Date of Hearing: April 30, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
AB 1493 (Ávila Farías) – As Amended March 24, 2025

SUBJECT: Charter schools: performance standards for renewal

SUMMARY: Requires verified data to be considered by a chartering authoring until the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted student-level growth model for English language arts and mathematics is fully implemented so as to provide the two years of data necessary for purposes of charter school renewal, as specified. Specifically, **this bill**:

1) Requires verified data to be considered by a chartering authoring until the SBE adopted student-level growth model for English language arts and mathematics is fully implemented as to provide the two years of data necessary for purposes of charter school renewal.

2) Changes the definition of verified data to mean data derived from nationally recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are included on the approved list of assessments adopted and maintained by the SBE.

3) Deletes the prohibition on data sources other than those adopted by the SBE to be used as verified data.

4) States that the state board is authorized to make revisions to the list of verified data and that revisions to the approved list of assessments are not be subject to the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act.

5) Deletes the sunset and repeal of verified data as of January 1, 2026.

6) Deletes obsolete language related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EXISTING LAW:

1) Establishes the Charter Schools Act of 1992, which authorizes a school district governing board or county board of education to approve or deny a petition for a charter school to operate independently from the existing school district structure as a method of accomplishing, among other things, improved pupil learning, increased learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving, holding charter schools accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and providing the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems. (Education Code (EC) 47605)

2) Establishes a process for the submission of a petition for the establishment of a charter school. Authorizes a petition, identifying a single charter school to operate within the geographical boundaries of the school district, to be submitted to the school district. Authorizes, if the governing board of a school district denies a petition for the establishment of a charter school, the petitioner to elect to submit the petition to the county board of education. Authorizes, if the county board of education denies the charter, the petitioner to submit the petition to the SBE only if the petitioner demonstrates that the school district

governing board or county board of education abused its discretion in denying the charter school. Authorizes a school that serves a countywide purpose to submit the charter petition directly to the county office of education.

3) Requires, upon renewal, a charter school to be identified as either low performing, middle performing or high performing based on Dashboard accountability data. Requires that low performing charter schools be denied, however the school may be renewed for a two year period if the authorizer is presented with verified data that meets specified criteria and the authorizer finds it compelling. Authorizes middle performing charter schools to be renewed for 5 years. Authorizes high performing charter schools to be renewed for 5-7 years.

4) Defines verified data to mean data derived from nationally recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are externally produced. Requires verified data to include measures of postsecondary outcomes. Requires, by January 1, 2021, the SBE to establish criteria to define verified data and identify an approved list of valid and reliable assessments. Prohibits data sources other than those adopted by the SBE pursuant to be used as verified data. States that upon adoption of a pupil-level academic growth measure for English language arts and mathematics, the SBE may reconsider the adopted criteria. States that verified data is in effect only until January 1, 2026, and as of that date, is repealed. (EC 47607.2)

5) Requires each chartering authority to do all of the following with respect to each charter school under its authority:

   a) Identify at least one staff member as a contact person for the charter school;

   b) Visit each charter school at least annually;

   c) Ensure that each charter school under its authority complies with all reports required of charter schools by law, including the local control and accountability plan (LCAP) and annual update to the LCAP, required pursuant to Section 47606.5;

   d) Monitor the fiscal condition of each charter school under its authority; and

   e) Provide timely notification to the California Department of Education (CDE) if any of the following circumstances occur or will occur with regard to a charter school for which it is the chartering authority:

      i. A renewal of the charter is granted or denied;

      ii. The charter is revoked; or

      iii. The charter school will cease operation for any reason. (EC 47604.32)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

What does this bill do? This bill requires verified data to be considered by a chartering authority for charter schools identified as low performing and middle performing until the SBE adopted student-level growth model for English language arts and mathematics is fully implemented so

as to provide the two years of data necessary for purposes of charter school renewal. The measure uses the terms "fully implemented" "for purposes of charter school renewal," however, it is unclear what fully implemented for purposes of charter school renewal means.

Need for the bill. According to the author, "The California Dashboard is the primary tool for evaluating its schools and identifying schools and districts for intervention and assistance. But no school or district uses it as the only tool to inform their practice or assess student achievement. While the Dashboard is a big step toward improving practice, it alone will not always be a sufficient tool for high stakes decisions such as charter renewal.

