

**Testimony of Caprice Young**  
**President and CEO, KC Distance Learning. Board Chairman, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.**  
**Legislative Hearing on Quality Charter Schools and H.R. 4330, the All Students Achieving through Reform Act**  
**House Committee on Education and Labor**  
**February 24, 2010**

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Kline, and members of the Education and Labor Committee, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at your first hearing in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress on reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). I am Caprice Young, President and CEO of KC Distance Learning, a leading provider of distance learning programs for 62,000 public and private school students in grades 6 through 12 across the country, and I am also the board chairman of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, a nonprofit organization representing all sectors of the national charter school movement.

I would like to preface my remarks with some personal information that underlies my testimony. I was raised as one of two biological children in a family headed by a special education teacher/sculptor and a juvenile probation officer/minister who served as foster parents for 45 years. By the time I went to college, I had had more than two dozen brothers and sisters from a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds. The one thing they all had in common was unrealized potential due to the situations into which they were born. During my career I have been responsible for 68 high school students complying with their court-required community service; more than a million early childhood education, K-12, and adult school students in LAUSD; a quarter of a million charter school students in California; and 63,000 online learning students who attend IQ Academies, or are enrolled in Aventa Learning courses and The Keystone School now. I am the mother of three girls who span the spectrum of having special needs, developing typically and being highly gifted. When I talk about my commitment to high quality education for all students, it comes from a very personal experience of the diversity of learners we have a responsibility to reach. I support the philosophy of **education by all means necessary**. I know the members of this committee share a similar depth of commitment from your own stories.

Mr. Chairman, the fact that you have called the first ESEA reauthorization hearing to discuss new ways to support charter school replication and expansion is a huge honor for the public charter school movement. I recognize there are many reform ideas and proposals to consider, and I thank the Committee for leading off its reauthorization efforts by highlighting ways America can more fully and robustly support the growth, replication, and expansion of high quality charters, while also infusing charter concepts throughout ESEA with the intention of improving all public schools. Together, in a bi-partisan fashion, the charter school movement looks forward to working with Members to support these goals. I also recognize that as ESEA is reauthorized, and the charter school programs are reauthorized, more focus must be placed on ensuring our best charter models are enabled to grow (rewarding success) and that the federal programs are updated to encourage state policies governing charter schools improve.

Over the last several years, I have, along with organizations such as the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, engaged in activities to grow the charter school movement, working with both schools and support organizations, all with a focus on quality. Importantly too, the movement has, and continues, to support the closure of low-performing charter schools. Inherent in the charter concept, and essential for success, is an agreement that in exchange for autonomy, quality schools will be developed or they will be closed down. I'd like to highlight a couple noteworthy activities of the movement in support of these goals: the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools created the "Task Force on Charter School Quality and Accountability" in 2005, which established the principle that the movement will flourish only if charter schools grow in quality as well as in numbers; it created a new model state charter law, developed through extensive consultation with policy experts and charter movement leaders; In 2009, the National Alliance released the first-ever ranking of all state charter school laws based on the full range of values in the public charter school movement, including quality and accountability - which includes closing low-performing charter schools - funding, and growth; and, The Allianceit developed a framework for the redesign of the Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) with a new emphasis on quality startups and replication of effective charter models. I share these same objectives, beliefs, and goals.

Over the past several years, the charter school movement has been fortunate to work extremely closely with this Committee on charter school matters. In the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.R. 2904, a bipartisan proposal authored by Congressmen Boustany and sponsored by Congresswoman McCarthy, as well as several other Committee Members was introduced to redesign the current public charter school programs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In 2009 and continuing to this day, I have been fortunate enough to see the great work of Rep. Polis on H.R. 4330 which has garnered bi-partisan Committee support from Rep. Ehlers. This is a proposal to support the replication and expansion of the best charter models while also encouraging and incentivizing states to dramatically improve policies authorizing and overseeing public charter schools.

Additionally, I've watched work undertaken with the Senate on charter proposals too; ranging from Senator Vitter's recently introduced S. 2932, a proposal to redesign the current charter school programs, to ongoing work with Senator Landrieu and Senator Hagan on yet-to-be-introduced bills supporting education reforms and public charter schools. And, directly related to today's proceedings, I know there is ongoing work with Senator Durbin on a Senate companion bill to the All Students Achieving through Reform Act (All-STAR).

Throughout my career including my work with the National Alliance, the focus has been on good policy and working in a bipartisan manner. It is my hope that any ESEA reauthorization includes critical elements of improved charter policy supported by all of the Committee. As a professional who has worked in multiple roles representing the public charter school movement, my goal today is to impress upon the Committee the need to update the federal charter school programs. Specifically, To ensure the federal government reauthorizes them with certain key additions, continues to provides resources when states and locals do not meet their obligations to charter schools, that federal policies encourage states to improve their charter laws, that federal policies continue to support both the growth of new charters and also the replication and expansion of the best models, and that ultimately chartering is an

education reform that benefits all public school children by having advantageous elements of charters infused throughout the traditional public school system.

Included in the fiscal year 2010 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Education is new language enabling funding from the Federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) to support the replication and expansion of successful charter models; this was the first legislative change to the programs since 2001 when they were reauthorized as part of the No Child Left Behind Act to meet the needs of parents and children across the country. Authorized in 1994, the CSP was originally created when there were only seven states with charter school laws, and only 60 schools in existence. By the time NCLB was signed into law, there were just slightly more than 2000 charter schools in 37 states and the District of Columbia. Today, there are almost 5000 charter schools, educating more than 1.6 million children in 39 states and the District of Columbia. The movement's growth has been dramatic, and that growth has been sustained and encouraged because of parent demand and persistent educators combined with the right resources and policies.

