

# Louisiana Believes

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**2016 ACT Results**

**July 25, 2016**

# Guiding Beliefs

Louisiana's students—all of them, no matter race, disability, or creed—are as smart and capable as any in America. They have gifts and talents no lesser than those given to any children on this earth.

Over the last five years, we have been working to raise expectations for students and educators, and as a result, students are performing at higher levels than ever before.

While we have made great strides in increasing life opportunities for our students, there is still much progress to be made, especially with those students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds.

As educators, we have a powerful role to play in helping these students overcome the challenges they will experience on the way to leading healthy and productive lives as adults.

# Louisiana's Priorities

- **Unify** child care, Head Start, and prekindergarten to prepare every student for kindergarten.
- **Align** standards, curriculum, assessment, and professional development that are as challenging for students and educators as any in America.
- **Prepare** every educator under a mentor educator through a professional residency.
- **Create** opportunity for every graduate through Jump Start, Advanced Placement, and other early college pathways to a funded education after high school.
- **Focus** relentlessly on students in persistently struggling schools by transforming those schools and creating new options.

# Progress to Date

Through its comprehensive plan and the work of thousands of educators, Louisiana students have more opportunities and success than ever before.

- **More than 65,000 at-risk children (birth to five) were served** in their communities in 2015-2016 across a variety of settings, including public and nonpublic pre-K programs, Head Start, and child care.
- Louisiana **fourth-grade students achieved the highest growth among all states** on the 2015 NAEP reading test and the second highest growth in math.
- Louisiana's 2015 **high school graduation rate was an all-time high** of 77.5 percent.
- Louisiana's class of 2015 **Advanced Placement® results showed greater annual improvement** than any state other than Massachusetts.

# ACT for All

BESE approved policy in 2012 to give all high school students the opportunity to take the ACT free of charge, as part of a comprehensive package to increase access to college and a career for high school students. Louisiana became the tenth state in the nation to institute an “ACT for All” policy in 2013.

