

# Charter School Performance in Los Angeles Unified School District: A District and Neighborhood Matched Comparison Analysis

## Response and Rebuttal to What Works Clearinghouse Quick Review

Thank you so much for giving us a preview of your review before publication. In the response that follows, there are several points of clarification with regard to our report and the data analyses that we request you consider. In addition, we are providing a response to several of the conclusions drawn in your review. We hope our response helps you accurately summarize and respond to our report.

### **Corrections Needed:**

**Our report assessed 2006-2007 median API base, growth, and change scores. We did not analyze charter and traditional public schools from 2005-06 to 2006-07.**

Your review is incorrect when it states that our report analyzed charter and traditional public schools from 2005-06 to 2006-07. Our report assessed 2006-2007 median API base, growth, and change scores. Unfortunately this is incorrectly stated four times in your review. Because this point is critical to the basis of our study, it should be corrected before you publish your review.

In the fourth paragraph of your review, you state that “The study measured the effect of charter schools by comparing the change in the API from 2005-06 to 2006-07 for charter schools to the change for their matched comparison schools during the same period.” We believe that you were likely referring to the analysis detailed on page 12 of our report which in the first paragraph discusses schools that increased their API growth score by 50 points or more. This single point however, as your review suggests, does not accurately characterize the thrust of our report. Furthermore, your review is incorrect when it states that the 2005-06 to 2006-07 change analysis was of matched comparison schools. It was not. That particular analysis was of charter and traditional public schools in LAUSD at the aggregate district level (i.e. all schools, not matched comparison schools). Our report clearly delineates those findings that are specific to the matched comparison analysis. These data points typically have those exact words attached to the discussion of them throughout the report. It is critical that our report not be characterized as solely a matched comparison analysis (most of the analyses were of all schools) and that the matched comparison results are not generally applied to every finding.

### **Our study conducted two different types of API change analyses**

Under the WWC Rating you then state that “The study compared the annual API change in charter schools to the change in traditional schools.” This statement 1) contradicts your original summary of our report and 2) is incorrect. There is a very important analytical and theoretical difference between California Department of Education (CDE) calculated API change scores and an analysis of the change in median API growth scores from one year to the next. Our report contains both analyses. CDE API change scores are assessed throughout the report and an analysis of the change in median API growth scores is discussed on page 12 of the report. The two are not the same and cannot be used interchangeably as you have done in your review. Given that you do not discuss any of the details pertinent to the numerous analyses of 2007 API change scores, we must assume that you are referring to the analysis of the change in median API growth scores discussed on page 12 of the report. As stated above, your review is incorrect when it states that this analysis was of matched comparison schools. It was not. Therefore, the statements concerning the merits of a matched comparison analysis that follow are then irrelevant as your review does not discuss any of our matched comparison analysis results.

Furthermore, the statement that our report is about either one of those analyses is extremely misleading. While we understand that your review clearly states that “The WWC rating refers only to the results summarized above and not necessarily to all results presented in the study”, we are concerned your summary does not accurately capture nor represent the central findings of our research. Your summary focuses on a less significant point while omitting the truly

