

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

August 22, 2013 | By Laura Margoni

The Preuss School UCSD Named A Top Five Charter High School in California

USC report ranks state's top charter schools



Preuss graduates are consistently accepted to four-year colleges and universities at a rate of nearly 95 percent, and almost 100 percent are going on to some form of higher education.

The Preuss School UCSD was named one of the top five charter high schools in California in a report developed to strengthen accountability among the state's charter schools. The seventh-annual [USC School Performance Dashboard](#) includes for the first time Top 10 lists for charter schools at both the elementary/middle school and high school levels.

The report was developed by USC's Center on Educational Governance at the Rossier School of Education and draws on data from 2005 to 2012 to rate charter schools across multiple measures of financial health and academic performance, including state test scores and classroom spending. For the first time, charters at the high school level are also judged on curriculum rigor, graduation rate and college-readiness.

"The school's success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the faculty, staff and students," said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "This stellar ranking also speaks to the value of the unique educational model at The Preuss School that provides a longer learning day and school year for students."

The Preuss School is a charter middle and high school on the campus of UC San Diego for low income, highly motivated students who strive to become the first in their families to graduate from college. The Preuss model is based on variety of research-based best practices proven to help prepare low-income students to be first-time college attendees. Among these practices are a single-track, college preparatory curriculum; the creation of a strong college-bound culture at the school with high expectations for students; and an expanded day and school year. The school has been consistently ranked as one of America's best high schools by *Newsweek*, the *Washington Post* and *U.S. News & World Report*, among others.

"This year's USC School Performance Dashboard drills further into the multiple dimensions of each California charter school, revealing not only the greater and lesser strengths of each, but also how each is performing relative to other charters and to other California public schools," said report co-author Guilbert C. Hentschke, professor with the USC Rossier School of Education.

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

1. High Tech LA (Los Angeles)
2. University High (Fresno)
3. Leadership Public Schools - Hayward (Alameda)
4. Hawthorne Math and Science Academy (Los Angeles)
5. The Preuss School UCSD (San Diego)
6. Alliance Gertz-Ressler High (Los Angeles)
7. Camino Nuevo Charter High (Los Angeles)
8. Summit Preparatory Charter High (San Mateo)

9. Orange County School of the Arts (Orange)

10. Renaissance Arts Academy (Los Angeles)

The report looks at campus trends across all charter schools statewide on a number of indicators during the 2011-2012 school year. Among some of the findings:

- The number of charter schools spending more than half their revenue on classroom-related expenses increased nearly 15 percent.
- Charter schools far outpaced traditional public schools in the rigor of their curriculum, with 42 percent of charters offering college prep math and sciences courses versus 20 percent of non-charter public schools.
- On average, charter schools had lower high school graduation rates as compared to all traditional public high schools.

Last year saw the highest growth rate in the history of California's charter school movement, with a 17 percent jump in the number of new charter campuses over the year before.

In fall 2012, California opened 81 new charter schools, leading the nation with 1,065 charter campuses. Los Angeles County led the state, adding 33 new charter schools.

The USC School Performance Dashboard is released annually by USC's Center on Educational Governance, under the direction of founder Professor Priscilla Wohlstetter who now is at Teachers College, Columbia University.

"Forty-six states (including California) have adopted the Common Core Standards, and this year's report gives us a hint of how prepared California public school students are for college- and career-readiness," Wohlstetter said. "Students who attend charter high schools are more likely to attend a school that offers college prep courses than students enrolled in traditional public schools. Students in traditional public schools do not have access to higher-level math and science course at the same rate as charter school students do."

Major funding for the 2013 USC School Performance Dashboard was provided by The Ahmanson Foundation, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation and the Weingart Foundation.

MEDIA CONTACT

Merrill Balassone at 213-740-6156 or balasson@usc.edu

UC San Diego's Studio Ten 300 offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via studio@ucsd.edu. To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.