When charter renewal standards were updated to align to the Dashboard the law also created a much more rigorous process and a much higher bar for schools to be renewed. It also created a specific and rigorous review process to allow charter schools to include other supplemental student assessment data in their renewal evaluations. These additional assessments may only be used if they meet specific requirements of the law and are approved by the State Board of Education for this purpose. Before high stakes closure determinations are made based primarily on Dashboard data, charter schools and the students they serve, deserve the opportunity to supplement the analysis of their student academic achievement performance by providing additional data that conveys a deeper, fuller picture of the work they are doing to support student growth and outcomes. Otherwise, schools doing some of the best work with our high need pupils risk closure. AB 1493 will ensure that the best available data will be used to evaluate charter schools when they are up for renewal."

Background on charter schools. According to the CDE, as of the 2024-25 school year, there are 1,280 active charter schools in California, with an enrollment of over 709,000 pupils. Some charter schools are new, while others are conversions of existing public schools. Charter schools are part of the state's public education system and are funded by public dollars. A charter school is usually created or organized by a group of teachers, parents, community leaders, a community-based organization, or an education management organization. Charter schools are authorized by school district boards and county boards of education. A charter school is generally exempt from most laws governing school districts, except where specifically noted in the law. Specific goals and operating procedures for the charter school are detailed in an agreement (or "charter") between the authorizing board and charter organizers.

AB 1505 (O'Donnell), Statutes of 2019, established verified data and requires charter authorizers to consider verified data for middle and low performing charters for renewal during a transition period before the SBE's student growth measure is adopted. Verified data was intended to be used only until the SBE adopted a student level growth measure, and is scheduled to sunset in 2025 and be repealed in 2026 because it was understood that the growth measure would be in place by that time.

What is verified data? Verified data is considered by the chartering authority during the charter school renewal process for schools in the low and middle performance categories (for more information on performance categories, see section below entitled, *How are charter schools identified as low performing, middle performing and high performing?*). The chartering authority considers verified data (assessment data) outside the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) and considers renewing a charter school if the verified data show measurable increases in academic achievement *or* strong postsecondary outcomes. Increases in academic achievement are defined as showing one- year's progress for each year in

school. Strong postsecondary outcomes are defined as achieving rates of college enrollment, persistence, and completion that are equal to those of their peers. The list of approved verified data criteria and list was adopted by the SBE.

Approved list of academic indicators for verified data. The following academic progress indicators are on the approved verified data list:

- Achieve3000 by McGraw Hill, Grades 2–12
- ACT by ACT, Inc, Grades 11–12
- Adaptive, Diagnostic Assessment of Mathematics (ADAM)/Diagnostic Online Math Assessment (DOMA) by Let's Go Learn, Grades K–9
- aimswebPlus by Pearson Assessments, PreK–12
- California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics, Grades 3–8 and Grade 11
- Developmental Reading Assessment, Third Edition (DRA3) by Pearson Assessments, Grades K–8
- Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment (DORA) by Let's Go Learn, Grades K–12
- easyCBM by Riverside Insights, Grades K–8
- English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) by Educational Testing Service, Grades K–12
- Exact Path by Edmentum, Grades K–12
- FastBridge by Illuminate, Reading Grades K-12, Math Grades K–8
- i-Ready 9-12 by Curriculum Associates, Grades 9–12
- i-Ready K-8 by Curriculum Associates, Grades K–8
- Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) by Istation, Grades K–8
- IXL Real-Time Diagnostic: Math and ELA by IXL, Grades K–12
- MAP Growth by NWEA, Grades K–12
- Math Growth Measure by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Grades K–12
- mCLASS by Amplify, Grades K–6
- PreACT and PreACT 8/9 by ACT, Inc., Grades 8–10
- RAPID by Lexia Learning, Grades K–12
- Reading Growth Measure by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Grades K–12
- SAT Suite by College Board, Grades 8–12
- Star Assessments by Renaissance, Grades K–12 Test of English Language Learning (TELL) by Pearson Assessments, Grades K–12

Approved list of postsecondary indicators for verified data. The following postsecondary indicators are on the approved verified data list:

- California Department of Education DataQuest College-Going Rate
- California State University Enrollment Dashboard Student Origin
- California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) Plus High School to Community College Transition Report
- National Student Clearinghouse StudentTracker
- University of California Admissions by School Source
- University of California Undergraduate Graduation Rates

