that if we increase our students’ literacy, we can get to where we want to be — and sooner rather than later. Seeing our results, our district, and our community are embracing the idea of Fast ForWord as an accelerator of student achievement.”



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