Evolution of Charter School Accountability in California: Reflections from Research, Policy, Advocacy and Practice

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California
Charter Schools

1992

- 1271 charter schools
    - 12.7% of the state's schools
    - 18% of the nation's charter schools

- 600,000 charter school students
    - 10% of the state's K-12 students
    - 21% of the nation's charter students

Accountability and Charter Schools

Charter schools, by design, receive more autonomy in operations; *in exchange they are to be held more accountable than other public schools* for student outcomes. Charter leaders use this autonomy to create their own schools, select their own governing boards, design educational interventions appropriate for students' unique needs and learning styles, and hire and fire teachers more freely. In turn, *the enhanced autonomy granted to charter schools was expected to result in, among other things, greater performance of students enrolled in them.*

(Miron & Applegate, 2009)

Lessons in Charter School Accountability: Evidence from California

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Charter School Accountability in California

	Public Schools Accountability Act	Assembly Bill 1137 CA ED CODE 47607	State Board of Education Regulations	California Charter School Association
	1999	2003	2010	2011
Minimum Performance Threshold	800 API			700 API
Growth	Annual growth towards 800 API	Meet annual growth targets	Cumulative 50 point gain in API over 3 years	Cumulative 50 point gain in API over 3 years
Absolute Rankings	Statewide Decile Rank	Decile 4 or above	Decile 2 or above	
Relative Rankings	Similar Schools Rank	Decile 4 or above		Similar Students Measure Actual API better than 6% below predicted API
Enforcement Authority	Define Metrics	Charter Authorizer	State Board of Education	No legal authority for enforcement

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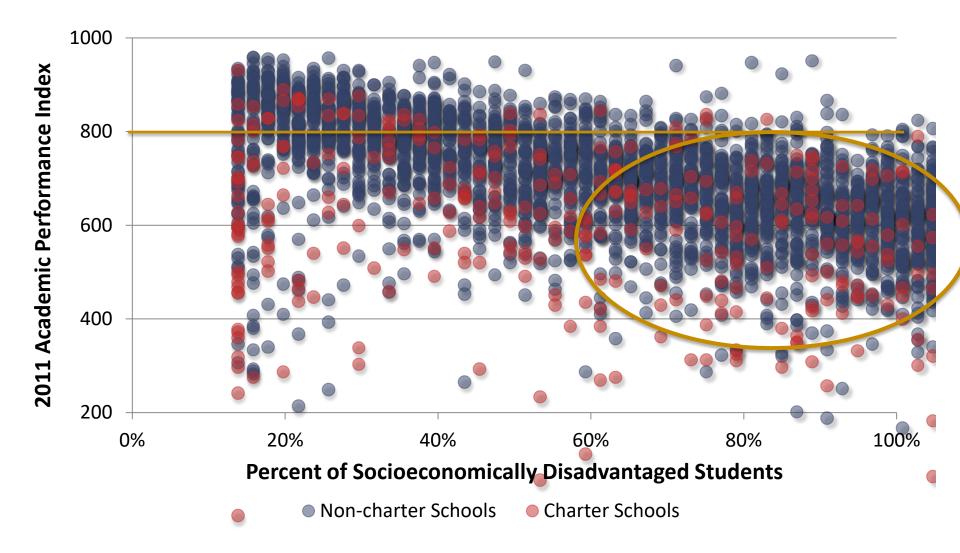*Charter Agreement with Authorizer*

Lessons from Prior Accountability Frameworks

Accountability metrics are often the average of student performance on a single measure (i.e., standardized-test)
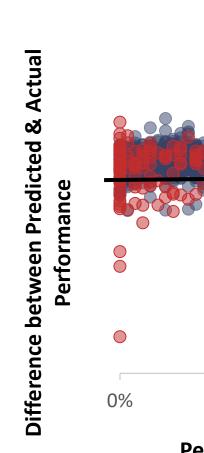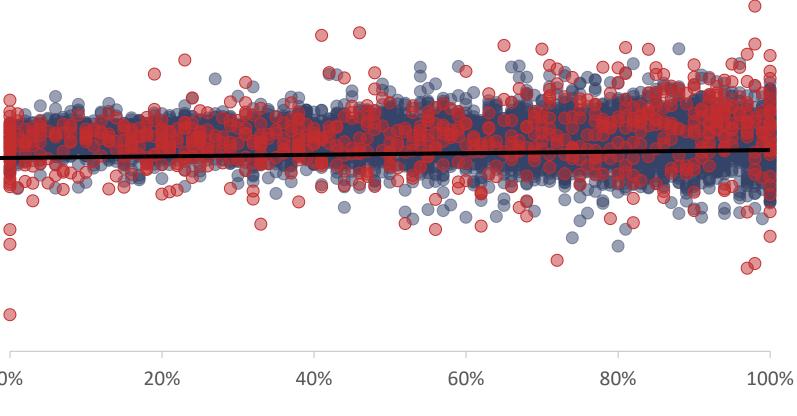
School Average Measures:

- Have potential to target schools serving high proportions of disadvantaged students

- Are statistically unreliable across schools and **over time**

- Are highly variable among **small** schools and schools serving high proportions of disadvantaged students

- Mask important differences between students within the same school

(Darling-Hammond, 2004; Kane & Staiger, 2002; Reed & Rose, 2017)

Potential to Target Schools Serving High Proportions of Disadvantaged Students

Potential to Target Schools Serving High Proportions of Disadvantaged Students
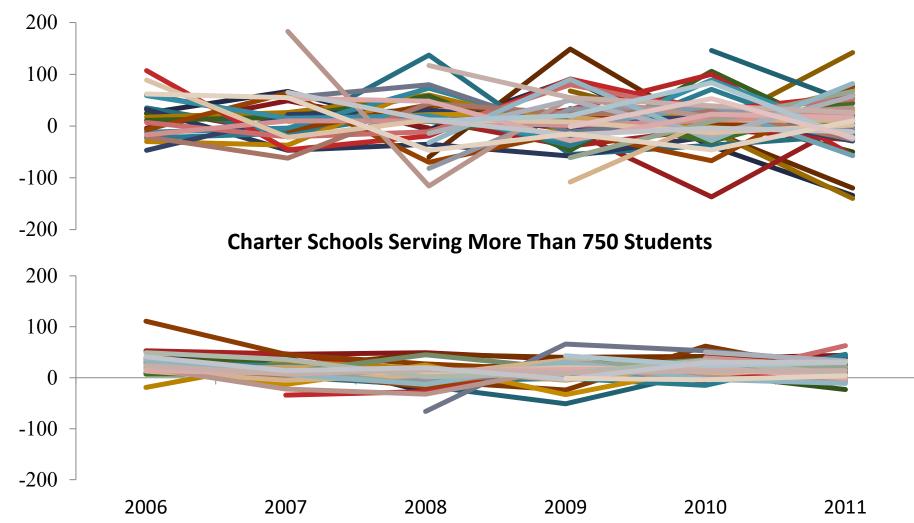

Difference between Predicted & Actual Performance

Percent of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students

● Non-Charter Schools   ● Charter Schools

Statistically Unreliable Overtime and Highly Variable for Small Schools

Charter Schools Serving Fewer Than 100 Students

Charter Schools Serving More Than 750 Students

Mask Important Differences between Students within the Same School

EXAMPLE

	School A	School B	School C
Student 1	12	45	10
Student 2	15	46	52
Student 3	89	55	72
Student 4	93	63	75
School Mean Score	52.25	52.25	52.25

High Stakes Decisions Harm Students

...applying sanctions to schools with lower test score performance penalizes already disadvantaged students twice over: having given them inadequate schools to begin with, society now punishes them again for failing to perform as well as other students who attend schools with greater resources. Such sanctions can discourage good schools from opening their doors to educationally needy students and place more emphasis on manipulating scores by elimination or keeping out low-scoring students than on improving schools.

(Linda Darling-Hammond, 2004)

Accountability: an Evolution in Thinking

- Multiple measures of performance
- Individual growth should be considered
- Examining subgroups is important
- Local context matters
  - Difference in students served
  - Size of school
  - Resources
- Provide support, not punishment

A New Approach for Accountability of All Schools: Combining Statewide and Local Indicators

Jenny Singh

Administrator, Academic Accountability Unit

California Department of Education

Landmark California Legislation: The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

- Passed in 2013: Identifies 10 state priorities
  - Significantly changed how all local educational agencies (LEAs) in California are funded
    - LCFF treats charter schools as LEAs
  - LEAs receive funds based on specific student populations (English learners, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and foster youth)
  - Allows LEAs maximum flexibility, or *local control*, in allocating resources to meet their needs

LCFF Accountability

- In exchange for the flexibility provided under LCFF, LEAs must engage parents, educators, and community members in decisions about how to use the LCFF resources to meet student needs and develop a local control and accountability plan (LCAP)
  - The LCAP is developed once every three years, but annual review and updates are required.