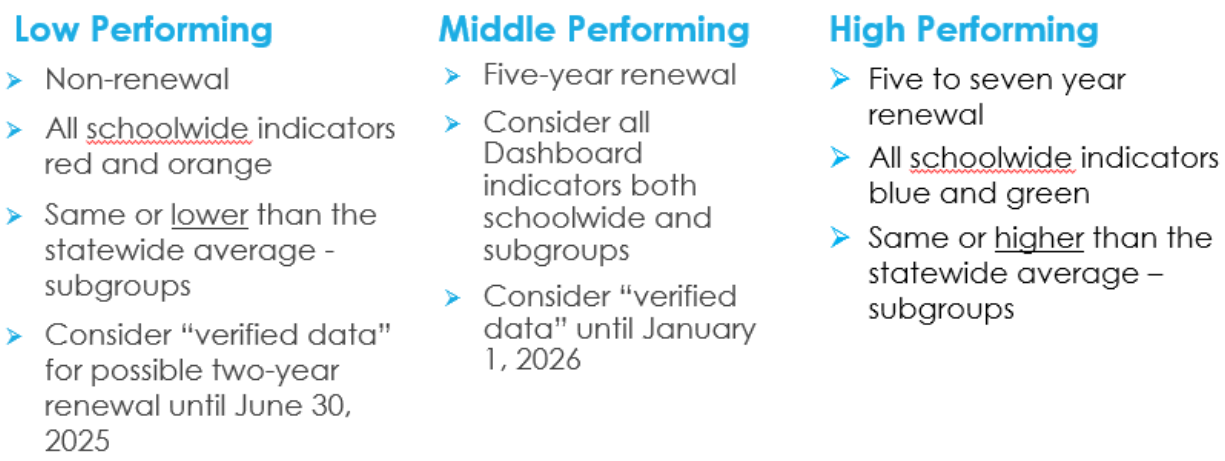
Concerns about verified data. The list of verified data has been in use since 2020, which has provided the opportunity for the state to learn more about these assessment sources. Concerns include:

- Stakeholders have raised concerns that the assessments included in the list of verified data are of less rigor and less statistically reliable than the CAASPP;

- It appears that some verified data sources use a test-retest model, where students take an assessment, the student is then provided interventions, and then the student re-takes the test again, which by design, will show student growth because students are being tested during the same school year; and

- It appears that some verified data sources use CAASPP data and then weight the growth that students are expected to achieve differently based on the student's race.

How are charter schools identified for low performing, middle performing and high performing? Below is a chart that outlines which Dashboard indicators are used to identify charter schools as low performing, middle performing or high performing.



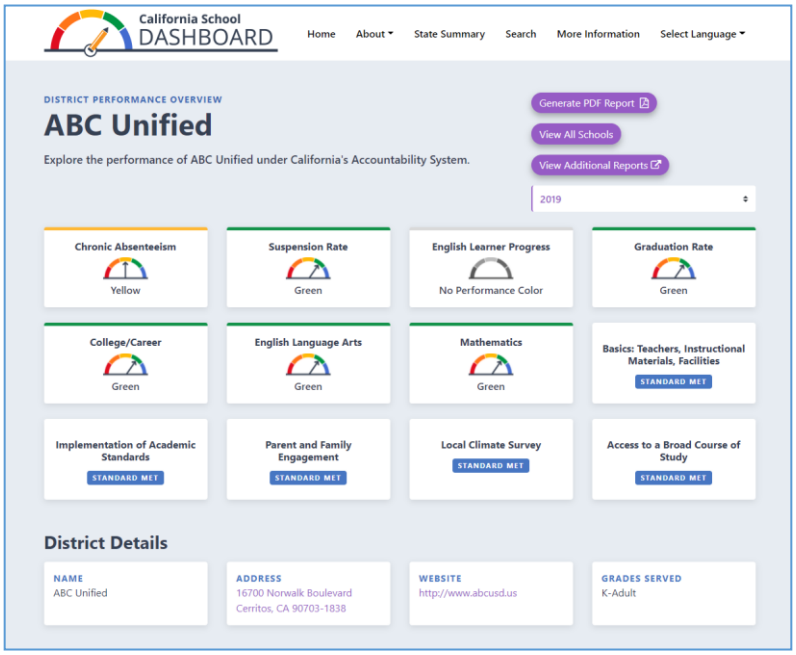
Charter schools are identified as low performing if all schoolwide Dashboard indicators are red and orange or if all academic Dashboard indicators are the same or lower than the statewide average for a majority of the school's subgroups. These schools have a default of non-renewal, however they may be renewed for two years with specific findings. In 2024, 98 charter schools were identified as low achieving according to this criterion.