## Impact on Students

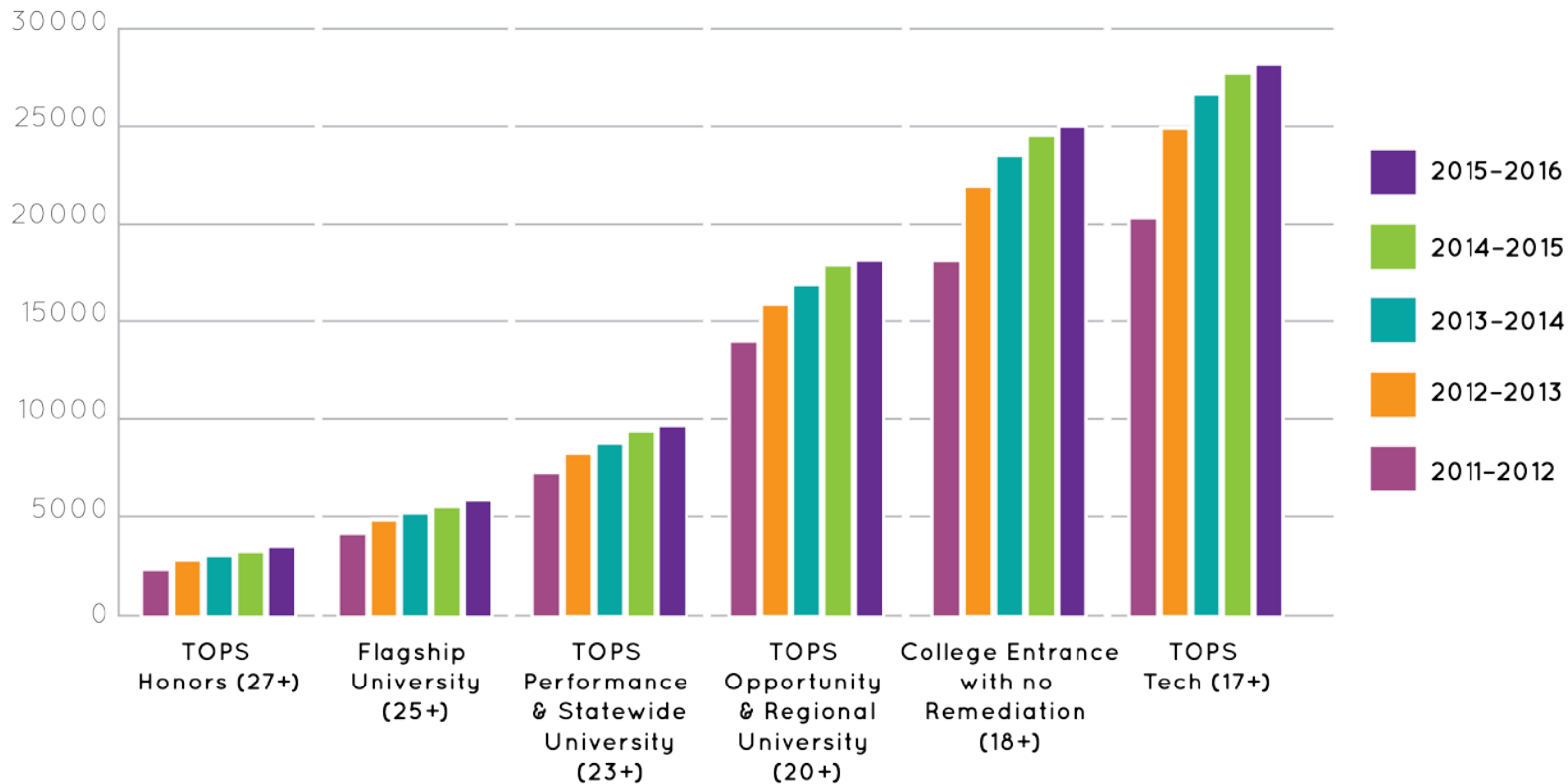
- Research from other states indicated that “ACT for All” allows historically overlooked students to succeed on the test.
- ACT allows students admission to college and qualification for college scholarships such as TOPS.
- ACT results provide schools, parents, and students with college- and career-readiness information, such as Jump Start and Advanced Placement course options based on a student’s ACT score.

**How is ACT reported?** Like colleges and universities, the Department counts the best score a student achieved on the test, no matter how many times he or she takes the test, when calculating school scores.

# Increased College Access and Scholarships

In 2016, the state's average composite score for public school students increased 0.1 points, from 19.4 in 2015 to 19.5, resulting in a continued increase in the number of students obtaining TOPS scholarships.

Number of Students (Statewide) at ACT Levels (2012-2016)