Creation of Single System

- In September 2016, California's State Board of Education (SBE) approved a new multiple measures accountability system.

  - Consists of **state and local measures** (called indicators)

  - Based on the LCFF state priorities

  - Results reported on the annual California School Dashboard (the Dashboard)

- Rather than having two separate accountability systems (state and federal) as in prior years, the new integrated system captures local, state, and federal requirements.

California's Six State Measures

1. Chronic Absenteeism (grades K–8)

2. Suspension Rate (grades K–12)

3. English Learner Progress (grades 1–12)

4. Graduation Rate (high school only)

5. College/Career (high school only)

6. Academic (grades 3–8 and grade 11)

   - English language arts/literacy

   - Mathematics

Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS)

- There are over 1,000 alternative schools in California that serve high risk students. They are held accountable for all the same state indicators as comprehensive schools.

- In order to fairly evaluate the success or progress of these schools, modified measures are applied to certain indicators (graduation, academic, and CCI).
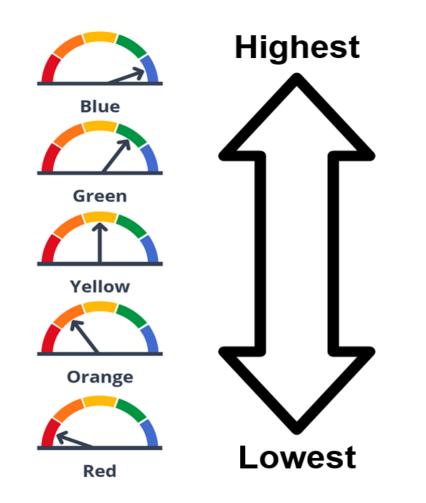
Reporting State Indicator Data on the Dashboard

- Performance on the state indicators is based on results for both the **current year** (**2019 data**) and the **prior year** (**2018 data**).

  – Reported for LEA, schools, and student groups

- For each state measure, LEA, schools. and student groups receive **one of five performance levels**.

  – Each performance level is identified by a different **color.**

Dashboard Colors for State Indicators

How Do You Get a Color?

Chronic Absenteeism Indicator

Performance Level	Increased Significantly from Prior Year (by 3.0% or more)	Increased from Prior Year (by 0.5% to less than 3.0%)	Maintained from Prior Year (declined or increased by less than 0.5%)	Declined from Prior Year (by 0.5% to less than 3.0%)	Declined Significantly from Prior Year (by 3.0% or more)
Very Low 2.5% or less in Current Year	Yellow	Green	Blue	Blue	Blue
Low More than 2.5% to 5.0% in Current Year	Orange	Yellow	Green	**Green**	Blue
Medium More than 5.0% to 10.0% in Current Year	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green
High More than 10.0% to 20.0% in Current Year	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Very High More than 20.0% in Current Year	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow

- Get a color (Green) by combining:
  - Current year results (Low), and
  - Difference from prior year results (Declined)
- Each indicator has its own five-by-five colored table

Five Local Indicators

1. Basic Conditions (teacher qualifications, safe and clean building, textbooks for all students)

2. Implementation of academic standards

3. Access to broad course of study

4. School Climate

5. Parent Engagement

Local Indicators: How Do You Get a Rating?
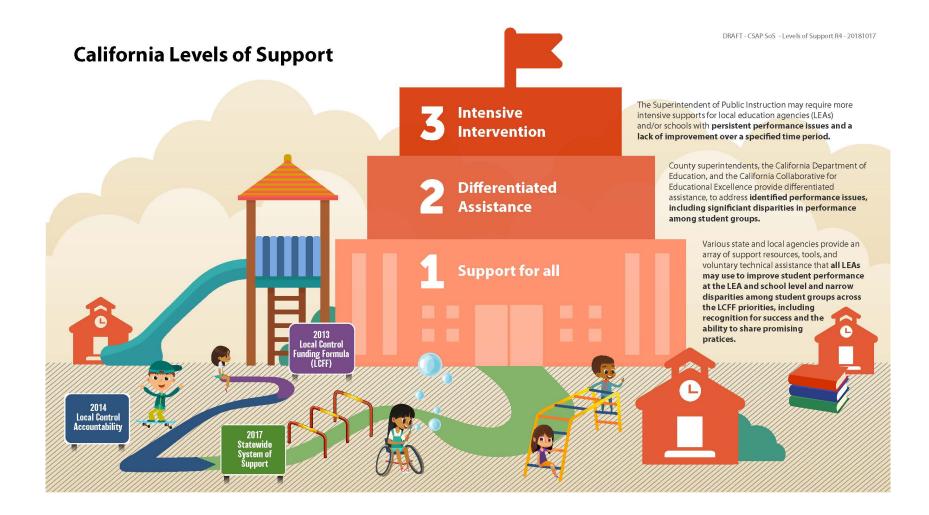
- LEAs determine whether they have:
  - Met
  - Not Met
  - Not Met for Two or More Years