Charter schools are identified as high performing if all schoolwide Dashboard indicators are blue and green or if all academic Dashboard indicators are the same or higher than the statewide average, for a majority of the school's subgroups. These schools have a renewal length of between 5-7 years. For 2024, 210 charter schools were identified as high achieving according to these criterion.

Charter schools are identified as middle performing based on all Dashboard indicators, both schoolwide and subgroups, and the law specifies that academic indicators will have greater weight, as defined by the chartering authority. For 2024, 840 charter schools were identified as middle achieving according to this criterion. Of the 840 middle achieving charter schools,

approximately 200 were identified as middle achieving due to the school's small number of pupils or due to the school not serving enough pupil subgroups that perform below the state average.

California School Dashboard. The Dashboard is an online tool that reports school and Local education agency (LEA) performance and progress on both state and local measures. State measures apply to LEAs, charter schools, and student groups, and are based on data that is collected consistently across the state. Local measures apply at the LEA and charter school level and are based on data collected at the local level. Charter schools are displayed as their own LEA on the Dashboard independent of their authorizer.



The state and local measures are drawn from the ten priority areas of the LCFF. The Dashboard is updated annually. LEAs receive one of five color-coded performance levels on the state indicators. From highest to lowest, the five performance levels are: Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red. The data displayed on the Dashboard is used to determine which LEAs and charter schools receive Differentiated Assistance (DA) from COEs and the Statewide System of Support. Eligibility for DA is based on the LEA and school performance on the state and indicators (or colors) on the Dashboard.

State student-level growth model. According to the CDE, since 2015, California has invested significant time and effort in developing a student growth model that is valid, reliable, and fair. California conducted a thorough and thoughtful process of selecting the model that best meets California's needs. On May 12, 2021, the SBE approved a student-level growth model using grades four through eight growth scores. The development and adoption of this growth model was accomplished due to the input from a broad range of stakeholders, and the expertise of the CDE's assessment vendor, Educational Testing Service (ETS), and the Technical Design Group (TDG).

A growth model is a way of measuring the growth of students' assessment scores year-to-year based on their statewide assessment scores in English language arts and mathematics. Growth is different from achievement. Achievement—such as a single assessment score—shows us how much students know at the time of the assessment. Growth shows us how much students' scores grew from one grade level to the next. In an accountability system, aggregate student growth can provide a picture of average growth for students within a school, LEA, or student group. California's student-level growth model methodology uses statewide Smarter Balanced test results from students in grades four through eight, due to the fact that CAASPP assesses students in grades 3-8 and 11. The following is the anticipated data release timeline and action:

- Winter 2025:
    - The CDE released the ELA and mathematic growth model data using current ELA and mathematics data results (using the years of 2022, 2023, and 2024) on the dashboard. As of April 2025, the growth model data has been published on the dashboard.

- Summer 2025:
    - The SBE is anticipated to take action on performance standards for the growth model, such as cut scores or colors, and how the growth model will be used in relation to the state and federal accountability systems.

With the forthcoming sunset of verified data, what data will charter authorizers consider during renewal? As of January 1, 2026, chartering authorities will consider the same data from the Dashboard that is available for all other public schools statewide.

What data are other states using to inform charter school renewals? For schools ending in grades K-3, the District of Columbia charter oversight authority uses the median of the school's Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) student level conditional growth percentile as the growth measure. For schools ending in grades 4-8, the District of Columbia charter oversight authority uses the median growth percentile on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as the growth measure. Additionally, several other assessments are authorized for use in grades K-8.

Arguments in support. Ednovate states, "In addition to data from the CA School Dashboard, charter schools are currently permitted to present supplemental data from nationally normed assessments as well as additional academic indicators, such as post-secondary indicators like college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates, during the charter school renewal process. These supplemental assessments have been explicitly vetted and approved by the SBE for use in charter renewal.

