

**Portrait of the Movement 2017**

CCSA’s fifth Portrait of the Movement report reveals California’s charter public schools are successfully striving towards full implementation of Common Core, and continue to outperform traditional public schools (TPS) at disproportionately high numbers.

**Performance Trends: California Charter Schools Have a Stable History of Outperformance**

California’s charter schools are successfully transitioning to Common Core and continue to outperform traditional public schools (TPS) at disproportionately high numbers. Charter school trends in performance are stable since the transition from the Academic Performance Index (API)\* as charters continue to positively serve the most historically disadvantaged and vulnerable student groups. The 2017 Portrait of the Movement documents that charters are achieving academic success across various student demographic groups and geographies and within different charter school types.

Figure 1 tells the story of performance from 2007-2016.

In 2007-08, charter schools had a U-shape distribution of performance when comparing schools serving similar students (CCSA’s Similar Students Measure based on the state’s Academic Performance Index “API”).

By the conclusion of API testing in 2012-13, charter performance had improved, shifting to a J-shape distribution showing many more charter schools concentrated among the most outperforming in the state as shown in the right side of Figure 1. (Note: From 2007-08 through 2012-13 data are based on API. In 2014-15 and 2015-16, data are based on Smarter Balanced assessments (SBAC)). These key differences in standards and assessments disallow for the two distributions to be directly comparable, as illustrated in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1**  
Historical Statewide Distribution on Top and Bottom Quartiles of Similar Students Measure (SSM)

	School Year	Bottom 5%	Bottom 10%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 10%	Top 5%
SBAC	2015-16	10%	16%	29%	32%	17%	11%
	2014-15	16%	22%	37%	30%	18%	13%
API	2012-13	9%	15%	26%	37%	21%	15%
	2011-12	12%	18%	33%	36%	23%	15%
	2010-11	11%	18%	32%	37%	22%	16%
	2009-10	13%	18%	34%	35%	22%	15%
	2008-09	13%	19%	34%	33%	21%	15%
	2007-08	15%	21%	35%	32%	22%	15%

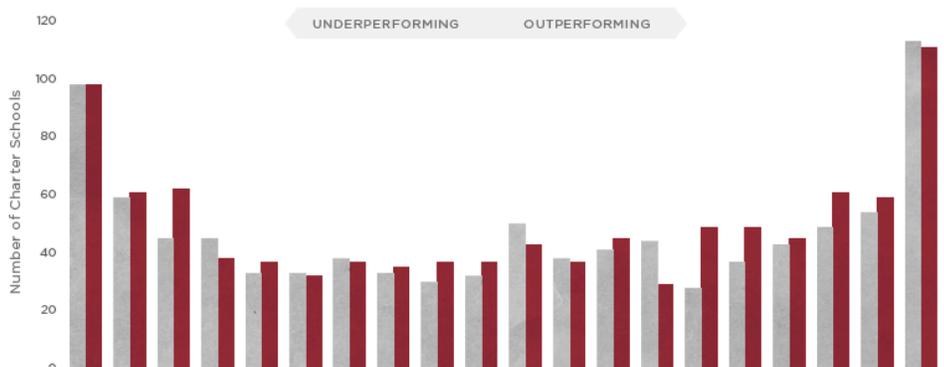
The transition to SBAC in 2014-15 resulted in a step back for charter schools, with proportionally fewer schools in the top 25% and an increase in underperforming charters. These results may reflect a variety of factors in addition to academic performance, such as new testing methodology.

The second administration of SBAC in 2015-16 showed charter schools righting the ship to some degree, nearly returning to the performance seen in the last year of API testing.