- Based on whether they completed the following requirements:

  - Annually measure progress on local performance indicator based on locally available data

  - Report results at a regularly scheduled public meeting of the local governing board

  - Report results to the public through the Dashboard

Support for LEAs under LCFF

- By state statute, LEAs and charter schools are eligible for differentiated assistance based on performance of student groups.

- Charter schools became eligible for differentiated assistance for the first time in January 2020: based on **student group performance** on **state indicators** in the **2017, 2018, and 2019 Dashboards**.

    – In January 2021 state and **local** indicators will be included in the eligibility criteria

California's Levels of Support

California Levels of Support

DRAFT - CSAP SoS - Levels of Support R4 - 20181017

3 Intensive Intervention

The Superintendent of Public Instruction may require more intensive supports for local education agencies (LEAs) and/or schools with **persistent performance issues and a lack of improvement over a specified time period.**

2 Differentiated Assistance

County superintendents, the California Department of Education, and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence provide differentiated assistance, to address **identified performance issues, including significant disparities in performance among student groups.**

1 Support for all

Various state and local agencies provide an array of support resources, tools, and voluntary technical assistance that **all LEAs may use to improve student performance at the LEA and school level and narrow disparities among student groups across the LCFF priorities, including recognition for success and the ability to share promising pratices.**

2013 Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

2014 Local Control Accountability

2017 Statewide System of Support

The Critical Role Charter Authorizing Plays in Ensuring High Quality Charter Schools in California

David Patterson, EdD

Board Member, California Charter Authorizing Professionals (CCAP)

Board Member, Placer County Board of Education

Charter School Oversight

- In the charter(ed) school system, the charter authorizer is the (second) most important entity to ensure the quality of charter schools. A strong authorizing function approves and renews high quality schools and ensures poorly performing schools improve or close.

Charter Schools and Authorizers in California

- 1,271 active charter schools
- 327 charter authorizers
- 287 district authorizers
- 40 county authorizers (plus SBE)
- 92% authorize 6 or fewer
- 42% authorize only 1 or 2
- 8% authorize 58% of all charter schools (large authorizers)
- 622 (50%) of current charter schools overseen by "small" authorizers

A History Lesson

- Second State to Pass Charter School Law – 1992
  - Virtually No Thought to Oversight
- Long Term/Ongoing Political Paralysis
  - AB 544
- Unprecedented Charter School Growth in California
- Impact of Jerry Brown
- Gubernatorial Election - 2020

Documented Shortcomings of the Existing Authorizing Structure

Summary of Reports on CA Authorizing

- Inconsistent authorizer capacity and expertise
- A politicized authorizing structure and process
- Lack of professional authorizing standards
- Lack of distinct, transparent performance agreements
- Weak state-level oversight of authorizers, with little enforcement authority
- Ineffective charter renewal processes that can distort accountability

Additional Challenges of Small Districts and Small Authorizers

Other Reasons for Poor Oversight

- Local Control
- Other Uses/Purposes for Charter Schools
- Poor State System for Measuring Educational Quality
- Lack of Consequences

Charter Authorizing 2.0
Opportunity to Create an Effective Structure

- Legislation passed in the 2019 Legislative Session

- General Recognition of the Shortcomings of the Authorizing and Oversight System

- Charter Schools are now an Ongoing part of the Public School System in California

- Value of Data Driven Decision Making

It's a Regulatory Function!

