

RENEWING THE PROMISE

How Charter Middle and High Schools
Are Putting Oakland Students
on the Path to College



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California Charter
Schools Association

The promise of public education depends on college readiness.

Our challenge is to prepare all schools to educate all students for college.

Today, it is no longer enough for schools to focus on helping their students to graduate 12th grade. To fulfill the promise of a brighter future, public schools must expand their focus from preparing students for graduation to preparing them for success through college and career. How public education best meets this challenge is currently the subject of intense national debate. The debate often aligns around the question of how to make **all students ready** for college.

The more appropriate framing of the question is how to ensure **all schools educate all students** for college and success in the 21st century workplace. This reframing is especially important in Oakland, California. Student achievement in Oakland’s middle and high schools has been low for decades. Many changes in the traditional school district, including a state takeover, have not significantly impacted this.

What has changed is that more charter public schools have opened in response to demand from families for more options. Serving the same population as the traditional district schools, charter schools are improving Oakland students’ chances to go on to college. Given these better results, especially with historically disadvantaged student populations, charter schools should be embraced as a solution in Oakland’s efforts to raise student achievement. **This report shows that Oakland charter schools are renewing the promise of a high-quality public education and changing what is possible for students of all demographic backgrounds to achieve in their lives.**



Oakland students deserve an excellent education, and their parents have made their voices heard by asserting that they want to send their children to the best schools available. And those schools are charter public schools.”

*-Jed Wallace
President and CEO, California
Charter Schools Association*



Key Findings

In Oakland, historically disadvantaged students comprise much of the enrollment in public secondary schools (meaning middle and high schools). Latino and African-American students are two of the student ethnicity groups most often left behind by our education system, and they make up the majority of Oakland’s secondary school population. In addition, students from low-income families and English learners typically get left even farther behind. Many schools will attribute their lack of success to their students’ demographics. But data for Oakland charter schools show that public schools can put historically disadvantaged students on the path to high school graduation and college success.¹



- ❖ In Oakland, the average percentage of high school graduates who completed all college preparatory coursework at charter public schools is **2 times as high** as it is for traditional district schools. This holds true for all students and for historically disadvantaged student groups.
- ❖ The average high school graduation rate at traditional district high schools has not budged from just about 50% for the last three years. The average graduation rate at charter schools has increased over time and is now at 68%. Further, the dropout rate at charter schools is half that of the traditional schools.
- ❖ Charter high schools achieve the same results for socioeconomically disadvantaged students as for other students. They continue to deliver a higher percentage of college-ready graduates than their traditional school counterparts, regardless of family income.
- ❖ Academic achievement at charter middle and high schools is higher than traditional district schools in several areas key to putting students on the path to college.

A greater percentage of charter school graduates complete a college preparatory curriculum.

Educators and elected officials agree academic success means graduating from high school with the academic requirements necessary to attend a two-year or four-year college without needing remedial classes. It can also mean graduating prepared to enter a career with an above-minimum wage salary; however for the purposes of most high schools, the aim is college completion. This fact has not changed in decades: students who finish college earn higher incomes than those who do not. The economic well-being of our country relies on a better educated generation ready to thrive in 21st century jobs.



In California, whether a student completes the “A through G” high school curriculum (A-G) tells us a lot about whether that student will succeed in going on to and finishing college. A-G includes the minimum set of high school subjects a student must complete to be eligible to attend a four-year California public university. More than that, the academic rigor of the A-G classes, along with the requirement to achieve a “C” or better in each one, prepares students to succeed in demanding, college-level courses.

For years, completing the A-G curriculum was out of reach for most historically disadvantaged students. Many schools in low-income communities and communities of color did not even offer the full curriculum. This has changed as the importance of college completion gained support, but most traditional public schools still fail their students when it comes to helping them complete the rigorous curriculum. In Oakland, most public high schools, regardless of whether they are district or charter, serve similar historically disadvantaged populations. Yet, charter school students are pulling ahead of their peers in traditional schools when it comes to college-readiness.

The most recent data from 2011-12 reveals that only 37% of traditional district high school graduates completed the A-G curriculum. In contrast, **86% of charter high school graduates met the A-G requirements, more than double the rate of their traditional district high school counterparts.** This dramatic difference between charter schools and traditional district schools holds true across all four of the historically disadvantaged student groups served most frequently in Oakland: Latino, African-American, low-income, and English learners.