The CSP was designed as a competitive grant to encourage states to not only pass public charter school laws, but to enact quality charter school laws. Although much attention is placed on newer competitive grants and a potential for more, the CSP has long been a competitive grant program intended to reward states for implementing education reform policies in line with supporting quality charter school growth. Each time it has been updated, new elements have been included that at the time were seen as critical components of quality state charter legislation, elements which would foster the growth of a high quality schools. This emphasis must continue, and new policies must be adopted at the federal level which to continue push states to improve their charter laws and environments. In California, as president of the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA), we often leveraged the CSP to encourage state policy changes.

One vital new direction for federal policy is ensuring the ability to support the replication and expansion of effective public charter schools. After almost 18 years of chartering, it is clear certain charter schools are some of the best schools, private or public, in America - more must be done to offer children an opportunity to attend them. As charter schools have grown, many have tried to replicate campuses or expand grades served to align K-12 offerings. Neither of these practices can be funded under current law, however. I encourage the Committee to consider changes via reauthorization to fully accomplish this goal. As mentioned before, via this year's appropriations process, new abilities were granted to the Department to fund the replication and expansion of the best charter models; however, this was a short term remedy, a release valve to help the schools currently trying to replicate but lack support. When ESEA is reauthorized, a more complete approach will need to be crafted. For the time being however, this new direction will be a dramatic help to schools around the country. For instance, the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) started 18 new schools in 2009, of those only 6 were able to receive CSP funding. Other high-performing charter management organizations (CMOs) share this problem. Uncommon Schools, a highly successful CMO operating schools in New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, plans to open 20 new schools in the next three years. Only six of these are eligible for CSP funding under current law. Achievement First, another nationally known high-quality CMO operating schools in

Connecticut and New York, plans to open 10 schools in the next three years, but only three are currently eligible for CSP funding under current law.

Ultimately though, even with federal funding able to support replication and expansion of the best charter models, state policies are, and will always likely be, the main factor in determining the environment in which charters operate. It is critical that federal policies be structured in alignment with good state policy. When this occurs, a constant loop of feedback can be set up. Federal incentives can encourage states to adopt the right policies, including equitable funding for charters, quality oversight of authorizers and all parties involved in chartering, equitable access to facilities and facilities support, and high levels of autonomy in exchange for high degrees of accountability. These will help create more high quality charter school sectors, like in New York City where “gold standard” study after study shows the city’s public charter schools excelling and outperforming the traditional public schools in the city. Federal programs can reward states for setting up these policies, and then states can ultimately develop new and improved policies that can be adopted in the future via reauthorization. A closed circuit of improvement can be created between federal and state legislation, the federal law incentivizing states to develop better policies, and then the federal law adopting the best state practices to encourage additional states to adopt the successful policies.

Currently though, the CSP has just three priority criteria for awarding grants to States:

- (A) the State has demonstrated progress in increasing the number of high quality charter schools that are held accountable in the terms of the schools’ charters for meeting clear and measurable objectives for the educational progress of the students attending the schools, in the period prior to the period for which a state Education Agency or eligible applicants applied for a grant under this subpart
- (B) The State –
  - (i) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not a local education agency, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to such State law; or
  - (ii) In the case of a State in which local educational agencies are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.
- (C) The State ensures that each charter school has a high degree of autonomy over the charter school’s budgets and expenditures<sup>1</sup>.

Although there are additional assurances that states must make when applying for CSP grants, these are the only priority criteria in determining grants to states. While these criteria have been helpful in addressing certain factors in state policies, and should continue to be priority criteria for federal charter funding, they do not reflect the full spectrum of policies at the state level to ensure quality charter growth.

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<sup>1</sup> See Charter Schools Program Section 5202 (e)(3) at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg62.html#sec5202>

In 2007, a bipartisan bill was put forward to amend the Charter School Programs: H.R. 2904 and then subsequently adopted into the House 2007 NCLB discussion draft. Many of these proposals included updating the priority criteria as well as enabling new usage of funds to better meet the growth of high quality schools. The six key changes were:

- **Enhancing Support for Start-Ups and Replications.** First, while helping charter school start-ups remained the foundation of the CSP, H.R. 2904 also provided greater support for the expansion and replication of successful charter models. In particular, the bill allowed more than one CSP grant per recipient and permitted charter support organizations to receive grants to undertake expansion and replication activities. **CCSA undertook significant steps to engage charters in CA's school turnaround efforts highlighted by the work at Gompers and Keiler traditional public schools which became successful charter schools. This change of who can directly administer the CSP grant would enable other groups to take on and support this activity more robustly like CCSA.**
- **Strengthening Priority Criteria for State Grants.** Second, the legislation strengthened the priority criteria by which the Secretary of Education may award grants to states. An ideal state charter school law encourages growth and quality as well as a high degree of school autonomy and accountability. To motivate states to adopt the ideal law, the bill added priorities to encourage the creation and support of non-district authorizers, the strengthening of charter school autonomy and accountability, and the provision of equitable funding to charter schools.
- **Allowing Authorizers to Serve as Grant Administrators.** Third, the bill strengthened the administration of the CSP by allowing charter school authorizers to serve as grant administrators in addition to state education agencies (SEAs). In some states, the SEA may be the best organization to manage CSP funds. These SEAs have involved their state's public charter school leaders in the administration of their grants and in developing programs that reflect their state's specific needs. In states where SEAs have fallen short in administering (or even applying for) the program, however, charter schooling in those states will be enhanced by allowing charter school authorizers to compete for the CSP grant administrator role.
- **Granting Funding Discretion to the Secretary.** Fourth, the bill allowed the Secretary of Education to allocate funds as needed between the Charter Schools Program and State Facilities Incentive Grants Program. This funding challenge is further exacerbated by the reservation of up to \$100 million in new CSP funds for the State Facilities Incentive Grants Program. By granting discretion to the Secretary, the bill allowed for federal appropriations to respond to the needs of the states, recognizing that in certain years more money will be needed for the CSP, while in other years more money will be needed for the State Facilities Incentive Grants Program.
- **Creating a National Dissemination Program.** Fifth, the legislation created a national dissemination program. As charter schools continue to grow, the best practices developed in these innovative public schools must be disseminated to all other public schools. Previously, the CSP's dissemination activities were primarily state-focused. As proposed by the legislation, a new national dissemination program will encourage the sharing of charter schools' best practices among public schools across the nation.