However, the required consideration of such supplemental academic data for charter renewal will sunset beginning on June 30, 2025. The loss of this supplemental data during charter renewal may lead to adverse outcomes or closure for schools that are delivering strong student outcomes. This puts schools serving high proportions of historically underserved students at risk. These issues are particularly significant because the SBE has yet to incorporate a growth metric into the Dashboard as originally anticipated. Without a viable growth metric, the dashboard alone provides an incomplete picture of school performance."

Arguments in opposition. The Alameda County Office of Education states, "We are concerned about the continued use of verified data, the acceptability of which is currently set to sunset on June 30, 2025. Most schools are evaluated based on the data reflected in the California Dashboard state indicators, which are standardized, vetted, and well understood by charter authorizers and the general public. Verified data submitted by charters, on the other hand, vary greatly in form, quality, and interpretation.

This variation makes it difficult to understand how a charter school's performance compares to other schools. Authorizers already have an immense amount of data to analyze from the California Dashboard, but the inclusion of non-standardized verified data adds another layer of analysis, by authorizers, for each individual charter school–on data with multiple interpretations.

Additionally, varied sources of data, open to multiple interpretations, also present challenges for school board members to evaluate a charter school's performance based on the analyses they receive.

The bill is also unclear about what is meant by "fully implemented" with regard to the student-level growth model. This lack of clarity presents an additional risk that the above-identified issue will persist indefinitely."

Recommended Committee Amendments. Staff recommends the bill be amended to be consistent with the version of AB 2254 (Rubio) passed by this Committee in 2024 as follows:

1) Clarify that verified data shall be used in charter school renewal until the CDE publishes the SBE adopted performance standards for growth for the student level growth measure on the Dashboard.

2) Clarify that charter authorizers shall consider the performance standards for growth of the SBE's adopted pupil-level academic growth measure during charter school renewal.

3) Require the SBE to regularly review the list of verified data for continued inclusion and removal of sources.

4) Require CDE to provide resources to charter authorizers on how to use data published by the CDE that is used to develop the Dashboard during renewal; and require charter schools to allow the charter authorizer to receive verified data directly from the publisher in accordance with SBE adopted data use procedures, in order to provide transparency.

5) Require the CDE to release the charter school performance data within 60 days of the release of the Dashboard.

6) Technical amendments to update and clarify the term "verifiable data" to mean CAASPP data, and delete obsolete language.

Related legislation. AB 2254 (Rubio) of the 2023-24 Session would have extended the requirement for charter school authorizers to consider alternative student performance data, known as "verified data," during charter renewal determinations until the SBE adopts the student growth performance standards. This bill was held in the Senate Education Committee.

AB 1505 (O'Donnell), Chapter 486, Statutes of 2019, makes various changes to the processes of charter school authorization, appeals, and renewal, and specifically related to this bill, does the following:

1) Requires charter authorizers to use the state accountability system as the criteria for charter school renewal;

2) Authorizes charter renewals of five to seven years for high performing charter schools;

3) Authorizes charter renewals for five years for middle performing charter schools;

4) Specifies that charter authorizers shall not renew low performing charter schools; and

5) Requires charter authorizers to consider verified data, approved by the SBE, for middle and low performing charters on renewal during a transition period before the SBE's student growth measure is adopted. Allows a low performing charter to be renewed for two years using verified data.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Achieve Charter Schools
Alder Grove Charter School
Allegiance Steam Academy
Alliance College-ready Public Schools
Alma Fuerte Public School
Alpha Public Schools
Altus Schools
America's Finest Charter School
American Heritage Charter Schools
Antioch Charter Academy
Antioch Charter Academy Ii
Aplus+
Ararat Charter School
Arts in Action Community Charter Schools
Aspen Meadow Public School
Aspen Public Schools, INC.
Aspire Public Schools
Association of Personalized Learning Schools & Services (APLUS+), the
Aveson Schools
Big Picture Educational Academy
Blue Oak Charter School
Bridges Charter School
Bridges Preparatory Academy
Brookfield Engineering Science Technology (best Academy)
California Charter Schools Association
California Creative Learning Academy
California Montessori Project
California Online Public School
California Pacific Charter Schools
California Virtual Academies
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy
Capital College & Career Academy
Champs Charter High School of the Arts
Children's Community Charter School
Chime Institute
Circle of Independent Learning (COIL) Charter School
Collegiate Charter High School of Los Angeles