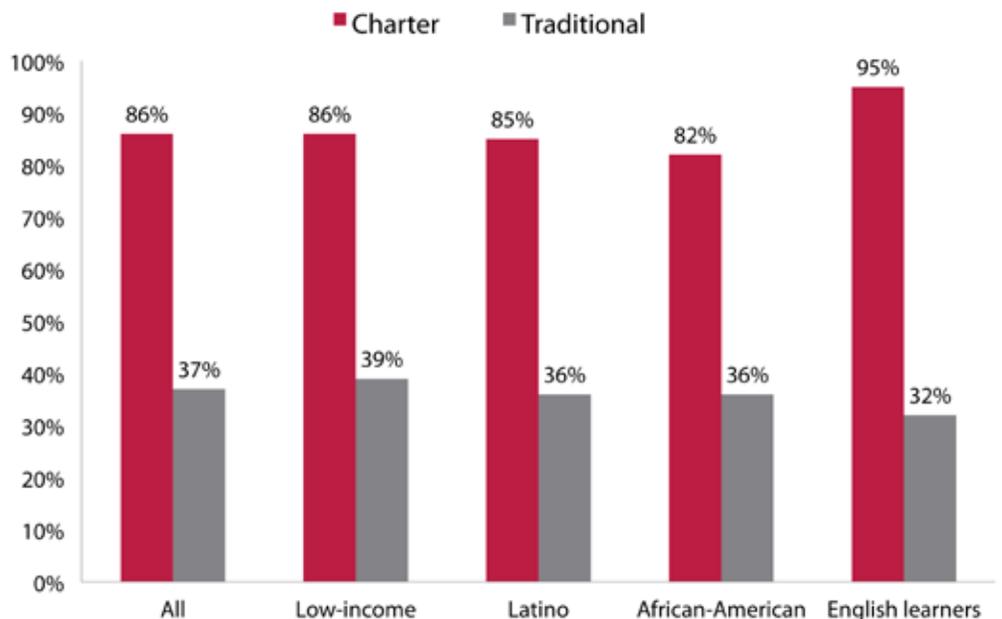


The academic intensity of the student’s high school curriculum still counts more than anything else in pre-collegiate history in providing momentum toward completing a bachelor’s degree.

- Clifford Adelman
Institute for Higher Education Policy²



Chart 1. Average Percentage of Oakland High School Graduates who are College-Ready (Completed A-G)



The data clearly show that charter schools surpass traditional schools when it comes to helping low-income students complete A-G. This difference is further confirmed when looking only at high schools that serve Oakland’s most socioeconomically disadvantaged students. For this subset of schools (5 charter, 7 traditional), family income and parent education levels present major hurdles to academic performance for most of the students. Data for this subset of schools show similar trends as found above. The charter school college-readiness rate is still about 2 times that of the traditional school rate for all students and for Latino, African-American and English learner student groups. **This consistent trend confirms that the difference is not in *who* the schools educate but *how* they do so.**

Report Schools and Data in Brief

The report includes public schools that serve middle school (MS) and high school (HS) age students from any grade span between 8th and 12th grade within the boundaries of the Oakland Unified School District. Data are from the 2011-12 school year, the most recent year with graduation and college-ready curriculum (A-G) completion data available. It only includes schools that are still currently open and not at risk of being closed.

19 charter public schools
(6 HS, 5 MS/HS, 8 MS)
40 traditional district public schools
(19 HS, 2 MS/HS, 19 MS)

Schools included in this brief serve a student population that is, on average: 48% Latino, 33% African-American, 63% low-income, and 40% English learners.

See *Methodology and Definitions at end* for more detail

Oakland Unity High School

Oakland Unity High School (Unity) opened as an independent charter high school in 2003 to serve students in the southeast area of the city. The vast majority (87%) of their students have parents whose highest level of education is a high school diploma or less. Moreover, 70% of their students are English learners. Poverty, a lack of familiarity with the United States public school system, and an unsafe neighborhood all present barriers to Oakland Unity’s student success.

The enrollment size and the demographics of Unity’s student body match those of the traditional district high schools serving the area.

But graduation rates and college-ready outcomes for Unity are dramatically different.

	Graduation rate	College-ready rate
Unity	93%	98%
Local high school 1	55%	56%
Local high school 2	56%	76%

“At Unity, we prepare our students for college by explicitly teaching and naming the practices and expectations of academic and professional environments when they are freshmen, and then holding them to this polished and businesslike standard for the remainder of their high school careers.

*- Damon Grant
English Teacher / Instructional Lead*



Charter high school graduation rates exceed traditional district school rates by at least 10% for all students and for historically disadvantaged students.

Preparing students for college is the primary goal, but the high school graduation rate is just as important. A student who does not graduate high school will be even less prepared for future success than a student who graduates high school without A-G completed. Therefore, high school cohort graduation rates -- the percentage of students who complete high school within four years of starting ninth grade -- represent another meaningful marker of school performance.



Simply put, other measures become less meaningful if a large number of students do not earn a high school diploma and thus are severely set back in their quest for college and career success.