- Lack of Recognition that Oversight is a Regulatory Function

- Majority of Authorizers have No Experience Or Expertise in Regulating an External Entity

- There is a Robust Body of Work on High Quality Regulatory Systems
  - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
  - U.S. Federal Government
  - CA – Administrative Procedures Act

Three Core Charter Performance Questions and Design Principles

A charter school is successful if three Core Charter Performance Questions can be answered in the affirmative:

- Is the school's educational program a success?

- Is the school financially viable?

- Is the organization operating consistent with public policy and operating effectively?

Seven Design Principles

- **Principle 1 -** The role of the authorizer is to approve/deny charter petitions, monitor, assess and intervene as necessary, and approve/deny renewals

- **Principle 2 -** The first level of oversight responsibility rests on charter school boards

- **Principal 3 -** The process is transparent to all stakeholders and the public

- **Principal 4 -** There are fundamental measures of charter school quality that can be identified and measured
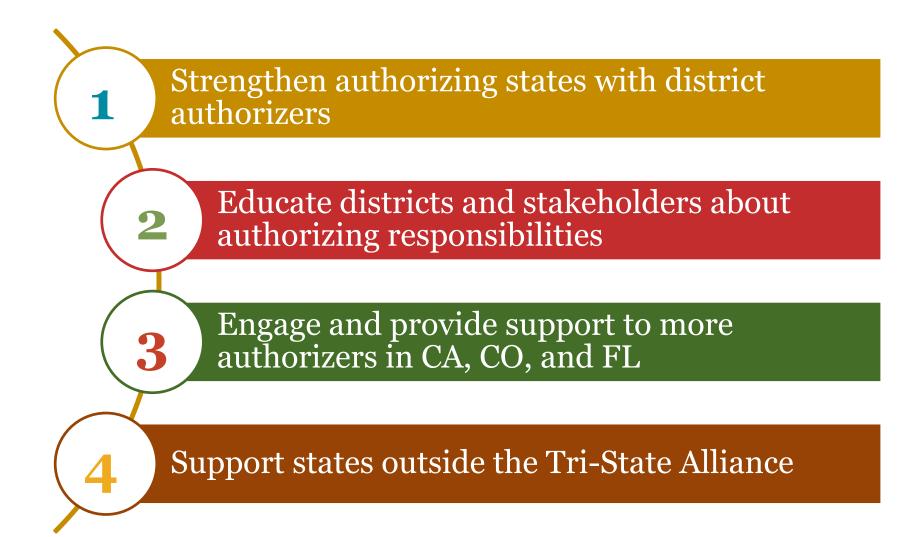
Seven Design Principles

- **Principal 5** - The level/intensity of oversight is based on the charter school meeting/failing key performance indicators.

- **Principal 6** - The authorizer provides an Annual Report that provides the foundation for the renew/not renew decision for the school by the authorizer

- **Principal 7** – Fulfilling the responsibilities of a charter authorizer must be within the capacity of all authorizers

Creating Authorizing 2.0

- Need Informed Discussions
  - Policy Makers and Leaders
  - Stakeholders
- Sacramento Actors
  - CCAP – Federal Grantee
  - CCSESA (CA County Superintendents)
  - CCSA – also a Federal Grantee
  - CTA
  - Other "ABC" organizations

CCAP Project Goals

1 Strengthen authorizing states with district authorizers

2 Educate districts and stakeholders about authorizing responsibilities

3 Engage and provide support to more authorizers in CA, CO, and FL

4 Support states outside the Tri-State Alliance

Charter School Accountability as a Two-Tiered System: Why Mixed Methods in the Better Approach

Erin Abshere, EdD

Managing Director

School Performance, Accountability and Research

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CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY AS A TWO-TIERED SYSTEM:
WHY MIXED-METHODS IS THE BETTER APPROACH

Erin Abshere, Ed.D.

California Charter Accountability: Changes Afoot

Old vs. New

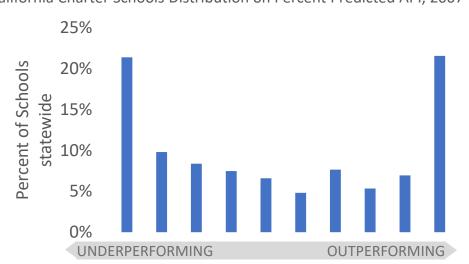| Former Charter Accountability	As of January 1, 2020 Charter Accountability
Emphasis on academic achievement with option for use of "alternative measures of academic performance" as evidence	Must look at all local and state outcome indicators In most cases, can submit alternative measures of academic and post-secondary performance as evidence, but must meet qualification criteria of being valid, reliable and peer-reviewed.
All charters given option for 5 year renewal and ability to submit alternative measures of academic performance	3 tiers of charter authorization • 5-7 year renewal: high track • 5 year renewal: middle track • 2 year renewal: low track Only middle and low track able to submit additional evidence

CCSA's charter accountability: Suitable and Stable

![California Charter Schools Association logo] CCSA

Why is CCSA involved in accountability advocacy?