- **Reauthorizing the Credit Enhancement Program.** Finally, the draft incorporated reauthorization of the Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities Program, an important vehicle for encouraging private sector investment in charter school facilities, into the CSP. This change will enhance administrative efficiency in the overall charter schools programs.

But, time has passed since 2007, and it has been almost 10 years since the CSP was last reauthorized. These last several years have shown the charter movement additional key steps the federal government should take to incentivize improved state policy environments. One critical area where federal law is silent is on quality authorizing. Any reauthorization must include core elements of quality control around authorizing, including: priority criteria for a transparent charter application, review, and decision-making process; requirements for performance based contracts between schools and authorizers; comprehensive charter school monitoring and data collection processes; clear processes for renewal, nonrenewal, and revocation decisions; and oversight of all parties involved in chartering from the schools to the authorizers too. **I strongly encourage the federal government to adopt measures to encourage states to hold all parties accountable in the chartering process.** Too often the emphasis is on just one entity, but many parties are ultimately responsible and accountable for charter school success.

The All-STAR legislation, includes many of the elements described above, and paints a comprehensive picture for how to move the federal charter programs forward. A critical new addition though is a significant focus on authorizer oversight and oversight of authorizers – highlighted by a priority criteria for states that have or will have in place policies for reviewing the effectiveness and quality of their charter authorizers, as well as additional priority criteria on charter schools having equitable access to pre-K and adult education funding streams; equitable and timely funding compared to traditional public schools, including facilities funding, that includes bonding revenues and millage revenues; options to be their own Local Education Agency; a renewed focus on charter autonomy including explicit requirements for written performance contracts that ensures charter schools have independent and skilled governing boards; and, a requirement for these successful, all-star schools to have in place plans to share their best programs, practices, or policies with other schools and LEAs. The bill moves federal statute in new directions as well, including allowing grant recipients to retain a portion of their grant in a reserve account to help cover the costs of expanding and replicating, even keeping the interest earned on the funds to help further the purposes of the program. **IMPORTANTLY, this proposal unlike previous proposals is focused on rewarding the best charter public schools, enabling these entities to replicate and expand – a necessary plank of any reauthorized ESEA’s support for charter schools.**

All of these proposals contain critical additions to the CSP and ESEA, and I strongly encourage the Committee to adopt them in its reauthorization legislation. Unlike the majority of programs in ESEA, the CSP has always been intended to drive state policy changes, and this emphasis must not be lost. It must however be modified to ensure it encourages the best policies for growing quality charter schools. The ideas embodied in the proposals outlined above are those elements. And, it is only with the right policy settings that charter schools will fully be able to succeed.

**Today, over 600,000 children are on charter school waiting lists across the country, enough demand to create over 2,000 new average sized charter schools<sup>2</sup>.** And, with growing bipartisan support, demand from parents and grassroots activists, charter schools not only afford parents and children new high quality public school options, but can be a dramatically effective tool in our nation's education reform efforts.

In Los Angeles, the school board recently approved a plan to turn over 250 campuses to charter schools and other independent school operators. This was a powerful showing from our nation's second largest school district that charter schools have a critical delivery role to play in educating its children, and it clearly showed that charters are having a competitive effect on traditional public schools. In New York City, the Chancellor there is planning to have 200 charter schools by the 2013-2014 school year educating approximately 100,000 children – a full 1/10 of our nation's largest school system's children. But, beyond large urban school districts, in communities and locales across the country, charters are opening up and serving students and families who want and need them. In fact, of the almost 5000 charter schools, 54 percent are in urban areas, 22 percent are in suburban communities, approximately 9 percent are in towns, and 15 percent are in rural areas according to the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data for the 2007-2008 school year. Charter schools provide parents and communities across the country - from the largest city to the most rural - true local control over their public education, they afford parents a choice and they are accountable for their performance. Whether in rural locations benefitting from online schooling or as in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Granada Hills, where the Granada Hills Charter High School in 2003 converted from a traditional public school to a charter school and became the largest comprehensive independent conversion charter school in the nation, charters are meeting the needs of communities across America.

Another example of charters meeting the needs of the local community, is the Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools in California (For more information on this network of schools, please see Appendix I). With significant expansion and replication plans, the Alliance has had to rely on private fundraising and philanthropic support to replicate and expand, and currently is on track to run 20 schools in Los Angeles, making it the largest operator of charter schools in LA. The Alliance for College Ready-Ready Public Schools has thrived since opening its first schools nearly six years ago, consistently posting test scores and attendance rates that far outpace surrounding district schools. Expectations and demands on students and teachers are high, with an extended school day running from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. as well as mandatory after-school and weekend classes for struggling students. All students are required to complete a rigorous course-load of college-preparatory classes and must repeat any classes in which they earn less than a C. Enrollment at high schools is limited to 500 students, and fewer at middle schools, while the ratio of students to teachers in classrooms does not exceed 25 to one. Many of the Alliance schools also use online learning to broaden the curriculum and offer individual students the opportunity to make up courses they failed the first time.

The early results have been impressive, with nine of every 10 Alliance students who enrolled as ninth-graders expected to enroll in two- or four-year colleges. In 2008, the Alliance launched a performance-

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<sup>2</sup> National Alliance for Public Charter School Research.



based incentive program, in which teachers and administrators received salary bonuses when their students hit performance targets, merging many of today's most promising education reforms under one roof – autonomy as a public school in exchange for high stakes accountability, an ability to reward excellent and effective teachers, a longer school day, and rigorous expectations for all students enrolled in the school. Expanding the number of Alliance schools would send more historically underserved students to college, students who would otherwise be pushed out of high school by low expectations and a tragic lack of rigor or support.