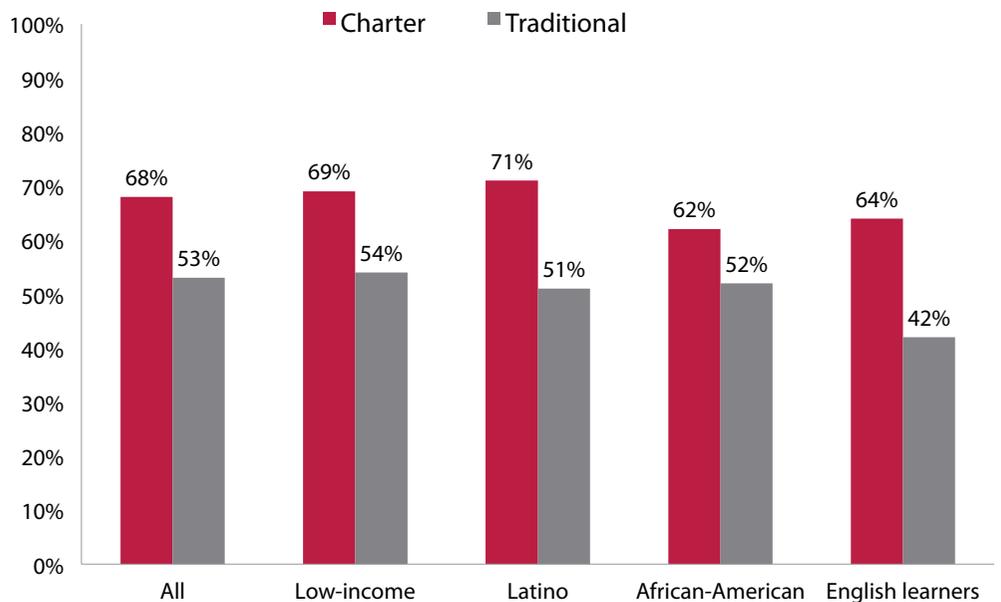
-Kathryn Young
*Jobs for the Future*³



The average graduation rate for Oakland’s charter high schools is 68%. While this would not be considered high-performing, the average graduation rate for traditional Oakland Unified schools is worse at just above 50%. The traditional school rate has also stagnated for the last three years, whereas the charter school rate improved from 62% to 68%. **Improving the graduation rate to nearly 70% among a student population in an urban district where failure to graduate has become the norm for one out of every two students is remarkable.**

The average charter school graduation rate for each of the historically disadvantaged student groups is also at least 10% greater than that of the traditional district schools. The difference is most notable for Latino and English learner students, with the gap between charter and traditional schools at 20% or higher.

Chart 2. Average Percentage of Oakland Students who Graduate High School within Four Years



Like the graduation rate, the dropout rate provides further evidence that charter schools are doing a better job of shifting the academic future of Oakland students. Almost one-third (31%) of traditional public high school students drop out. Charter schools cut that rate in half for their students (16%). This dropout rate is still higher than ideal, but the difference between charter and traditional schools again points toward looking at the differences in how schools serve their students, not who they serve.





At my school, students were made aware that everyone has the opportunity to learn and achieve success. OMI prepares students for college by giving them challenging class schedules & course work and by nurturing their dreams and goals. The students all come from different backgrounds and circumstances, but are taught that a higher education is never impossible.

- Baisy Beltran
 Oakland Military Institute-College Preparatory Academy (OMI)
 Class of 2009
 California State University East Bay
 Class of 2013



More charter school students are on the path to graduation and college earlier in their secondary school experience than their traditional district school peers.

The path to college readiness starts much earlier than the last year of high school. Similar to the graduation and college-ready rates, Oakland charter secondary schools outperform traditional district schools in key academic outcomes along this pathway. This includes 10th grade proficiency on the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) and 8th grade proficiency levels in Algebra 1. This section also includes the state’s Academic Performance Index (API) scores for the schools. API provides a general indication of how well schools help students achieve across subjects.



English and Math Skills in 10th Grade

California students are required to pass the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) in order to receive a high school diploma. The test is divided into sections for English-Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Students take these tests for the first time in 10th grade. If a student fails to pass a test with the minimum passing score of 350, they receive several more chances to take the test in 11th and 12th grade in order to graduate. The 10th grade passing rate indicates students have grade level skills, but going beyond that, the proficiency rates provide an indicator of college readiness. An independent evaluation of the CAHSEE found that 10th grade students who score proficient or advanced (a score greater than 380 on ELA and Math) are more likely to enroll in and complete college.⁴

More than 80% of charter school students pass the CAHSEE in 10th grade, versus only half of traditional school students. This indicates charter schools are better at ensuring their students are on track for high school graduation within four years. In addition, charter schools have a higher percentage of 10th grade students who score proficient or advanced. On average, more than half (58%) of charter students scored proficient or advanced on the Math Test and half (50%) scored the same on the ELA test. While lower than hoped, **the charter school CAHSEE proficiency rates are still about twice as high as the traditional district schools’ average.** The traditional school average is just above one quarter for Math (27%) and ELA (26%). In other words, a student has a better chance of being prepared with the skills they need to succeed in college if they attend a charter school.