- In 2009, too many charters were far underperforming, even compared to schools serving similar student groups.

- Not only did this not serve students well, but this threatened all charter schools because legislators and authorizers would likely address issues of underperformance at a few schools by eroding all schools' autonomy and ability to innovate.

California Charter Schools Distribution on Percent Predicted API, 2007-08

How did CCSA address underperformance issues?

CCSA, led by its Member Council, which is made up of charter educators from across the state, resolved to **Build a rigorous, equitable accountability framework which prioritized**:

- Alignment to state standards where possible

- Academic growth and performance (as aligned with charter law)

- Equity

- Access to post-secondary education

Accountability Framework Basics:
Publicly Available Quantitative Review first AKA "Initial Filters"

1. Initial Filters

   - Publicly available measures of academic data
   - Uses a growth-proxy measure with demographics to understand performance of schools serving similar peers
   - Uses more than 1 year of data to capture trends in performance
   - Acts as a sifter for school performance

   Important caveat: this accountability framework does not apply to:
   - *Schools approved for Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS)*
   - *Schools which have been in operation less than 4 years*
   - *Schools with less than 30 test-takers*

Accountability Framework Basics:
Next: Quantitative & Qualitative data AKA "Second Look"

2. Second Look

- Uses locally driven measures of academic growth, emphasizing similar demographics, performance of subgroups of students and matched student growth in the absence of CA adopting a growth metric

- Uses evidence of alignment to vision and mission of school

- Utilizes and aligns with documentation required for local and other agencies such as: LCAP and WASC

- Looks at local indicators and other non-academic metrics such as school culture and climate, leader capacity and turnover, as well as pupil and parent engagement

Deep Dive on Second Look

CCSA's principles and data guidelines for the Second Look

Guiding Principles

1. *Charter schools should be accountable for the* **achievement growth** *of their students for the term of their existing charter.*

2. *Students should be set up for success in high school and should have access to the* **post-secondary outcomes** *of their choice and data should indicate that they will have the chance to be successful when they get there.*

In extreme cases:

• *Are there* **extreme extenuating circumstances** *that impacted the school's ability to accomplish greater outcomes for students and have these issues been rectified or will they likely persist into the next charter term?   What is the evidence?*

• *Is there* **stability and confidence in leadership** *moving forward that they can continue the upward growth patterns or significantly reshape the existing outcomes from where they are? What is the evidence?*

Case Study Using CCSA's Framework

Public Data revealed with Initial Filters
- 9-12 high school, Central Valley, 130 students
- State Rank 2, Similar Students : 3-year trend of performing worse than similar schools
- Early college focus; A-G Rate: 0%
- Graduation rate: 90% (2014), 87% (2013)
- 46% FRL, 5% SpEd, 59% Latino, 33% White

Case Study Using CCSA's Framework

Multiple Measure Review of internal metrics

- Recruit 9th grade dropouts (avg. GPA 1.8); Pass rates improved (75% avg. gain)
- Credit completion rate in 9th grade of 20 credits jumped to 38
- 76% concurrent enrollment in 2-yr college
- Graduates:
  - First graduating class, 49 of 50 graduates enrolled at local college
  - Second class had 100% 1-year graduation rate, 86% attended college
- 81% of latest graduates received trade certifications
  - 16 graduates received 2-year certifications
  - 45% of graduates had 3-12 college credits; 33% had 12-24 credits
- 31% of graduates needed remedial college English (vs. 35% of district grads)
- 68% first-generation college-goers
  - 86% of first graduating class still enrolled in college
  - 90% of second grad class still enrolled

Bridging existing Ed code and CCSA's framework

Alignment between CCSA Accountability Framework and CA School Dashboard

CCSA Accountability Framework

INITIAL FILTERS
- **STATUS & CHANGE** (Same "distance from met" as the state)
- **SIMILAR STUDENTS**
- **% Prepared on CCI**