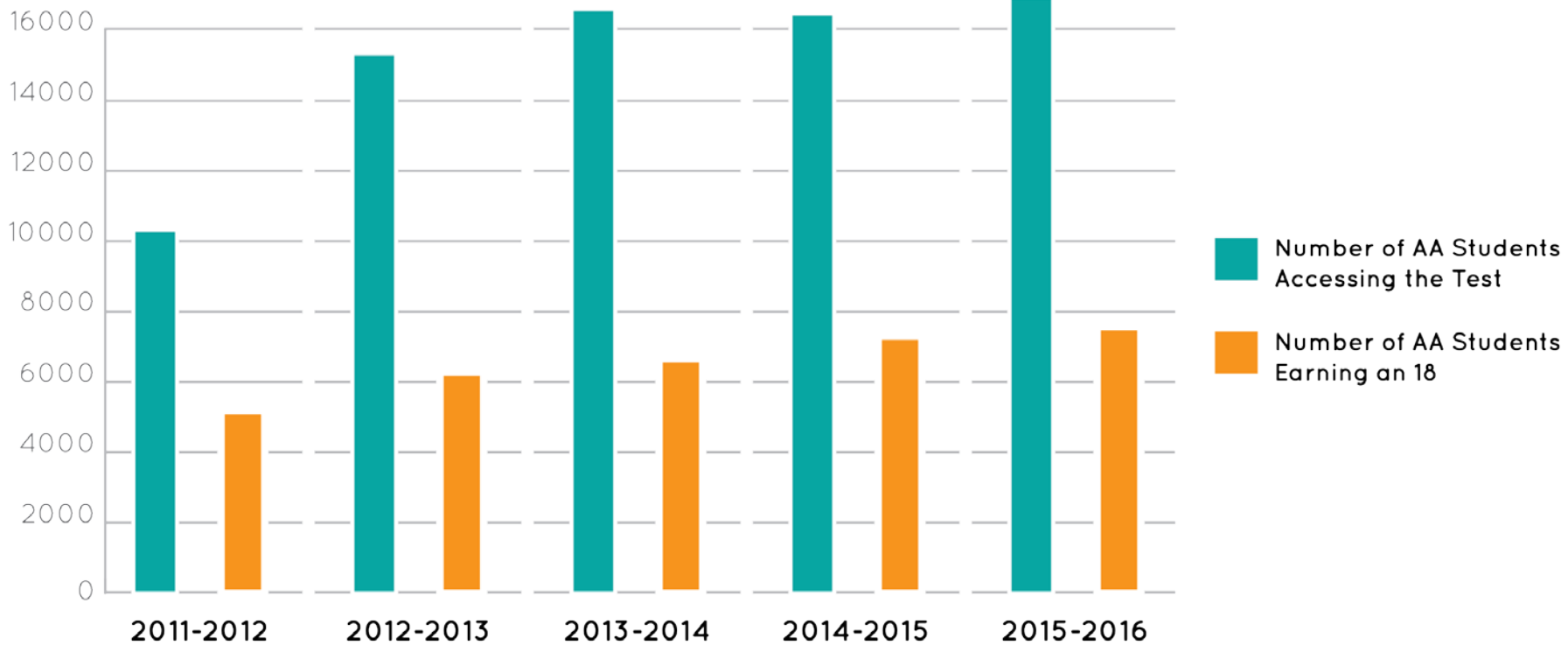
# Top Growth Districts: Overall

District	2014-2015 Average ACT Score	2015-2016 Average ACT Score*	ACT score increase from 14- 15 to 15-16
DeSoto Parish	18.2	19.3	1.1
Acadia Parish	17.9	18.9	1.0
LaSalle Parish	18.8	19.8	1.0
St. Helena Parish	16	17	1.0
West Feliciana Parish	20.5	21.4	0.9
Assumption Parish	17.4	18.2	0.8
Jackson Parish	18	18.7	0.7
Madison Parish	15	15.7	0.7
Webster Parish	18.1	18.8	0.7
Natchitoches Parish	17.6	18.2	0.6
Zachary Community Schools	20.7	21.3	0.6

These districts are making great strides in increasing their average ACT composite score, resulting in more students qualifying for TOPS scholarships and getting accepted into college. However, there is still more work to be done to get students to a place where they are achieving ACT scores needed for flagship universities, such as LSU, where a score of 25 is needed for admittance.

# Greater College Opportunities for African American Students

Since 2012, Louisiana has increased the number of African American students earning a college-going ACT score by 46 percent, or more than 2,300 students. African American students in Louisiana earned an average ACT composite score of 17.4, outperforming the national average of 17 for African American students.