Compass Charter Schools
Connecting Waters Charter Schools
Core Butte Charter School
Crossroads Charter Academy
Cwc
Desert Trails Preparatory Academy
Discovery Charter Preparatory School
Discovery Charter Schools
Dixon Montessori Charter School
Dr. Lewis Dolphin Stallworth Charter School
Edison Bethune Charter Academy
Ednovate
Ednovate (UNREG)
Education for Change Public Schools
Eel River Charter School
El Sol Science and Arts Academy
Element Education
Empower Language Academy
Environmental Charter Schools
Epic Charter School
Equitas Academy Charter Schools
Excel Academy Charter School
Extera Public Schools
Family Partnership Charter School
Feaster (mae L.) Charter School
Fenton Charter Public Schools
Forest Charter School
Forest Ranch Charter
Gabriella Charter Schools
Gateway Community Charters
Girls Athletic Leadership Schools Los Angeles
Glacier High School Charter
Global Education Academy
Golden Eagle Charter School
Golden Valley Charter School
Gorman Learning Center Charter School
Granada Hills Charter High School
Green DOT Public Schools California
Griffin Technology Academies
Guajome Schools
Health Sciences High School and Middle College
High Tech Los Angeles
Howard Gardner Community School
Icef Public Schools
Imagine Schools
Ingenium Schools
Intellectual Virtues Academy of Long Beach
Irvine International Academy
Isana Academies

Ivy Academia Entrepreneurial Charter School
James Jordan Middle School
Jcs, INC.
John Muir Charter Schools
Julia Lee Performing Arts Academy
Kairos Public Schools
Kavod Charter School
Kepler Neighborhood School
Kid Street Charter School
Kidinnu Academy
Kipp Norcal
Larchmont Charter School
Lashon Academy
Leonardo Da Vinci Health Sciences Charter School
Libertas College Preparatory Charter School
Literacy First Charter Schools
Los Angeles Academy of Arts and Enterprise
Los Angeles Leadership Academy
Magnolia Public Schools
Mayacamas Countywide Middle School
Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary School
Method Schools
Mountain Home School Charter
Multicultural Learning Center
Natomas Charter School
Navigator Schools
New Academy Canoga Park
New Designs Charter School
New Heights Charter School
New LA
New Village Girls Academy
New West Charter
Nord Country School
Northwest Prep Charter School
Nova Academy Early College High School
Nova Academy-coachella
Ocean Charter School
Odyssey Charter Schools
Olive Grove Charter School
Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts
Orange County School of the Arts / California School of the Arts Foundation
Pacific Charter Institute
Pacoima Charter School
Para Los Ninos
Pasadena Rosebud Academy Charter School
Pca College View
Placer County Office of Education
Port of Los Angeles
Puente Learning Center

Redwood Coast Montessori
Redwood Collegiate Academy
Renaissance Arts Academy
Rocklin Academy Family of Schools
Rocky Point Charter School
Sage Oak Charter Schools
San Diego Virtual School
Santa Rosa French-american Charter School
Scholarship Prep Charter School
Sebastopol Independent Charter
Sequoia Career Academy
Shasta Charter Academy
Sherman Thomas Charter School
Sherwood Montessori
Soar Charter Academy
Soleil Academy
Springs Charter School
Stella Elementary Charter Academy
Stem Prep Schools
Success One! Charter
Summit Public Schools
Sycamore Creek Community Charter School
Synergy Academies
Tehama Elearning Academy
Temecula Valley Charter School
The Accelerated Schools
The Cottonwood School
The Foundation for Hispanic Education
The Grove School
The Language Academy of Sacramento
The Learning Choice Academy
The O'farrell Charter Schools
The School of Arts and Enterprise
Trillium Charter School
Urban Charter Schools Collective
Valley Charter School
Valley International Preparatory High School
Valley Life Charter Schools
Valley View Charter Prep
Vibrant Minds Charter School
Virtual Learning Academy, Sage Oak Charter Schools
Vista Charter Public Schools
Voices College Bound Language Academies
Vox Collegiate
Westbrook Academy
Western Sierra Charter Schools
Westlake Charter School
William Finch Charter School
Ypi Charter Schools

Opposition

Alameda County Office of Education
Cft- a Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, Aft, Afl-cio

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