**As evidenced by this hearing, there is strong rationale and support for the growth of high quality public charter schools like the Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools. Never before has there been such strong support from policymakers across the political spectrum for the replication and expansion of our best models. Federal policy should support this activity, but it must also continue to support the creation of new quality charter schools.** Undoubtedly, the federal support for charter schools has been critical in taking the movement from 60 schools in 1994-1995 to almost 5000 in just 15 years, and it has been invaluable in shaping state policies that govern charter schools. As ESEA is reauthorized, the past objectives must be married with the new goals and work together to push simultaneously the expansion of our best charter models.

As evidence for the strong bipartisan belief in charter schools, the President has included significant support for them in his fiscal year 2011 budget request. While I am excited about the opportunities stemming from this request, there is cause for concern. Included in the Administration's fiscal year 2011 budget is a proposal to support the growth of "*autonomous public schools*" in addition to charter schools. Although the charter school movement considers this on one hand a success, that traditional public schools are reacting to the pressures from public charter schools and are adopting successful practices from charters, I am concerned that the federal charter school funds will lose their purpose. These programs were established to support the growth of public charter schools, and although the Administration proposes many exciting ideas via its consolidation of programs in the fiscal year 2011 Budget's Expanding Educational Options category, including a way to combine support for growing high quality charter schools with ensuring parents have the information necessary to know about their choices (supply and demand), the new ability to fund autonomous public schools lessens the impact of the federal charter school programs. Furthermore, even the most successful examples of autonomous public schools, the Pilot Schools in Boston, are not achieving at the same success rates as Boston's public charter schools<sup>3</sup>. According to "Informing the Debate: Comparing Boston's Charter, Pilot, and Traditional Schools," a report prepared for the Boston Foundation, Boston's public charter schools are doing significantly better than pilot and traditional public schools in raising student achievement. This includes results from randomized studies designed to reduce the possibility that charters might benefit from having more motivated students or parents.

The federal charter programs were designed to support the growth of public charter schools because state and local governments do not provide funding to support new charter schools. State and local

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.tbf.org/uploadedFiles/tbforg/Utility\\_Navigation/Multimedia\\_Library/Reports/InformingTheDebate\\_Final.pdf](http://www.tbf.org/uploadedFiles/tbforg/Utility_Navigation/Multimedia_Library/Reports/InformingTheDebate_Final.pdf)



governments already provide funds for the creation of new traditional public schools, including autonomous public schools. Besides being duplicative of current state and local funds, it is difficult to envision the Department of Education ensuring that all “autonomous public schools” receiving funding under this new authority are truly autonomous public schools. Furthermore, the achievement results of these schools are in many place is less than charter schools. And, although the Department has set out ambitious targets for what an autonomous public school would be, I await additional details on this proposal.

I do understand though that the Administration and Congress want to examine all possible promising education reforms. And, I look at the push for truly autonomous public schools as a validation of charter schools having a systemic impact on public education. However, when ESEA is reauthorized, if it includes a new push for autonomous public schools in addition to public charter schools, it must ensure several things. In the current Congressional Budget Justification for the FY2011 ED Budget, the Department defines autonomous public schools as “...charter and other public schools that have autonomy over key areas of their operations, including staffing, budget, time, and program and are subject o higher levels of accountability than other public schools<sup>4</sup>.” Congress must establish clear guidelines and principles for states that set out clear definitions for all these terms, and ensure “that higher levels of accountability” means closure for not meeting academic performance objectives. Clearly defining and defending these terms is critical for these schools to be successful.

A lesson can be clearly learned here form charters. Charter schools around the country are facing regulatory creep, where third parties are unfortunately infringing upon their autonomy. For instance, in Baltimore, KIPP Ujima Village which is Baltimore’s most successful middle school, with its students consistently achieving some of the highest test scores in the state may have to dramatically alter its successful program because the Baltimore Teacher’s Union is demanding dramatically higher pay – something that hasn’t been a concern of the Union for the past seven years the school has been operation. Despite the fact that the school’s teachers are already among the city’s highest paid (on average receiving 18 percent more than the salary scale) the union is demanding 33% more than the salary scale. In Arizona, the state attempted to align charter schools teaching schedules with ones imposed on traditional public schools. Ultimately, a settlement was reached and the state did not impose a rigid annual schedule for instructing students. Clearly though, this is an example that in even some of the most “progressive” charter states, attempts are constantly being made to “standardize” charter schools in the name of alignment<sup>5</sup>. **These efforts to create a “level playing field” by handcuffing charters are backwards. I would instead recommend removing the handcuffs from non-chartered public schools and increase their accountability.**

Another example comes from Wisconsin, where “charter schools” were established as programs within traditional public schools and used as a revenue source via the federal charter programs rather than as new schools. When the federal funding expired or was exhausted, these “charter schools” were

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget11/justifications/f-iiit.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0804charter0804.html>

absorbed back into the district. This practice stems from a lack of clear state law on the independence of charter schools, and federal law must take steps to prevent states from “gaming the system.”

As the committee moves forward with potentially marking up this legislation and considering additional ESEA ideas with the goal of reauthorizing the statute, I know the national charter school movement stands ready to help support an ambitious agenda for reforming and improving our nation’s public education system. In the discussions that surround this goal though, there are critical elements that must be adopted to ensure charter schools can meet the Committee’s objectives as a powerful education reform vehicle.

Congress must develop significant and wide-ranging policies for replicating and expanding our best charter schools. By increasing the capacity of these “all star” schools to serve more students, we will dramatically improve our nation’s high school graduation rates and importantly our college attendance and success rates. As highlighted by the recent EdNext study conducted by Kevin Booker, Tim Sass, Brian Gill, and Ron Zimmer recently, “charter schools are associated with an increased likelihood of successful high-school completion and an increased likelihood of enrollment at a two- or four year college in two disparate jurisdictions, Florida and Chicago<sup>6</sup>.” Although this examines just two jurisdictions, it clearly reinforces the necessity of policies being structured to ensure charter school success.

