

LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Education News Update

Education Officials Update Status of School Closures

BATON ROUGE -- Today the Louisiana Department of Education issued a report on the status of school districts across the state. (PLEASE NOTE: The report is subject to change. The local school district may make adjustments.)

School districts located in parishes hit hardest by Hurricane Gustav, primarily in the south central, southeast and central part of the state are indicating they will not be prepared to resume classes before Monday, September 8. In some cases, particularly where the eye of the storm passed along the Gulf Coast, it will likely be later than that date, and perhaps as much as two weeks before classes can resume. The western, southwestern and northern parts of the state were spared the immediate effects of Gustav. However, as a result of very heavy rains and tornadoes in the aftermath of the storm, school districts outside of its path may have to postpone classes beyond the projected re-opening date of Thursday, September 4.

Operations of almost all schools have been halted since Friday, August 29, when the state began bracing for Hurricane Gustav.

"As we anticipated, school districts in Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, Assumption and other parishes in the south are reporting severe power outages and notable damage to school buildings. We are continuing to work with districts as they assess the damages and make adjustments to accommodate students and families in their school communities," said State Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek.

"Many local superintendents and education officials are working very hard under difficult circumstances to reopen schools for students as fast as possible," Pastorek said.

"Because of great planning and post storm collaboration, these local officials are bringing schools back remarkably quickly. The good news is that there are some areas in the state that are ready to resume classes Thursday, and even those who have been substantially affected seem well prepared and are working to serve their communities.

"However, there are some locations that have been too heavily devastated and continue to be pelted with rains and tornadoes, and it is just too early to tell when schools in several parishes can reopen. We encourage families to stay tuned to their local media for updates."

For information on school district closures, please visit the Department of Education website at www.louisianaschools.net or refer to the attached list of updated closures.

For the latest on Hurricane Gustav, you can visit emergency.louisiana.gov or call the state's emergency hotline at 1-866-288-2484 to listen to a recorded message with the most up-to-date information.