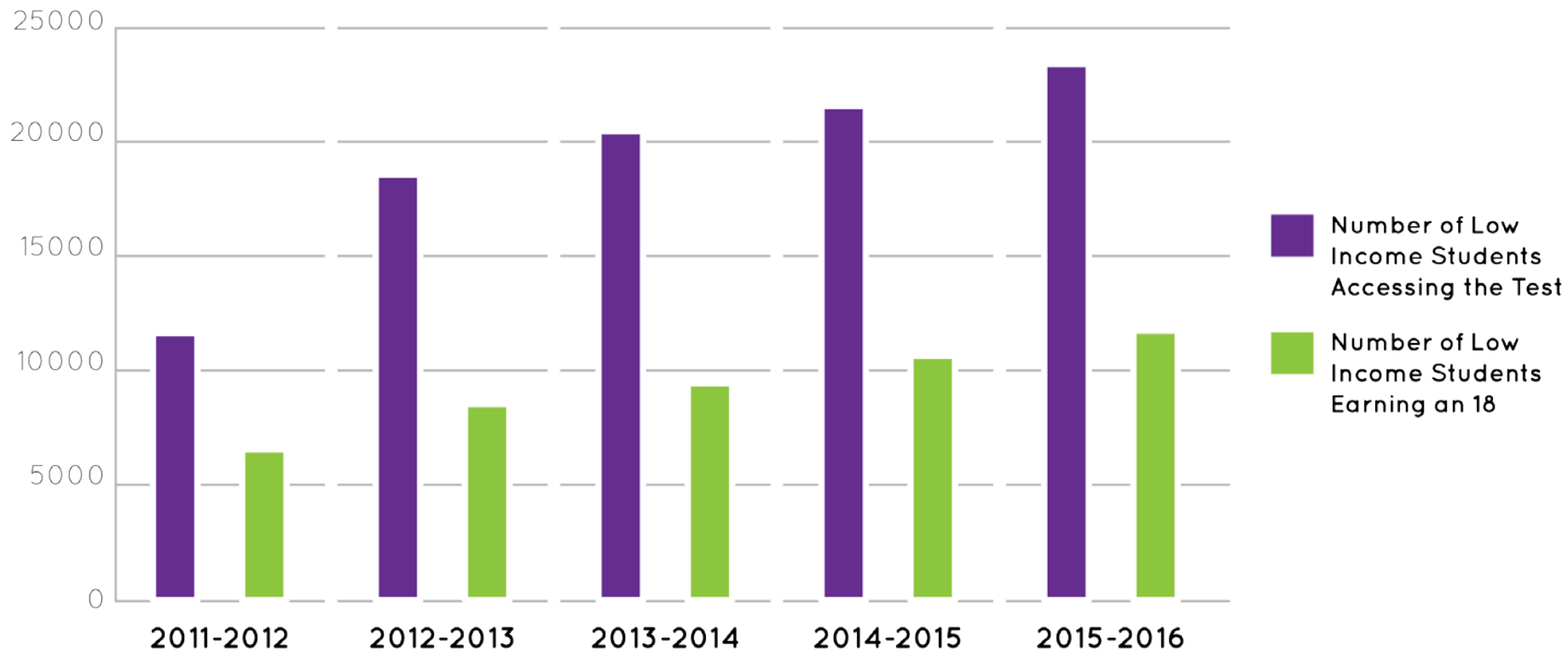


# Top Growth Districts: African American Students

District	2014-2015 Average ACT Score	2015-2016 Average ACT Score*	ACT score increase from 14-15 to 15-16
DeSoto Parish	16.5	17.6	1.1
Jackson Parish	15.5	16.6	1.1
St. Helena Parish	15.9	17	1.1
Allen Parish	16.8	17.7	0.9
St. Charles Parish	17.2	18	0.8
Red River Parish	16.3	17	0.7
Pointe Coupee Parish	17.2	17.8	0.6
Union Parish	16	16.6	0.6
Livingston Parish	17.2	17.8	0.6
Winn Parish	16.5	17.1	0.6
Madison Parish	15	15.6	0.6
St. James Parish	17.6	18.2	0.6

# Greater College Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Nearly 5,200 more low income students earned an ACT score of 18 or above in 2015-2016 than in 2011-2012, and nearly 1,100 more than in 2014-2015.