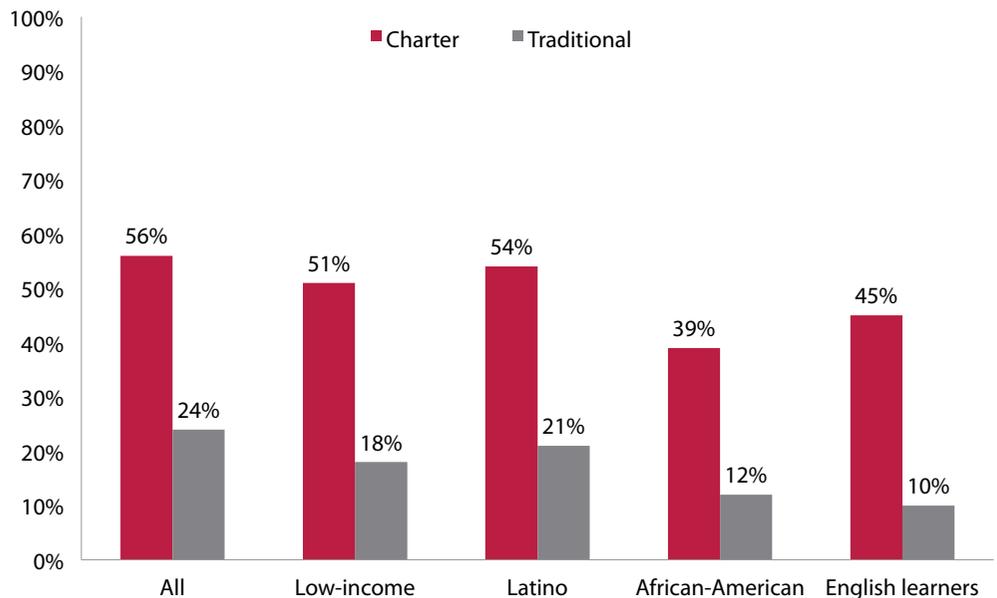
Algebra I Proficiency in 8th Grade

Research consistently finds a connection between taking higher-level math classes in high school and college attendance and completion. Algebra I completion is considered the “gateway” to being able to take those higher-level math classes. Students are expected to pass Algebra I by 9th grade, but it has become common among California schools to have students take the class in 8th grade. The thinking is that 8th grade students who complete Algebra I will have a head start on high school math, and those who fail will be more prepared to pass it in 9th grade.

On average, charter secondary schools test 84% of their 8th grade students in Algebra I and traditional schools test 78%. While both types of schools enroll the majority of their 8th students in Algebra I, students’ ability to demonstrate proficiency on the subject sharply differs. As Chart 3 shows, more than half (56%) of 8th grade charter students score proficient or advanced in Algebra I, compared to just one quarter (24%) of the traditional school 8th grade students. This means **8th grade charter students are more likely to start high school with a college-readiness advantage than their traditional school peers.**



Chart 3. Average Percentage of 8th Grade Oakland Students who Score Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra I State Standardized Test



Charter schools’ average percent proficient for low-income and Latino students stay within the range found for all charter 8th grade students, right around 50%. On the other hand, the charter school average rates for African-American students and English learners dip a bit lower. This indicates that charter schools have more work to do to support early success in Algebra I for these two student groups. While the charter rates for African-American and English learner students are lower than for all charter 8th grade students, they are still triple or quadruple the traditional school rates.

The CAHSEE and Algebra I scores are important not in the sense that they are where they need to be, but in that they show movement away from the underperforming results in traditional public schools. Oakland students have a better chance of gaining the academic skills they need to succeed in college if they attend a charter school. This difference signals the source of answers to the college-readiness crisis.

Lighthouse Community Charter School

Guiding Every Child To A Bright Future

Founded by a small, committed group of teachers and parents, Lighthouse opened its doors in 2002 in downtown Oakland. Their mission is to prepare students from Kindergarten through grade 12 for college and the career of their choice. Eighty percent of their students are low-income, a much higher percentage than that served by the traditional schools serving a similar age group in the area.



Lighthouse reaches the state's goal of a score of 800 for its schoolwide academic performance (API). Traditional schools that serve the same age group in the area lag behind by about 150 points.

In addition, the majority (79%) of the 8th grade Lighthouse students score proficient or advanced on the Algebra I test. This greatly exceeds the 29% and 11% achieved by the two other traditional schools serving 8th grade students in the area.