In the name of scaling up though, the charter concept must remain true to its objectives and goals; public charter schools must remain autonomous public schools that are held accountable for their results. They must have control over their budget, personnel, programs, and other elements critical to their success. Watering down the charter concept in the name of scaling will not achieve the success Congress wants nor the public demands from public schools.

I have greatly appreciated the chance to speak to the Committee and its Members today, and I will gladly take any questions you may have.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://educationnext.org/the-unknown-world-of-charter-high-schools/>

**Appendix I – Information on the Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools**



## 2010 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Background** - Alliance College-Ready Public Schools (Alliance) is a nonprofit charter management organization committed to creating small high performance, college-ready public schools in Los Angeles. In April 2004, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education approved the first high school charter operated by the Alliance. Since that time, the Alliance has had a total of 16 charter petitions approved by LAUSD.

**Mission** - The mission of the Alliance is to create a network of small high performing schools in historically underachieving, overcrowded, low income communities in Los Angeles that will prepare students for college success. Through research-based best practices, a small school environment, and strong community and parental involvement, Alliance schools provide a rigorous, accountable education designed to give each student college-preparatory skills, experience and knowledge.

**Network of Schools** – The Alliance network currently includes 16 schools in operation – 11 high schools and 5 middle schools serving almost 5,600 students in South, Northeast and East LA in the 09-10 school year. In August 2009, three new Alliance high schools and two new middle schools opened. Our vision is to grow our network to include 20 public charter schools by fall 2010. At full enrollment, these schools will serve almost 10,000 students in the most underserved areas of Los Angeles.

**Measurable Goals** – Each Alliance school promotes a culture of high expectations for every student. Some measurable objectives include: at least 95% average daily attendance at all schools; 90% of Alliance students continuously enrolled from grades 9 – 12 will pass the California High School Exit Exam and meet University of California and California State University A through G college-preparatory course requirements. 90% of graduates will attend two or four-year colleges.

**Milestones Achieved** – According to Academic Performance Index (API) scores released by the CA Dept of Education, one-third of the top tier LAUSD high schools are Alliance schools. On the 2009 API, two Alliance schools scored above 800 and five are in the top 16 schools in the district. All Alliance schools significantly outperformed the neighboring schools from which their students came by a range of 86 to 331 points. Of the Alliance's three graduating classes, 99% passed the California High School Exit Exam and 100% were accepted to a college.

### **Alliance School Demographics**

Average Daily Attendance: 97%  
Ethnicity: 84% Latino, 15% African American  
Free/Reduced Meal Program Participants: 94%

**Financial Model** - Alliance schools are designed to be fiscally self-sufficient with public funding in their third year of operation. State and Federal public funding allocated on a per pupil basis is not sufficient to provide facilities and all essential program costs in the first two years. To meet those needs, the Alliance provides \$800,000 in start-up funding through contributions and grants to each new school, and approximately \$2 million per school in capital support.

**Fundraising** - Over the past five years, the Alliance has raised over \$40,000,000 in contributions, grants and commitments to support the operation of its corporate office, schools and school facilities.

**Leadership** - Alliance President and CEO Judy Ivie Burton is a former LAUSD local district superintendent who also served as head of the LAUSD Charter School Office. Led by Chairman Tony Ressler, the Alliance Board of Directors brings a wealth of diverse experience in key areas such as education reform, leadership development, finance and operations.



## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS FOR 2009-10 SCHOOL YEAR

	Year Opened	CBEDS Enrollment	Current Grade Levels	Ethnicity					English Learners	Free/Reduced Meals	Special Education
				Hispanic/Latino	African American	Asian	White	Other			
Alliance College-Ready Public Schools	2004	5551	6-12	86.40%	12.90%	0.40%	0.18%	0.13%	23.29%	92.07%	5.87%
<b>High Schools</b>											
College-Ready Academy High School #4	2006	446	9-12	93.27%	5.16%	0.90%	0.22%	0.45%	18.16%	96.64%	4.72%
College-Ready Academy High School #5	2007	429	9-11	83.45%	16.08%	0.00%	0.47%	0.00%	31.93%	93.47%	7.41%
College-Ready Academy High School #7	2007	312	9-11	59.94%	40.06%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30.45%	98.72%	6.23%
Environmental Science and Technology High School	2009	139	9	97.84%	0.72%	0.00%	0.00%	1.44%	31.65%	92.81%	10.14%
Gertz-Ressler High School	2004	518	9-12	87.84%	10.81%	1.35%	0.00%	0.00%	17.76%	91.70%	5.25%
Health Services Academy High School	2009	143	9	55.24%	44.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	19.58%	87.41%	8.39%
Heritage College-Ready Academy High School	2005	538	9-12	82.53%	17.29%	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%	22.86%	96.84%	4.66%
Huntington Park College-Ready Academy High School	2005	523	9-12	99.62%	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%	0.19%	22.37%	91.20%	5.53%
Media Arts and Entertainment High School	2009	135	9	99.26%	0.00%	0.00%	0.74%	0.00%	29.63%	96.30%	8.21%
Marc and Eva Stern Math and Science School	2006	537	9-12	98.32%	0.19%	0.93%	0.56%	0.00%	17.69%	91.99%	4.27%
William and Carol Ouchi High School	2006	468	9-12	83.12%	16.45%	0.21%	0.21%	0.00%	18.59%	87.82%	6.62%
<b>Middle Schools</b>											
College-Ready Middle Academy #3	2008	265	6-7	82.64%	17.36%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	27.92%	96.98%	5.28%
College-Ready Middle Academy #4	2009	155	6	76.77%	23.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	27.10%	94.84%	4.52%
College-Ready Middle Academy #5	2009	119	6	94.96%	0.84%	4.20%	0.00%	0.00%	30.25%	97.48%	9.17%
Jack H. Skirball Middle School	2007	401	6-8	75.81%	23.94%	0.00%	0.25%	0.00%	21.95%	90.77%	5.92%
Richard Merkin Middle School	2005	423	6-8	93.14%	6.62%	0.00%	0.00%	0.24%	26.95%	96.45%	6.00%



**Progress Summary, 2009-10**

In 2004, Alliance College-Ready Public Schools opened a single high school with a profound promise: to prepare underserved students in areas of Los Angeles with historically low-performing schools to graduate ready for success in college. We believe in our ability to succeed so much that we put our promise in our name. Students and their parents have embraced our rigorous instruction, personalized campuses, longer school year and the expectation that every student can achieve at high levels.