**Key Findings**

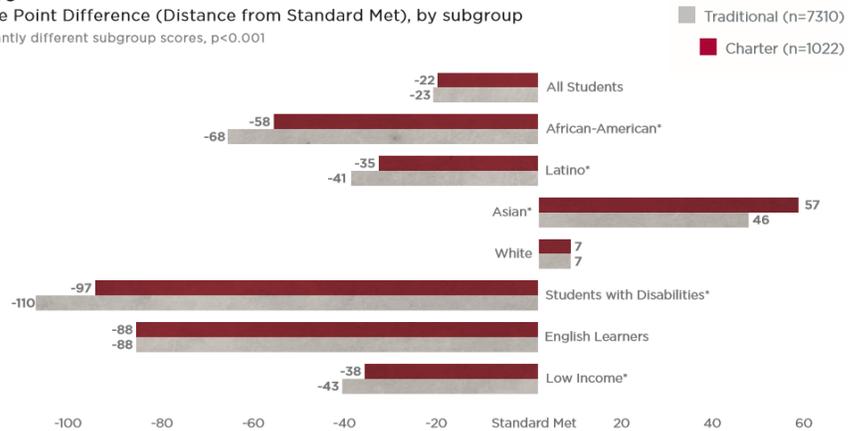
- Using CCSA’s [Similar Students Measure \(SSM\)](#)\* we find that charter schools are overrepresented at the highest (most outperforming) and lowest (most underperforming) ends of the distribution, making up the “Shape of the U” that we have historically seen for charter schools in California. (See Figures 1 and 2)

**FIGURE 2**  
Distribution of Charter Schools on the Similar Students Measure (SSM) 2015 (n=963) vs 2016 (n=1022)



2. Charter schools are not only doing significantly better to help all students meet standards, but **on average charters are ranking higher statewide according to CCSA's Average Point Difference (APD)\* decile ranks.**

**FIGURE 8**  
Average Point Difference (Distance from Standard Met), by subgroup  
\*Significantly different subgroup scores, p<0.001



3. Using CCSA's APD we find that, for most subgroups, **on average charter schools performed the same or better on Common Core state tests than did traditional public schools.** (See Figure 8)

4. **Latino and African-American charter school students are twice as likely as their TPS peers to be attending a school in the top 10% statewide and over three times as likely to be attending a top 5% school statewide. Nearly half (43%) of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) charter schools perform in the top quartile statewide – more than double the percent of LAUSD traditional public schools. In Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), 31% of charter schools perform among the top quartile statewide – nearly eight times the TPS percentage.**

5. By school type we see **the performance of Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) is highly concentrated in the top quartile.** Also, consistent with API trends, **classroom-based charter schools on average are more likely to be higher performing than non-classroom based charters.**

6. CCSA maintained clear academic standards and accountability for charters with its [academic accountability framework](#) during the state standards and assessment gap over the last three years. These **consistent accountability efforts have helped positively impact the distribution of California charter school performance** in the past and we believe we can continue the charge to improve performance in this early Common Core era.

### A Clear Plan to Address Academic Underperformance

There are still areas for growth as evidenced by the continued high number of underperforming charter schools, and even a minor uptick from 2012-13. The Portrait of the Movement identifies areas of focus for the future. CCSA will:

- Continue its academic accountability advocacy by using a clear, straightforward academic accountability framework.
- Apply constructive pressure on the charter sector to accelerate towards achieving greater levels of academic performance.
- Persist with its [Public Call for Non-Renewal](#) to advocate for the closure of chronically underperforming charter schools as it has since 2011, and call on authorizers to do what is right for students and deny the renewal of chronically underperforming charter schools.

### History of CCSA's Portrait of the Movement

In January 2011, CCSA released its first "Portrait of the Movement" publication showing the performance of all California charter schools and identifying performance trends within the sector. Rather than comparing averages as many studies had done before, this research revealed that charter schools had higher concentrations of schools at both ends of the performance spectrum (a U-shape). Since 2011, CCSA has released a total of five (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017) reports assessing the performance of the charter school movement. For more information, visit [www.ccsa.org/pom](http://www.ccsa.org/pom).

### Resources

- [Portrait of the Movement](#)
- [Academic Accountability Framework](#)
- [Snapshot Reports](#)
- [Public Call for Non-Renewal](#)
- [Average Point Difference Measure \(APD\)](#)
- [Similar Students Measure \(SSM\)](#)
- Visit [www.ccsa.org](http://www.ccsa.org) to learn more.

\*See definitions in Appendix D of report.