The Lighthouse model includes five organizing principles:

- High Expectations for All
- A Rigorous Curriculum
- Serving the Whole Child
- Family Involvement
- Professional Learning Community

“Lighthouse prepares students for college by developing our students capacity in three areas throughout their K-12 experience. The areas of focus are academic readiness, college knowledge, and the deliberate development of the college soft skills. Our greatest growth has been in how to develop each students college soft skills in a systematic way that ensures when they walk onto their college campus they know how to organize study groups, access academic support, and manage their time effectively.”

-Stephen Sexton, Head of School

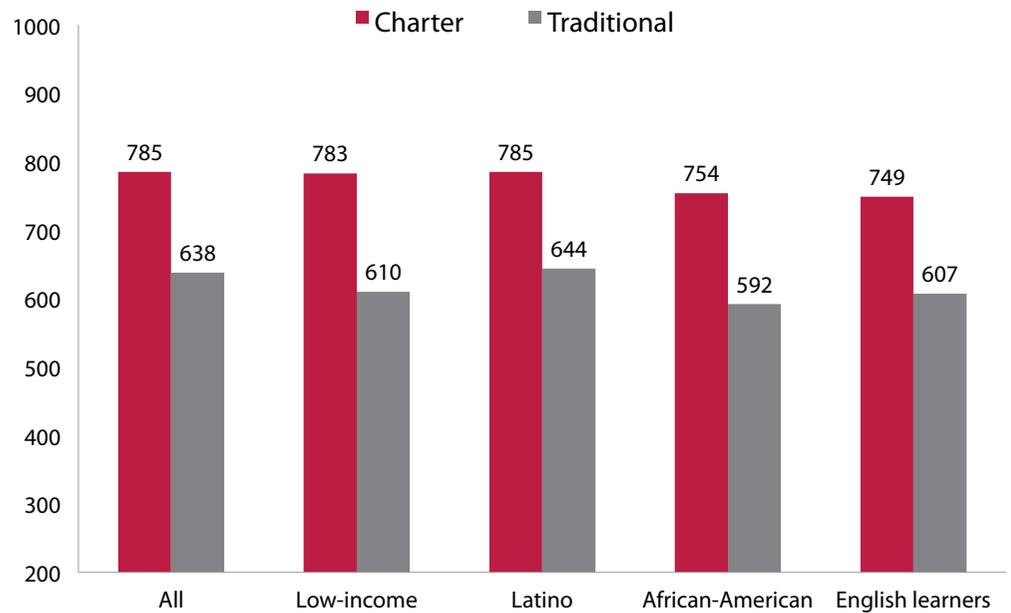
School-wide Academic Performance Index (API) Score

The Academic Performance Index (API) scores for charter and traditional district secondary schools show similar trends to the other data in this report. That is, on average, charter schools achieve a higher performance level than do traditional schools for all students and for the historically disadvantaged student groups. For charter schools, the average API score for all students and Latino students is approaching the state's expected minimum goal of 800. None of the average scores for traditional schools even reaches 700.

Notably, the average API for charter schools stays almost exactly the same for low-income students as for all students, 783 rather than 785. On the other hand, the traditional school rate drops even lower than its overall rate, from 638 down to 610. Stated another way, charter schools are

typically better than traditional district schools at helping students academically, regardless of their family income or parent education level.

Chart 4. Average Academic Performance Index (API) Scores for Oakland Middle & High Schools



Our school shows us that our potential is boundless, and we are compelled to prove ourselves through advanced coursework and maximum effort."

- Current high school student
Oakland Charter High School



While students with disabilities are not a focus of this report, they are important to mention. There are many misconceptions around the supposed lack of charter school services to students with disabilities. Oakland charter schools do serve a lower percentage and more limited range of students with disabilities than traditional schools, but several factors contribute to this discrepancy. This includes parent choices, barriers in state and local special education governance structures, and the Oakland school district's placement decisions. When a charter school operates under the district's special education local plan, the district is responsible for all services to students with disabilities who enroll in that charter. The district often chooses to place students with more severe disabilities in traditional schools rather than serve them on the charter school campus.

This district practice continues despite the fact that charter schools are designed to offer innovative educational strategies, making them uniquely situated to provide individualized support to meet the needs of students with disabilities. CCSA is currently working in partnership with Oakland charter schools to negotiate a more flexible special education structural arrangement. CCSA also encourages charter schools to seek options that allow them full autonomy and responsibility for all of their students. These efforts are already improving the percentage of students with disabilities served by charter schools. Given that charter schools outperform traditional schools for the historically disadvantaged student groups that are the focus of the report, the same can soon be expected for increasing numbers of students with disabilities - now that charter schools are clearing the path for parent choice to not be overridden by district preferences.