**Demographics**

The Alliance opened five schools in the 2009-10 academic year and now operates a total of 11 high schools and 5 middle schools in low-income areas of Los Angeles. The student body numbers about 5,600: 84% Latino and 15% African American. Also, 27% are English-language learners and 94% qualify for free or reduced federal meal program.

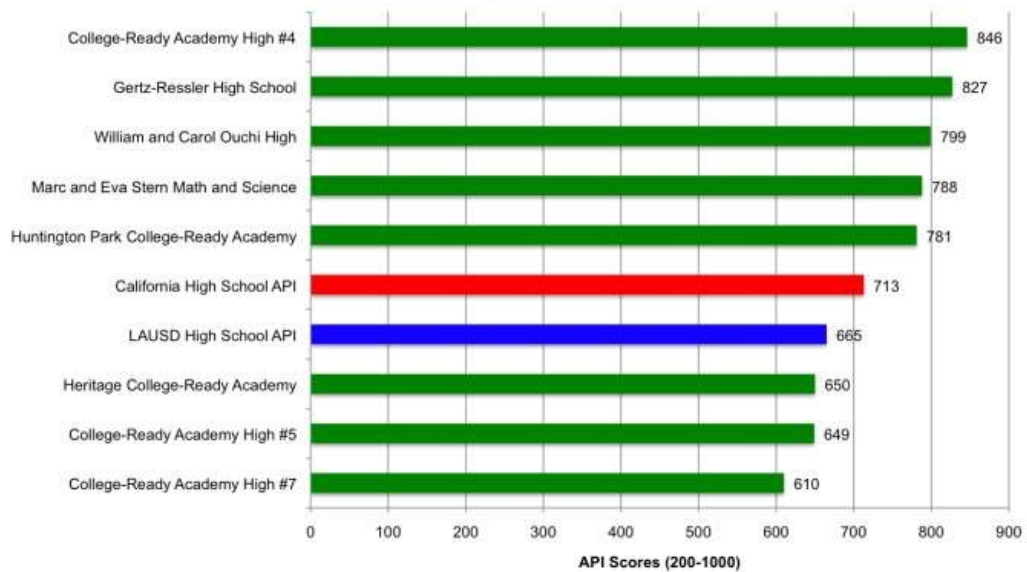
**Graduation Rates**

In June 2009, the Alliance celebrated three high school graduations. 100% of our graduates were accepted to four-year universities or community colleges. Alliance grads currently attend UC and Cal State public and private universities such as Vassar, Wellesley, Mills and Dartmouth. In June 2010, six Alliance schools will have graduating classes.

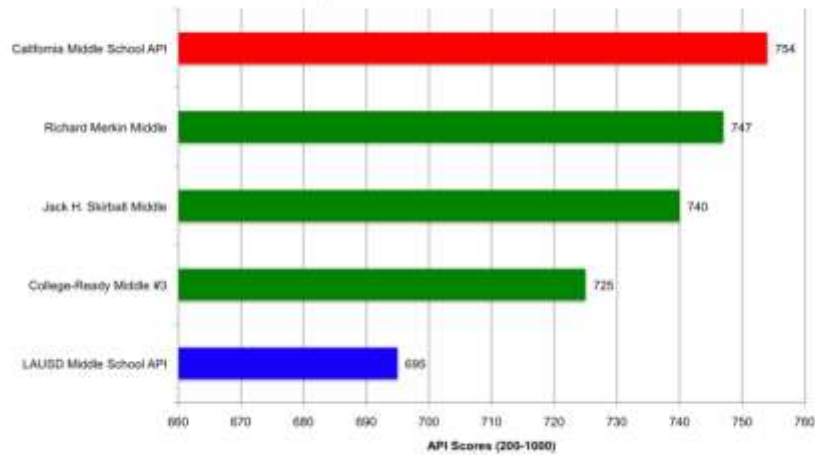
**Academic Performance Index**

Five Alliance high schools have earned 2009 Academic Performance Index (API) scores that rank them in the top 16 high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District; two scored higher than 800 and rank in the 10 top-scoring high schools. All Alliance schools outperformed nearby traditional schools by a range of 86 to 331 points, but single test scores don't tell the whole story. It's growth over time that ensures sustainable change in student learning. For example, Gertz-Ressler High School improved 131 points since 2005 and Huntington Park College-Ready Academy High School jumped 188 since 2006.

**2009 Academic Performance Index (API)  
Alliance Among Top Performing High Schools  
in California and Los Angeles Unified School District**



**2009 Academic Performance Index (API)  
Alliance Among Top Performing Middle Schools  
In Los Angeles Unified School District**



Assessment Data Analysis Services, 11/18/2009

**California Content Standards Tests (CST)**

Overall between 2007 and 2009, Alliance schools increased the percentage of students performing at advanced or proficient levels on California Content Standards Tests by 1% in English and 16% in math.

**Attendance and Parent Satisfaction**

A survey of 3,000 Alliance families shows that parents strongly support the academic program, the college-bound culture and the school environment. The average daily attendance rate at Alliance schools is 95%.





## Our Mission

The mission of Alliance College-Ready Public Schools is to create a network of small high performing schools in historically underachieving, overcrowded, low income communities in Los Angeles that will prepare students for college success.



