

LOS ANGELES DISTRICT-CHARTER COLLABORATION COMPACT

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of All Public School Students: 653,826 (2013-2014) Ed-Data.org

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 20.9%

Charter Authorizer(s): Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Los Angeles County Office of Education, California State Board of Education

School District Governing Body: Elected Board

Compact Grant Amount: \$100,000

CURRENT STATUS OF COLLABORATION:



OVERVIEW

The large charter sector in Los Angeles has a history of strong school performance, and the district, as the major charter school authorizer, takes pride in these results. However, the players operate in a politically charged atmosphere that overshadows, and occasionally hinders, collaboration efforts. School board elections are often hotly contested between union-backed and charter-backed candidates, creating uncertainty for the district's strategic vision. The board's contentious relationship with past Superintendent John Deasy compounded this uncertainty, as does the search for his replacement. Ramon Cortines, who preceded Deasy as superintendent, is now serving as acting superintendent through 2016. In May 2015, voters elected to the school board both a long-time LAUSD administrator and a charter school network founder.

Commitment to Compact goals—redesigning special education services, easing charter schools' short-term capital needs, and streamlining the district's access to charter schools' student data—was initially strong but has softened over time. Compact leaders point to the reorganization of special education services as an important success that received national attention: new provisions allowed charter schools increased flexibility over funds and service providers. Yet, state law allows charter schools to opt out of the plan altogether, which has caused strain.¹ Rejecting district staff's recommendation, the school board

refused to renew the charters of two high-performing Aspire Public Schools, citing Aspire's decision to not use the special education plan. The charters were subsequently approved by the LA County Office of Education. Since then, several charter schools reported that renewal discussions before the school board have become more difficult.

LAUSD and charter schools walk a fine but promising line regarding facilities. Thanks to Proposition 39, a voter-approved law guaranteeing charter schools space "reasonably equivalent" to district schools, about 50 district and charter schools share campuses. As of June 2015, district staff had responded with facility offers to 102 requests. A handful of co-located schools work well together, but most interaction is limited to logistical concerns; real tension between staff is not uncommon. An ad-hoc working group closely watches \$7 billion in facilities funding authorized by a 2008 bond measure; \$402 million was designated to expand permanent space for charter schools. With numerous school choice options and initiatives in Los Angeles arising over the years, but no true "master plan," charter schools are sited in neighborhoods saturated with schools, even as other neighborhoods need new high-quality options. Navigating the facility web presents significant challenges, but also presents real opportunity for Compact leaders to help the district define a strategic vision for LA students.

1. California districts and charter schools provide special education through what is known as a Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). Many charter schools in the state use a SELPA in El Dorado County rather than the SELPA to which their district belongs.

COMMON AREAS OF COLLABORATION	COMPACT PROGRESS
High-Performing Schools	LAUSD continues to open approximately 20 new charter schools a year, comprising the largest option in the diversified portfolio of school choice options in LAUSD. However, charter leaders worry that the reauthorization process has become more political and less based on a standard bar of school quality (e.g., Aspire Public Schools 2014 decision).
Special Education & English Language Learners (ELL)	District and charter leaders co-facilitate presentations across the country about their reorganization of the district's special education services to better meet the needs of charter schools and students.
Facilities & Resources	California's Proposition 39 requires that charters have equitable access to buildings, resulting in approximately 50 district-charter co-locations. With Loyola Marymount University's support, LAUSD and the California Charter Schools Association collaborated on a co-location conference last summer about promising practices. As a result of California's "parent trigger" law, 24th Street Elementary and Crown Preparatory Academy are sharing character development practices and professional development to turnaround a K-8 campus.
School Performance Framework	In fall 2011, the district applied a School Performance Framework (SPF) to all district and charter schools. Revisions are made annually (e.g., new measures have been added for special education students and English Language Learners). Currently, the district and charters lack common standardized testing data; results from the statewide administration of the new Common Core-aligned Smarter Balanced Assessments are not available until this fall. Additionally, in 2013-14 California chose to administer only a practice test of the Smarter Balanced Assessments—no official tests were administered. The district is exploring an SPF measure only for high schools during this time.
Enrollment Systems	Charter schools run their own applications, timelines, and lotteries. The district recently created a portal for its various district-run choice options, such as magnet schools, zones of choice, schools for advanced studies, and open enrollment. However, these programs continue to have separate applications and timelines.
Human Capital & Professional Development	The College-Ready Promise, a coalition of four charter management organizations, has shared with the district lessons on teacher and administrator effectiveness. The coalition includes the Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, Aspire Public Schools, Green Dot Public Schools, and Partnerships to Uplift Communities.
Common Core	Co-located charter schools are part of the district's Common Core Technology Project, which provides digital devices for each student, paid for by local bond funds.