Renewing the Promise

Research shows that postsecondary education is now critical to career opportunity and economic status in adulthood. If children start life in a low-income community, they are unlikely to improve their economic status without postsecondary education. When measuring whether the promise of public school is fulfilled or broken, the ultimate benchmark is college preparation. There is no question that most of Oakland's public secondary schools have much more to do to prepare all students to be part of the next generation of college graduates. Yet, this report shows that charter schools deliver on that promise for Oakland's historically disadvantaged students better than traditional schools do.

If there is one clear takeaway from this report, it is that we cannot blame student backgrounds for traditional schools' low rates of graduation and college-readiness. With similar student populations and limited resources, Oakland charter schools achieve outcomes that still show room to grow but nonetheless exceed the outcomes of traditional district schools by life-changing leaps. If Oakland charter schools are getting it right for more students across all types of demographics, then effective practices and policies do exist.

This means the college readiness debate needs to be reframed. These data show that "historically underperforming" groups of students can become college-ready. Our obligation – whether we are educators, parents, students or employers – is to **demand that public education ensures that all schools are truly capable of being college-preparatory.**

Oakland data points to one source of solutions for fulfilling that promise: charter schools. With greater support, charter schools can and should expand to educate more students in the coming years. In this way, we will achieve the goal of preparing children of all backgrounds and abilities for high school graduation and college admission, ensuring a brighter future.

End Notes

¹ The data presented in this report will not exactly match data that has been publicly shared via the media or the California Department of Education because it only includes 2011-12 data for schools that are still open and not at risk of being closed. This means some schools are excluded that might otherwise be included in other publicly available data reports.

² Adelman, C. (2006). *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.

³ Young, K. (2013). *NCLB Waivers and Accountability: The Graduation Rate Balancing Act*. Washington, D.C.: Jobs for the Future.

⁴ Becker, D.E., Wise, L.L., Hardoin, M.M., & Watters, C. (2012). *Independent Evaluation of the California High School Exit Examination: 2012 Evaluation Report*. Virginia: Human Resources Research Organization. Prepared for the California Department of Education.

Methodology

Data

Data for this report are from the 2011-12 school year, the year that graduation and college-ready data are most recently available. For consistency purposes, other academic performance indicators and student demographic data are used from that same school year. Only outcome data relevant to middle and/or high schools are included. These are:

- Four-year adjusted high school cohort graduation rate,
- Four-year adjusted high school cohort dropout rate,
- College-ready rates for high school graduates (also known as UC/CSU ready rates or A-G completion rates),
- Algebra I standardized test proficiency scores for 8th grade students,
- California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) proficiency rates for 10th grade students, and
- Academic Performance Index (API) school scores.

Data were downloaded from the publicly available research files on the California Department of Education’s website. Descriptive analyses were conducted to identify trends in average rates across schools for all students and for the historically disadvantaged student subgroups most frequently enrolled in Oakland public secondary schools.

Schools

The report focuses on secondary public schools that serve students who are enrolled in a grade between 8 and 12 and live within the geographic boundaries of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). While the data are from 2011-12, this report only includes charter and traditional schools that are currently open and not at risk of being closed (as of the writing of this report). In addition, it does not include indirect funded charter schools, which receive their funding from the local school district rather than from the state. The school set includes 59 public schools (See Figure 3 below for the full list):

- 40 traditional district schools that are part of the Oakland Unified School District, and
- 19 charter public schools, 18 of which are authorized by the OUSD and one by the Alameda County Office of Education.

Several of the schools are identified as alternative schools and/or participate in the state’s Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM). OUSD’s traditional district schools include three ASAM schools and seven alternative schools, such as continuation schools and community day schools. The charter set of schools includes one ASAM. Alternative and ASAM schools are included in this report because they are part of the system for ensuring all students receive the education and services they need to graduate high school.

Figure 1. Student Demographic Profile for Charter and Traditional District Secondary Schools included in the Report

	Schools serving Grade 12*		Schools serving Grade 8*	
	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
# of schools	11	21	13	21
<i>Average:</i>				
# enrolled students	300	307	318	386
Level of parent education**	2.3	2.1	2.8	2.3
% Free/reduced lunch participants	67%	70%	70%	51%
% Latino students	58%	42%	50%	48%
% African-American students	21%	40%	32%	31%
% White students	7%	4%	9%	8%
% Asian students	6%	9%	3%	8%
% English learners	42%	40%	36%	43%
% Students with disabilities	7%	11%	7%	11%
% student within year retention	96%	78%	96%	87%

* Five charter schools and two traditional district schools are included in both datasets since they serve both grades 8 & 12.

