



A data-based look at Los Angeles Schools from a classroom teacher with experience in LAUSD and Charter Schools

The Most Improved Schools in Los Angeles

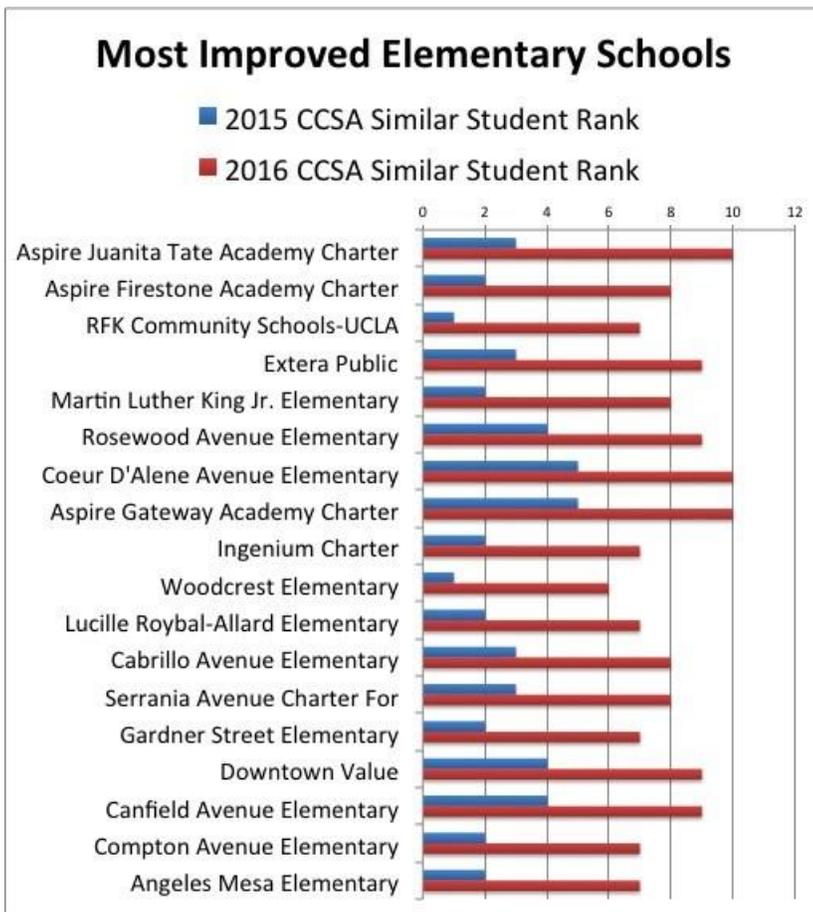
[October 31, 2016](#) / [School Data Nerd](#)

Last week, I mentioned that the [California Charter Schools Association \(CCSA\) had done an incredible data analysis](#) – way more powerful than my dinky little MacBook Air could ever handle. I’ve looked over it, and it seems pretty legit.* Using this data, we can see some pretty interesting things.

Let’s start **positive**. What are the most improved schools in the LAUSD area?

The CCSA analysis creates a “similar student score”, which rates each school from 1 to 10 based on their scores AND their demographics. This puts everyone on a fair playing field – schools are only compared to schools with similar demographic make-ups.

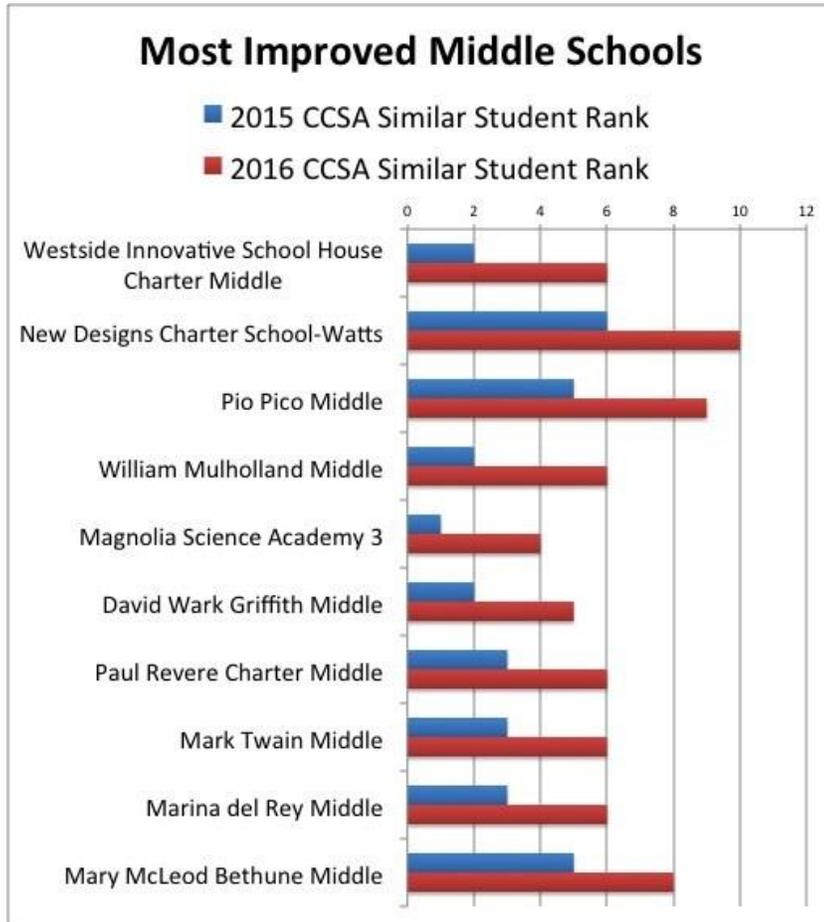
But not only did they create a similar school score for 2016 – they also made one for 2015. As a result, we can see schools that have made dramatic improvements. Without further ado, here are the most improved elementary schools in LAUSD:



All of these schools grew 5 or more points on the similar schools ranking. Some interesting trends:

- 11 of the 18 schools are traditional public schools and 7 are charter schools.
- Aspire Public Schools had 3 of the most improved schools.
- Aspire Juanita Tate improved by **7 levels** and is the most improved school in the entire district
- Woodcrest Elementary and the UCLA school at RFK improved from the lowest possible score to 6 and 7 respectively.

For middle school, there were no schools that made the kind of gains that were made in elementary school, but there were still some stand outs:



These schools all made gains of 3 levels or more. Again, some trends:

- 5 are charter schools and 5 are traditional schools.
- The gains in middle school just aren't as profound as the gains in elementary. There are no schools making a gain larger than 4 level gain.
- Magnolia Science Academy 3, which recently had its charter revoked, went from a level 1 to a level 4.

We should remember that the 2015 scores were the first time that schools ever saw their scores on the new Common Core based test. The schools above, saw those scores and made adjustments that led to measurable improvements.

That is not an easy thing to do.

We should take a harder look at these schools. We should ask them – how did you turn things around? How did you make such substantial gains? And how can other schools replicate it?

Notes:

I should say that I am not going to put out a list of improved high schools. As a noted in an earlier post, [I believe that high schools CAASPP scores are not reliable sources of data](#) (unless they are part of a span school).

*CCSA is, of course, an advocacy organization. Because of that, I was originally skeptical of their data analysis and worried of their bias. Upon further review though, I found that their data seems very valid (anecdotally) and that their data has many negative things to say about charter schools as well. More on that later. But for now, I think that their data is pretty reliable and fair.