# Top Growth Districts: Economically Disadvantaged Students

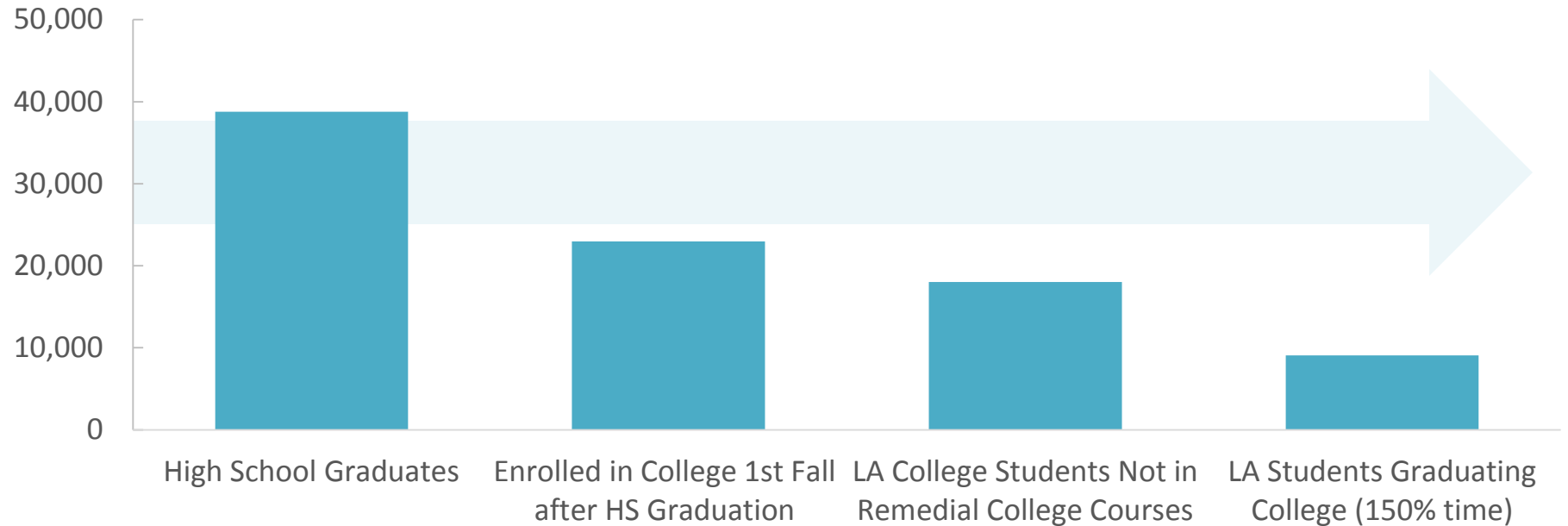
The following districts have demonstrated growth in the performance of low income students on the ACT. While this growth shows an upward trend for these students, there is still a 3.3 point gap between the performance of low income students and their higher income peers.

District	2014-2015 Average ACT Score	2015-2016 Average ACT Score*	ACT score increase from 14- 15 to 15-16
Jackson Parish	16.5	17.6	1.1
Zachary Community School District	18.2	19.3	1.1
Acadia Parish	16.9	17.9	1.0
Assumption Parish	16.4	17.3	0.9
St. Helena Parish	15.8	16.6	0.8
St. James Parish	17.4	18.2	0.8
Webster Parish	16.9	17.7	0.8
Plaquemines Parish	18.6	19.4	0.8
DeSoto Parish	17.3	18	0.7
West Carroll Parish	19.2	19.9	0.7

# Challenges Persist

In spite of great progress on ACT and other high school measures, data indicate that challenges to achieving prosperous adult lives persist for many Louisiana students. Many students graduating from high school are **required to repeat high school coursework when they arrive in college** because they have yet to master fundamental skills.

Additionally, less than 40 percent of students that enroll in a Louisiana college or university graduate in 150 percent of normal time (3 years for an associate's degree and 6 years for a bachelor's degree).



# Contact Us

Please contact [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov) with questions.