** Scale is: 1=less than high school, 2=high school degree, 3=some college, 4= college graduate, 5=graduate school.

Figure 2. School Structure Characteristics of Charter Secondary Schools included in Report

District Authorizer	18 Oakland Unified School District; 1 Alameda County Office of Education
Site Type	18 classroom-based instruction; 1 independent study
Funding Type	19 directly from the state (0 indirectly through a district or county office)
Autonomy Status	17 autonomous; 2 semi-autonomous (0 non-autonomous)
Startup Type	19 first-time, startup charter schools (0 conversion charter schools)
Management Model	7 charter management organization (CMO); 7 freestanding; 5 network
Years Open	Average 8 years open as a charter

In the first section of the report, a subset of the high schools is discussed that all serve a similarly high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and are not identified as alternative or ASAM schools. This includes 5 of the 11 charter public schools and 7 of the 21 traditional district public schools. This subset focus helps to check if the general trends also occur among schools that serve Oakland’s most impoverished families. Schools are included in this subset if more than 61% of their students receive free/reduced lunch and if the average parent education level is lower than high school graduation. These inclusion points were based on the averages for the 32 Oakland high schools included in this report so that schools in the subset would be most representative of the majority of Oakland’s public high school students.

Figure 3. List of Schools included in the Report, including Key Grades Served (Grade 12 &/or 8)

Charter Schools that serve through Grade 12		Charter Schools that serve through Grade 8	
ARISE High School	12	Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy	8
Civicorps Academy (ASAM)	12	Aspire ERES Academy	8
Envision Academy of Arts & Technology	12	Conservatory of Vocal/Instrumental Arts	8
Lighthouse Community Charter High School*	12	KIPP Bridge Charter Academy	8
Oakland Charter High School*	12	Lighthouse Community Charter School	8
Oakland Unity High School*	12	North Oakland Community Charter School	8
Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy*	12&8	Oakland Charter Academy	8
Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy*	12&8	Reems (E.C.) Academy of Technology & Art	8
Bay Area Technology School	12&8		
Oakland Military Institute, College Prep Academy	12&8		
Oakland School for the Arts	12&8		
Traditional Schools that serve through Grade 12		Traditional Schools that serve through Grade 8	
Business and Information Technology High*	12	Alliance Academy	8
College Preparatory and Architecture Academy*	12	ASCEND	8
Dewey Academy (ASAM)	12	Barack Obama Academy (Alternative)	8
East Oakland School of the Arts*	12	Bret Harte Middle School	8
Far West (Alternative)	12	Claremont Middle School	8
Gateway to College at Laney College (Alternative)	12	Edna Brewer Middle School	8
Leadership Preparatory High*	12	Elmhurst Community Prep School	8
Mandela High*	12	Frick Middle School	8
Media College Preparatory*	12	Hillcrest Elementary School	8
Oakland High School*	12	Madison Middle School	8
LIFE Academy	12	Melrose Leadership Academy	8
McClymonds High School	12	Montera Middle School	8
MetWest High	12	Oakland Community Day Middle (ASAM)	8
Oakland International High School (Alternative)	12	Roosevelt Middle School	8
Oakland Technical High School	12	ROOTS International Academy	8
Ralph J. Bunche High School (Alternative)	12	United for Success Academy	8
Rudsdale Continuation School (Alternative)	12	Urban Promise Academy	8
Skyline High	12	West Oakland Middle School	8
Street Academy (ASAM)	12	Westlake Middle School	8
Coliseum College Prep Academy	12&8		
Sojourner Truth Independent Study (Alternative)	12&8		

Note: The names of the schools and their ASAM/Alternative status are as of the 2011-12, the year for which data are reported here. Some may currently have a different name or status.

* This school is included in the high school subset that serve Oakland’s most socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Definitions

Charter Public Schools

Charter schools are publicly funded schools that are tuition-free and open to all children. Charter schools became part of California’s public school system in 1992 in order to provide families and teachers a choice beyond underperforming traditional schools. Unlike traditional district schools, charter schools operate independently from the school district’s central bureaucracy. Each charter school is governed by its own school community. Every charter school must be authorized every five years to operate, either by a local school district or the county or state board of education. This reauthorization process holds charter schools to higher levels of accountability in exchange for operating independently from a traditional school district or county/state board. As schools of choice, charter schools can serve students regardless of where they live, but are committed to serving a student body that reflects the local community.

Autonomy Status. Charters can be categorized according to one of three autonomy types that also identifies the level of independence from its authorizing educational entity.

- Autonomous charters appoint their board of directors, do not use the local school district's collective bargaining agreement, are directly funded from the state and are likely to be incorporated as a 501(c)3.
- Semi-autonomous charters appoint their own board and are incorporated as a 501(c)3. However, they are either indirectly funded or directly funded but still use their authorizing district's collective bargaining agreement.
- Non-autonomous charters either have the majority of their board appointed by their authorizer or are under a school district's collective bargaining agreement, and are indirectly funded (through their authorizer rather than the state) and not incorporated as a 501(c)3.

Management Model. Charters can be characterized according to one of three different types of school management models. The California Charter School Association defines each of these models as follows.