MULTIPLE MEASURE REVIEW
- Any outcome measures the school chooses, aligned to school mission & goals, for example:
- Schools' benchmarks
- Postsecondary readiness
- College/career outcomes

CA School Dashboard

| Equity Report | Status and Change Report | Detailed Reports | Stu |

State Indicators	All Students Performance
College/Career (9-12) Select for one year of available data	N/A
English Language Arts (3-8)	
Mathematics (3-8)	
Chronic Absenteeism	N/A
Suspension Rate (K-12)	
English Learner Progress (1-12)	
Graduation Rate (9-12)	

54

Why not just use the full CA Dashboard?

The dashboard, while a giant step forward compared to publicly available previous outcome metrics:

- Does not prioritize or more heavily weight academic achievement, which is required by Ed Code

- Does not consider similar student demographics, which discourages charter schools that are achieving growth with traditionally underserved students

- Does not illuminate school quality on local indicators: "met/not met"

- No true growth metric available yet (though CDE working hard to adopt something)

- Colors (status combined with change over time) can be volatile for small schools. This method works better with districts than schools.

Charters are eligible to use data like our "second look" for the next 4 years.

What should authorizers keep in mind for a robust second look?

- **Longitudinal.** Should cover at least two consecutive academic years and should be provided for entire charter term.

- **Standardized.** Should be from a standardized assessment measure so that data are comparable to other schools and correlated to Common Core standards.
  - Per the new law this is referred to as: "verified data" AKA data derived from nationally recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are externally produced.

- **Representative.** Should represent the vast majority of all students that were continuously enrolled.

- **Mixed-Methods.** Should include both quantitative publicly available data as well as internal assessment data in addition to qualitative review of school leadership capacity.

Appendix

CCSA Accountability Framework, 2018-19

A charter school <u>above any of the initial filters</u> meets the academic threshold for CCSA advocacy support at the time of charter renewal*

- **Status:** State Rank of 4 or higher in 2 of the last 3 years*
  (Schools in bottom 5% of SBAC in 2 of last 3 years require automatic MMR)

OR

- **Similar Student Measure**: Similar Schools Rank of 4 or higher in 2 of the last 3 years.
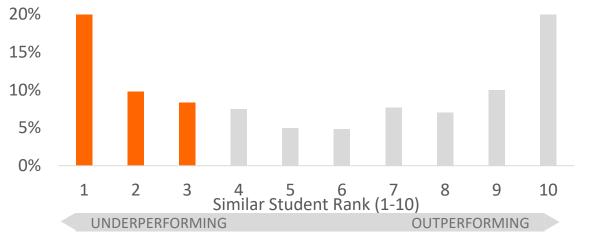
OR

- <u>**Growth**</u> (K-8): Improvement on SBAC (distance from level 3) over last 3 years at/above the 75th percentile of growth statewide

- <u>**CCI**</u> (high school): state average % CCI readiness (45%) in 2 of last 3 years

BELOW ALL = MULTIPLE MEASURE REVIEW (MMR)
(Deeper dive review of public and school- submitted student outcome measures)

CCSA SBAC-based Demographic Control
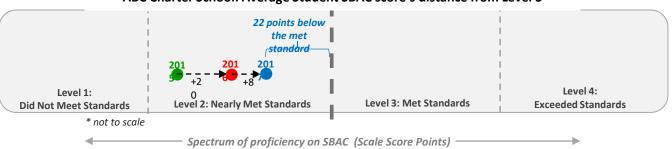# SIMILAR STUDENTS RANK

- Average SBAC scores compared to schools serving similar demographics.
- "Predicted vs. Actual" performance: regression by grade level shows how schools would be predicted to perform based on how all other schools across the state performed with similar student demographics in that same year.

