The Similar Students Measure (SSM) – OVERVIEW

The California Charter Schools Association is taking a lead in strengthening accountability for charter schools, to ensure that we follow through on the promise of high student achievement. Recognizing deficiencies in the current system, the Association has developed an improved metric, the **Similar Students Measure**, which raises academic performance standards while taking into consideration the background of students served.   The SSM consists of two components:

1. **Annual School Performance Prediction:** The ASPP is a yearly snapshot calculated for all schools that shows: how did your school's Academic Performance Index (API) compare to the average estimated API for a school with your demographic make-up?

2. **Similar Students Measure:** The SSM sets a minimum performance bar using three years of ASPP data. Schools that were 10% or more below prediction for three consecutive years would not pass the SSM, and would be identified as not meeting minimal renewal criteria.

➔ **How we Generate the Predictions**

Looking at all schools in the state, we measure the amount that demographic characteristics such as parent education and family income relate to a school's performance as measured by API. Using the statistical tool of regression, we "hold constant"– or neutralize – those effects on API, and asses how each school did in comparison with its predicted performance. The predicted performance can be interpreted as the *average estimated API* for a school with your demographics.

➔ **How to Interpret the ASPP and SSM**

Schools can view the **ASPP** as a yearly snapshot of how they are performing against the statewide average for their student body. The **SSM** applies only to schools that are four years older and have an API under the statewide goal of 800, and it serves as an accountability tool to set a minimum bar of academic performance at time of renewal.

➔ **How SSM Improves Upon the Current System**

With Similar Schools Ranks, schools are compared to 100 other schools that received similar scores on the School Characteristics Index, but often end up being quite dissimilar in reality. With **SSM**, schools are compared to themselves, in that they are compared to the predicted performance for a school with their exact demographic make-up. Additionally, **SSM** only considers factors outside the school's control – the background of students served – which leads to a measure that is more appropriate for charter accountability than Similar Schools Ranks.