- Charter Management Organization (CMO): a network of three or more schools linked by a common philosophy and centralized governance or operations.
- Network: a set of schools that share a common philosophy but not centralized governance or operations (also includes CMOs with less than 3 schools).
- Freestanding: single-site schools that are not part of a network or CMO affiliation.

Traditional District Public Schools

Traditional district public schools are publicly funded schools that are tuition-free and open to all children. Traditional district schools are operated by a local school district and must implement the educational program mandates of their local district. Each school serves students who live in their specific geographic attendance boundaries.

Alternative School. Traditional district schools that do not follow the district's standard educational program but instead provide a structure or learning approach for students with different needs or interests. Examples include community day schools and magnet schools. While alternative schools can use different means of achieving grade-level standards, they must still meet the same standards of student performance as the district's conventional schools.

Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM)

Both charter schools and traditional district schools can apply to be part of the California Department of Education's Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM). This model provides school-level accountability for alternative schools serving highly mobile and high-risk students (e.g., majority of students have been expelled or suspended or are pregnant/parenting or wards of state). Examples of ASAM schools include community day schools, continuation schools, opportunity schools, and alternative schools and charter schools that meet ASAM population criteria. Schools participating in ASAM are still held accountable for academic performance, including the goal of helping students graduate. Because schools voluntarily choose to apply for ASAM status, other schools may serve a similarly mobile or high-risk population but have chosen not to participate in ASAM.

Historically Disadvantaged Student Subgroups

A historically disadvantaged student subgroup is a group of students that share a common demographic characteristic and have not had access to the same level of quality education as their demographic counterparts. Research consistently finds educational inequities for students by race/ethnicity, income, language and disability.

Low-income students. Students who are eligible to participate in the free/reduced-price lunch program.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Students who are eligible to participate in the free/reduced-price lunch program and/or whose parents have not received a high school diploma.

Student Ethnicity groups. Students self identify their race and ethnicity according to several categories. Below are definitions for the two main ethnicity groups served in Oakland secondary public schools.

Latino, identify race as Latino regardless of ethnicity group.

African-American, identify ethnicity as African-American and do not identify race as Latino.

English Learners. Students who do not yet speak English as their primary language, as identified by their results on state standardized tests.

Student with disabilities. Students who receive special education services and have a valid disability code.

High School Cohort Graduates

High school cohort graduates include students who started at a school in ninth grade and finished high school within four years, accounting for transfers in and out of schools. It includes students who received a traditional or adult education high school diploma or passed the California High School Proficiency Exam within four years of starting high school. This is known as the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, a method recommended by the U.S. Department of Education and used by the California Department of Education since 2010.

College-Ready Graduates

College-ready graduates include 12th grade students who graduated high school *and* received a grade “C” or better in all of the required academic courses needed to enter one of California’s public universities – the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU). The definition of high school graduates in this data set differs from the cohort definition above. This does include summer graduates but not students with high school equivalencies (such as the or California High School Proficiency Examination).

A-G Curriculum

The “A through G” high school curriculum (A-G) identifies the minimum set of high school classes a student must complete to be eligible to attend a California public university. This is a rigorous academic curriculum that includes multiple years of English, Math, Science and Social Science as well as language and performing arts expectations. To be eligible for college entry, students must reach a minimum “C” grade in each class. School districts can decide if completing this curriculum is a requirement for high school graduation or not, and can decide what constitutes a passing grade.

California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

Passing the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) is a requirement for high school graduation in California. Students are tested in English / Language Arts (ELA) and Math for the first time in 10th grade. The ELA section tests students on California content standards through grade ten, and the math section tests students on California content standards through the first part of Algebra I. If a student does not pass, they have several more opportunities to take the test in 11th and 12th grade and even beyond 12th grade.

Algebra I California Standards Test

Completing Algebra I is a requirement for high school completion. Students are expected to have completed Algebra I by the end of 9th grade. In California, it has become common practice to have students take the course in 8th grade. Students who take the course complete the Algebra I standardized test in the Spring. If they score proficient or above on that test, they have successfully completed Algebra I.

Academic Performance Index (API)

The California Department of Education uses the Academic Performance Index (API) to summarize school academic performance, both school-wide and for each student subgroup with significant representation in the school. Possible API scores range from 200 to 1000, with every school expected to reach a minimum goal of 800. The API includes averaged standardized test scores in multiple academic subjects in grades 2 through 11, along with results from the California High School Exit Exam.

About Us

The Vision of the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) is to empower parents and educators to unleash a new era of innovation within public education so that highly autonomous and accountable schools of choice provide quality learning opportunities for all California students.

The Mission of CCSA is to enable our members to increase the number of students attending quality charter schools in California as quickly as possible by securing policy wins supportive of charter schools and providing the supports necessary to open and expand quality charter schools.

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