Similar Student Rank (1-10)

UNDERPERFORMING   OUTPERFORMING

- Schools are ranked by how outperforming/underperforming their actual SBAC scores are compared to their predicted scores and then divided into ten similar schools ranks (rank of 1 = most underperforming compared to schools serving similar student demographics; rank of 10= most outperforming)

Status Measure: STATE RANK
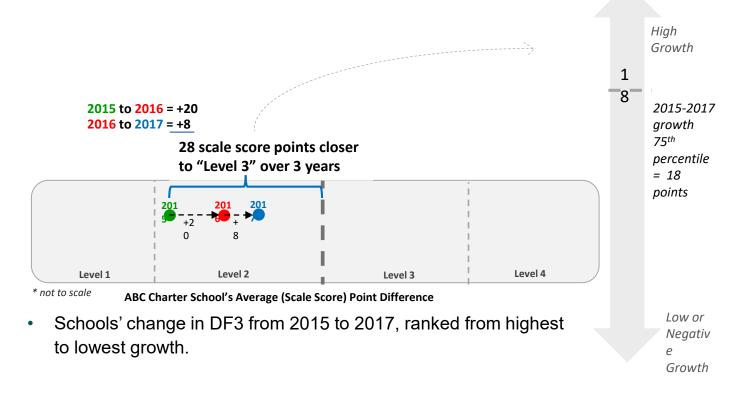## *Distance from Standard*

- Rather than just a % met/exceeded, this is a more nuanced measure of how each student moved along the proficiency spectrum

- E.g., at ABC charter the average student is **22 scale score points** below the "met standard" on SBAC ELA and Math assessments. This represents the **69th percentile of performance statewide**, which is equivalent to a **state rank of 7**. Last year this school was in the 59th percentile (state rank of 6).

ABC Charter School: Average Student SBAC score's distance from Level 3

- Schools are ranked by how far their students are below/above the "met" standard and then divided into ten state ranks (rank of 1 = farthest below the "met standard," rank of 10 = farthest above)

Growth Measure (K-8 schools):
Change of Distance from Standard over 3 years

2015 to **2016** = **+20**
2016 to **2017** = **+8**

28 scale score points closer to "Level 3" over 3 years

201
5

201
6

201
7

+2
0

+
8

Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

Level 4

* not to scale

ABC Charter School's Average (Scale Score) Point Difference

High Growth

1
8

2015-2017 growth 75th percentile = 18 points

Low or Negative Growth

- Schools' change in DF3 from 2015 to 2017, ranked from highest to lowest growth.

College/Career Readiness (high schools)

- High Schools: Schools with 45% or more of 12th grade graduates who are considered prepared for college/career on the CA Dashboard metric College/Career Indicator (CCI).

- There are 8 options for students that are included in this metric:
  - CTE Pathway Completion
  - Grade 11 Smarter Balanced Assessments (Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments) in ELA and Mathematics
  - Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
  - International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams
  - College Credit Course (formerly called Dual Enrollment)
  - a-g Completion (specific HS course completion)
  - State Seal of Biliteracy
  - Leadership/Military Science

External Validation of our Metrics

Our metrics have been evaluated by external researchers (Most recently, Education Analytics)

Evaluated and developed with a panel of respected university researchers, education agencies and authorizers (CORE, UC Berkeley, USC, Columbia Teacher's College, CREDO, Fresno Unified School District, National Association of Charter School Authorizers, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, and 5 state charter school organizations)

Metrics reviewed annually by council of charter leaders from a variety of locations, management models and populations served

Typical Data Used in MMR process

- Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)
- WASC Narrative
- Demographic trends (overall and by grade)
- % of students who are EL, SPED, & unduplicated and the performance of these groups
- Course offering summary, Number of AP courses offered
- Disaggregated status and growth outcomes for subgroups of students
- EL reclassification rates
- AP participation and pass rates
- SAT and ACT participation and performance
- CCI on the dashboard
- ELPI on the dashboard
- Internal Assessment data: NWEA MAP, iReady, etc.
- % who complete career tech requirements

- College acceptance, enrollment, & persistence
- Physical Fitness Test results
- CST Science
- Middle/high school dropout rates
- High school graduation rates: 4-year by subgroup
- Process: Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates
- Chronic Absenteeism on CA Dashboard
- Graduation Rates on CA Dashboard
- Outcomes of interventions to improve student engagement (e.g. change in attendance rates for at-risk students who received home visits)
- Suspension and expulsion rates (overall and their proportional use for disadvantaged students) for school and district
- Suspension rates on CA Dashboard

Evolution of our Metrics

Over the past 9 years, we've considered using or have used the following metrics in our framework (among others):

- API

- School Characteristics Index

- SAT

- ACT

- AP pass rates

- CTE Completion

As the state continues to develop the Dashboard, we will investigate using:

- English Learner Progress Indicator

- English Language Arts Academic Growth

- Mathematics Academic Growth