

Louisiana Believes

**Time to Learn:
Louisiana Transitions to Higher
Expectations**

Louisiana's Transition

After years of gradual transition, Louisiana schools are using more rigorous math, reading, and writing standards to guide student learning.

In summer 2013, the Department of Education announced that it would propose transition accountability policies to BESE in December 2013 to guide the last two years of the transition.

The proposed transition policies – developed during dozens of meetings over months of engagement – represent the collaborative work of educators, parents, and other stakeholders from across the state.

The policies continue the transition by creating time for teachers, students, and parents to learn the expectations.

The Need to Transition

Most jobs in Louisiana require some education after high school, primarily at a four-year college or at a two-year technical and community college. This is a change from jobs of generations past.

In 2011, 28 percent of the Louisiana workforce had a two- or four-year degree. To meet Louisiana's future job needs, that number must double.

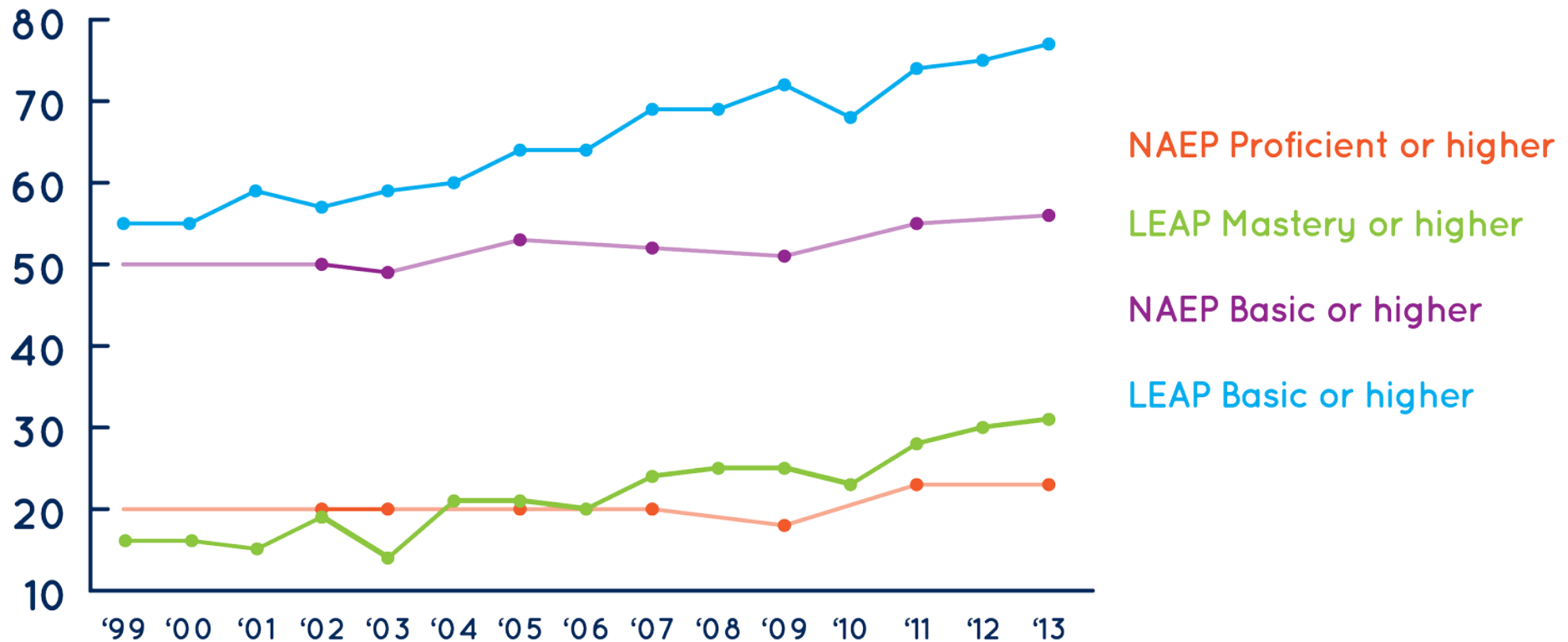
In part this gap is because our own academic expectations do not correspond with the job need. While a score of "mastery" or level four out of five denotes readiness to complete at least a year of technical college or university on-time, in our state "basic" or level three out of five has been accepted as a mark of full proficiency.

The transition to higher expectations is, at its essence, a transition from "basic" to "mastery" as the bedrock academic expectation.

Assessment	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
LEAP	Unsatisfactory	Approaching Basic	Basic	Mastery	Advanced
NAEP	Below Basic		Basic	Proficient	Advanced
PARCC	Minimal Command	Partial Command	Moderate Command	Strong Command	Distinguished Command

Past Performance

Performance since the state's transition to the LEAP shows two important trends. First, the state has shown steady increases on the LEAP, the state's main assessment. Next, the difference between LEAP scores and NAEP scores have increased, showing the need to raise expectations.



2015-2025

Today an “A” school is one in which the average performance is a minimum of “basic.”

If our bedrock expectation is to be “level four” or “mastery,” we can start by proposing that in the year 2025, an “A” school will be one in which the average performance is “level four” or “mastery.”

The path to 2025 requires a gradual raising of the bar for each letter grade, starting in 2015, after we take the new tests for the first time and at the conclusion of the learning phase.

The 2015 scores will create a “baseline” or starting point from which to raise the bar.

In order to establish a fair school and district performance score baseline in 2015, for the next two years:

- Test distributions will not change significantly from 2013 to 2014 and 2015.
- Letter grades will be awarded on a curve, so that the baseline is a fair starting point.

Starting in 2015-2016, the expectations for letter grades will gradually rise so that by 2025 an “A” school is one in which the average performance is a minimum of “mastery” or “level four.”

2013-2015

The learning period allows educators and students time to learn the new expectations through the following policy supports:

- **Test scheduling.** Students will take the PARCC test in grades 3 to 8 (online in grades 5-8; paper in grades 3 and 4). However, to allow schools and districts more time to learn the new expectations, Louisiana will not adopt PARCC in high schools for 2015.
- **School accountability.** Letter grade distribution will remain the same from 2013 to 2014 and 2015.
- **Teacher accountability.** For 2014 and 2015, the state will not produce “value-added data” because there will be no baseline from which to calculate. Compass policies will remain in effect, but student learning scores will not need to be based on value-added data.
- **Student accountability.** In 2014 and 2015, the state will maintain current 4th grade policy but allow districts to issue waivers for students demonstrating readiness to progress. The state will shift the 8th grade retention standard to be a remedial standard and require that remediation take place on the high school campus in a “transitional 9th grade” year.

Technology and Curriculum

- **Technology.** Students in grades 3 and 4 will take paper/pencil tests in 2015. The state will conduct a “dry run” of computer-based tests in fall 2014. If specific schools serving grades 5 to 8 are unable to demonstrate technology readiness status, the state will grant one-year exemptions for 2015.
- **Curriculum.** The state will produce a Louisiana Curriculum Guidebook for English Language Arts and Math in grades Kindergarten through 12 that will include learning standards, a recommended sequence of skills to be taught, recommended units to present, and recommended materials to use in the classroom. The state will also recommend math curricula, including LSU-developed Eureka Math, along with English reading materials.