In 2004, Alliance College-Ready Public Schools opened a single high school with a profound promise: to prepare underserved students in areas of Los Angeles with historically low-performing schools to graduate from high school and succeed in college. We believe in our ability to succeed so much that we put our promise in our name. Students and their parents have embraced our rigorous instruction, personalized campuses, longer school year and the expectation that every student can achieve at high levels.

The Alliance network currently includes 16 schools—11 high schools and 5 middle schools serving almost 5,600 students in South, Northeast and East LA in the 09-10 school year.

In August 2009, three new Alliance high schools and two new middle schools opened. At least five more Alliance schools will open by fall 2010. At full enrollment, these schools will serve almost 10,000 students in the most underserved areas of Los Angeles.

The student body numbers about 5,600: 84% Latino and 15% African American. Also, 27% are English-language learners and 94% qualify for free or reduced federal meal program.

### Alliance Alums

Alliance grads currently attend UC and Cal State public and private universities such as Vassar, Wellesley, Mills and Dartmouth. In June 2010, six Alliance schools will have graduating classes.

## Graduation Rates

In June 2009, the Alliance celebrated three high school graduations. Of these graduating classes, 99% passed the California High School Exit Exam and 100% of our graduates were accepted to four-year universities or community colleges.





### Academic Performance Index

Five Alliance high schools have earned 2009 Academic Performance Index (API) scores that rank them in the top 16 high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District; two scored higher than 800 and rank in the 10 top-scoring high schools.

All Alliance schools outperformed nearby traditional schools by an average of 200 points, but single test scores don't tell the whole story. It's growth over time that ensures sustainable change in student learning. For example, Gertz-Ressler High School improved 131 points since 2005 and Huntington Park College-Ready Academy High School jumped 188 since 2006.

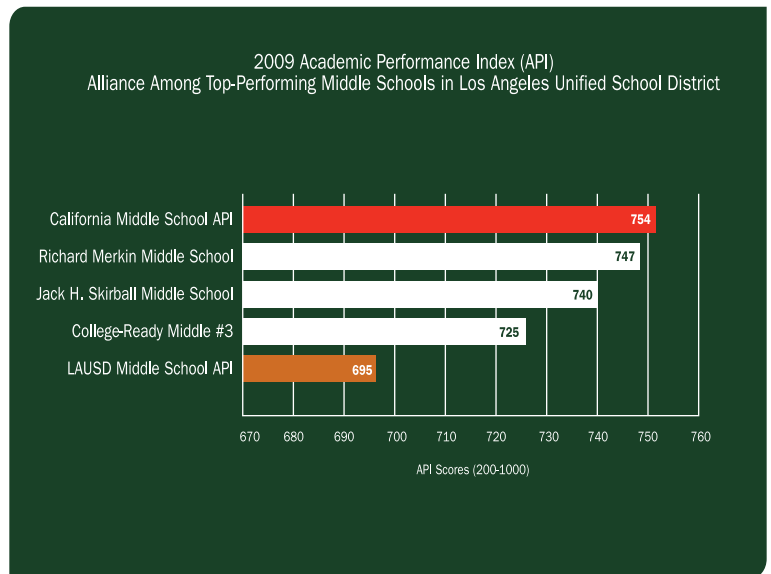
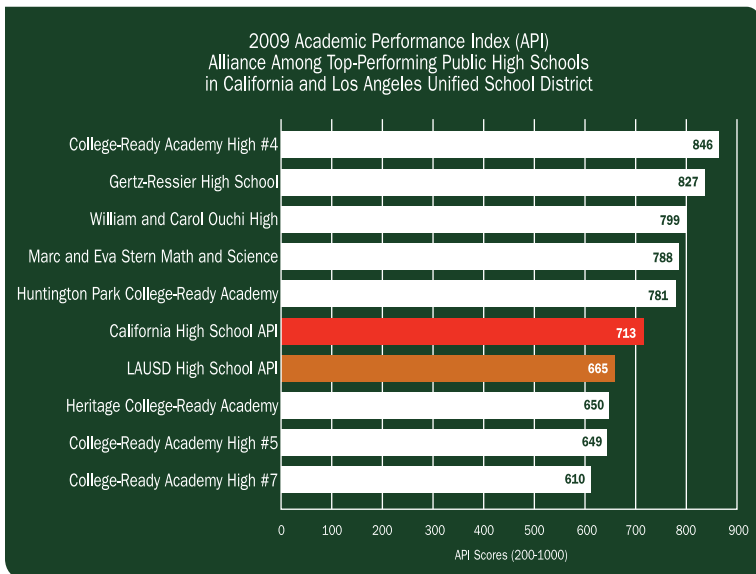
### California Content Standards Tests (CST)

Overall between 2007 and 2009, Alliance schools increased the percentage of students performing at advanced or proficient levels on California Content Standards Tests by 1% in English and 16% in math.

### Attendance and Parent Satisfaction

A survey of 3,000 Alliance families shows that parents strongly support the academic program, the college-bound culture and the school environment. The average daily attendance rate at Alliance schools is 95%.

Leadership—Alliance President and CEO Judy Ivie Burton is a former LAUSD local district superintendent who also served as head of the LAUSD Charter School Office. Led by Chairman Tony Ressler, the Alliance Board of Directors brings a wealth of diverse experience in key areas such as education reform, leadership development, finance and operations.



Assessment Data Analysis Services, 11/16/2009

Assessment Data Analysis Services, 11/16/2009



## Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy

### Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy

**Enrollment for Current School Year:**

265 in grades 6 and 7.

**Enrollment for 2010-11 School Year:**

A new 6th-grade class of 125 new students will join the school in September 2010.

**Address:**

5355 South 4th Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90043  
Phone: (323) 294-3172

**Date opened:**

September 2008

The school is named for Christine O'Donovan, sister of donor Frank McHugh.



**Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy is a free public charter school developed by Alliance College-Ready Public Schools and authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District.**

**School Description:** Designed to prepare students to succeed in high school and continue on a path toward college, Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy's educational model focuses on five core values: high expectations for all students, small personalized schools and classrooms, increased instructional time, highly qualified principals and teachers, and parents as partners.

**Performance:** Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy achieved a 2009 API score of 725, 30 points higher than the average 2009 API score for LAUSD middle schools.

**Community:** Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy, located in the Angeles Mesa Community/Crenshaw District of Los Angeles, acts as a feeder school and shares a campus with the Alliance's William and Carol Ouchi High School. The community is home to mainly non-charter public high schools that historically are low-performing and/or overcrowded.

**Demographics and Average Daily Attendance:** 83% Hispanic and 17% African American, 28% English language learner (ELL) Students, and 97% free or reduced meal program participants. To date, average daily attendance is 97%.





## William and Carol Ouchi High School

**William and Carol Ouchi High School is a free public charter school developed and operated by Alliance College-Ready Public Schools and authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District.**

**School Description:** Designed to prepare students for graduation and readiness to enter and succeed in college, William and Carol Ouchi High School's educational model focuses on five core values: high expectations for all students, small personalized schools and classrooms, increased instructional time, highly qualified principals and teachers, and parents as partners.

**Performance:** William and Carol Ouchi High School achieved a 2009 Academic Performance Index (API) score of 799, making it the 13th top-performing public high school in LAUSD.

Ouchi High School scored 134 points above the 2009 API average for LAUSD high schools and 86 points higher than the 2009 API average for high schools statewide.

Ouchi High School was recognized as a 2009 California Distinguished School, an award that recognizes the state's most exemplary, inspiring and well-rounded community public schools.

**Community:** Located in the Angeles Mesa Community/Crenshaw District of Los Angeles, William and Carol Ouchi High School enrolls students from and shares a campus with the Alliance's Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy. The community is home to mainly non-charter public high schools that historically are low-performing and/or overcrowded.

**Demographics and Average Daily Attendance:** 83% Hispanic and 16% African American, 19% English language learner students, and 88% free or reduced meal program participants. Average daily attendance so far for the 09-10 school year is 98%.

**William and Carol Ouchi:** The school is named for William Ouchi, Alliance board member and longtime education reform activist, and his wife Carol. William Ouchi, who holds an MBA from Stanford University and a PhD in business administration from the University of Chicago, teaches courses in management and organization design, and conducts research on the structure of large organizations at UCLA's Anderson School of Business. He is co-founder and chairman of The Riordan Programs, which foster diversity in the business community by encouraging and preparing individuals from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue higher education and careers in management. He also is author of many books on education, including his most recent "The Secret of TSL: The Revolutionary Discovery That Raises School Performance," which explains what autonomous principals do to improve their schools.



### William and Carol Ouchi High School

#### Enrollment for Current School Year:

468 Students in grades 9 – 12. William and Carol Ouchi High School will celebrate its first graduating class in June 2010.

#### Address:

5356 South 5th Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90043

#### Date opened:

September 2006

Ouchi High School scored 134 points above the 2009 API average for LAUSD high schools and 86 points higher than the 2009 API average for high schools statewide.



## Schools

### Our Mission

The mission of Alliance College-Ready Public Schools is to create a network of small high performing schools in historically underachieving, overcrowded, low income communities in Los Angeles that will prepare students for college success.



#### Opened in 2004-05 School Year

**Gertz-Ressler High School**  
(Manual Arts High School Community)  
James Waller, Principal  
2023 South Union Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90007

#### Opened in 2005-06 School Year

**Heritage College-Ready Academy High School**  
(Locke High School Community)  
Robert Pambello, Principal  
9719 South Main Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90003

#### Huntington Park College-Ready Academy High School

(Huntington Park High School Community)  
Laura Galvan, Principal  
2071 Saturn Avenue  
Huntington Park, CA 90255

#### Richard Merkin Middle School

(Audubon Middle School Community)  
Donna Jacobson, Principal  
2023 South Union Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90007

#### Opened in 2006-07 School Year

**College-Ready Academy High School #4**  
(Jefferson & Belmont HS Communities)  
Janette Rodriguez, Principal  
644 West 17th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

#### William and Carol Ouchi High School

(Manual Arts, Crenshaw High School Community)  
Ena LaVan, Principal  
5356 South 5th Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90043

#### Marc and Eva Stern Math and Science School

(Roosevelt & Garfield HS Communities)  
Derrick Chau, PhD., Principal  
5151 State University Drive – CSULA Lot 2  
Los Angeles, CA 90032

#### Opened in 2007-08 School Year

**College-Ready Academy High School #5**  
(Jefferson High School Community)  
Dean Marolla, Principal  
1729 West Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90062

#### College-Ready Academy High School #7

(Crenshaw High School Community)  
Carolyn Miller, PhD., Principal  
2941 West 70th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90043

#### Jack H. Skirball Middle School

(Gompers Middle School Community)  
Joy May-Harris, Principal  
603 East 115th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90059

#### Opened in 2008-09 School Year

**Christine O'Donovan Middle Academy**  
(Manual Arts, Crenshaw High School Community)  
Rosalio Medrano, Principal  
5355 South 4th Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90043

#### Opened in 2009-10 School Year

**Environmental Science & Technology High School**  
(Franklin High School Community)  
Howard Lappin, Principal  
2930 Fletcher Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90065

#### Health Services Academy High School

(Washington High School Community)  
Erik Elward, Principal  
12226 S. Western Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90047

#### Media Arts & Entertainment High School

(Roosevelt/Garfield High School Community)  
John Fox, Principal  
5156 Whittier Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90022

#### College-Ready Middle Academy #4

(Washington High School Community)  
Alejandro Gomez, Principal  
1625 E. 111th St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90059

#### College-Ready Middle Academy #5

(Roosevelt/Garfield High School Community)  
Suzette Torres, Principal  
2635 Pasadena Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90031



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