

USC School Performance Dashboard includes a ranking of the state's top 10 charter campuses. The report was developed by USC's Center on Educational Governance at the Rossier School of Education and draws on data from 2003 to 2011 to rate charter schools across multiple measures of financial health and academic performance, including state test scores and classroom spending.

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UC San Diego

## UC San Diego News Center

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# The Preuss School UCSD Named Top California Charter School

## USC report ranks state's top 10 charter schools



*Students benefit from a longer school year—198 days  
typical 175-day school year.*

The Preuss School UCSD was named the top charter school in California in a new report developed to strengthen accountability among California's charter schools. The sixth-annual [USC School Performance Dashboard](#) includes a ranking of the state's top 10 charter campuses. The report was developed by USC's Center on Educational Governance at the Rossier School of Education and draws on data from 2003 to 2011 to rate charter schools across multiple measures of financial health and academic performance, including state test scores and classroom spending.

“The USC School Performance Dashboard uses data collected for accountability purposes to help parents decide which school is the right fit for their child, for teachers to decide where they want to work and for those funding charter schools to judge the return on their investment,” said lead author [Priscilla Wohlstetter](#), director of the Center on Educational Governance.

The Preuss School is charter middle and high school on the campus of UC San Diego for motivated, low-income students whose parents have not graduated from college. The school has been consistently ranked as one of America's best high schools by the *Newsweek*, *Washington Post* and *U.S. News & World Report*, among other ranking institutions.

"We are proud to receive this recognition," said Preuss principal Scott Barton. "Our graduates are remarkable young people who overcome countless obstacles to become the first generation in their families who will receive a college education. This award is a testament to what a rigorous curriculum, hard work, high expectations and continuous encouragement and support services can accomplish."

**The top 10 California charter schools are (listed in order):**

1. **The Preuss School UCSD**, San Diego (San Diego County)
2. **Leadership Public Schools**, Hayward (Alameda County)
3. **Primary Charter**, Tracy (San Joaquin County)
4. **Alliance Dr. Olga Mohan High**, Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)
5. **KIPP Bayview Academy**, San Francisco (San Francisco County)
6. **KIPP Summit Academy**, San Lorenzo (Alameda County)
7. **(tied) Camarillo Academy of Progressive Education**, Oxnard (Ventura County)
8. **Alliance Gertz-Ressler High**, Los Angeles (Los Angeles County)
9. **KIPP Heartwood Academy**, Alum Rock (Santa Clara County)
10. **University High**, Fresno (Fresno County)

Half of the top 10 charter schools serve large populations of students from low-income families, with 75 percent or more of the schools' students qualifying for the federal free- and reduced-price lunch program. At six out of the 10 schools, more than 10 percent of the students are learning English as a second language.

Seven of the top 10 charter schools are affiliated with a charter school network, including three campuses run by San Francisco-based KIPP (the Knowledge is Power Program). In Los Angeles, two Alliance College-Ready Public Schools made the top 10 list – Alliance Dr. Olga Mohan High and Alliance Gertz-Ressler High.

Two of the schools, including this year's top-ranked charter, operate on university campuses – The Preuss School UCSD at the University of California, San Diego and University High at California State University, Fresno.

A full copy of the report and accompanying interactive database can be found at [www.uscrossier.org/ceg/](http://www.uscrossier.org/ceg/)

The 2011-2012 school year saw the highest growth rate in the history of California's charter school movement, with a 13 percent jump in the number of new charter campuses over the year before.

In fall 2011, California opened 118 new charter schools, leading the nation with 912 charter campuses. Los Angeles County gained 31 new charters for a total of 242, the highest number of charter schools of any county in the United States.

The report's snapshot looks at campus trends across all charter schools statewide on a number of indicators including student and staff ethnicity, school size, parent education, and populations of low-income and English learner students.

Wohlstetter said this year's data show charter schools continue to be either disproportionately high or low performing as compared to non-charter schools.

"We see a large group of charter schools being very high performers. This begs the question: 'What are these schools doing that leads them to excel and how can that information be shared?'" Wohlstetter said. "For charters clumped at the bottom, we hope serious attention is being given to improving those schools or closing them down."

Major funding for the 2012 USC School Performance Dashboard was provided by The Ahmanson Foundation, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and the Weingart Foundation.

### ***About The Preuss School UCSD***

The Preuss School UCSD was named the top transformative high school in the nation by *Newsweek* and has been consistently ranked as one of America's best high schools by the *Washington Post* and *U.S. News & World Report*. With 816 students in grades 6-12, The Preuss School has an exemplary Academic Performance Index Score (API) of 899, one of the highest in the county. The school, located on the UC San Diego campus, is jointly chartered by UC San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District.

### ***About the Center on Educational Governance***

Founded in 1992, the Center on Educational Governance (CEG) researches the linkages between policy, educational governance and the improvement of urban schools and systems. Housed within the USC Rossier School of Education, CEG brings together faculty from different disciplines to improve policy and practice through research and by working collaboratively with educators in the field.

### ***About the USC Rossier School of Education***

The USC Rossier School of Education (ross-EAR) is one of the top-ranked education research institutions in the world, preparing teachers, educational leaders and scholars who are committed to improving learning in urban education locally, nationally and globally. Among its innovative initiatives is USC Hybrid High School, a Los Angeles public charter school designed to serve high-need students at risk of dropping out.

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