

Oct. 16, 2001 San Francisco  
Parents Advocating School Accountability

## Controversial Edison School Lands Dead Last in District Academic Rankings

San Francisco's controversial, for-profit Edison Charter Academy ranks at the very bottom among San Francisco elementary schools rated on California's Academic Performance Index (API), according to figures released Oct. 15.

The API gives schools a score based on standardized test results. The newly released API scores are based on spring 2001 testing.

Edison Charter Academy (ECA) ranked No. 70 out of 70 San Francisco Unified School District elementary schools that received an API score.

ECA, operated by New York-based Edison Schools Inc., received an API score of 487. The district's highest-scoring school was Clarendon Alternative Elementary School, with a rating of 890 on a scale ranging from 200 to 1,000.

ECA received international attention last spring when San Francisco's school board moved to revoke its charter, citing lack of accountability, poor academic performance, high costs and other problems. A June compromise severed ties between Edison Schools Inc. and the San Francisco school district and allowed Edison to secure a charter for the school from the California state Board of Education.

Edison Schools Inc. recently characterized some of its schools' results as "positive" in its annual School Performance Report, but failed to compare Edison schools' achievement to that of other schools in their districts. That omission attracted comment not just from Edison critics but also from the RAND Corp., which Edison has commissioned to study its schools' performance. "Interpreting any kind of data behind a school requires contextual information," Tom Glennan, RAND senior education policy adviser, told Education Week.

Edison critic Nancy Van Meter of the American Federation of Teachers agreed. "We would very much be interested in seeing how Edison's performance compares to other similar schools where they are

operating," she commented to Education Week.

The San Francisco rankings dramatically demonstrate the results of such a comparison.

Edison Schools is a nationwide school management firm with stock publicly traded on the NASDAQ, though the 9-year-old company has never made a profit. Edison has attracted ideological support from backers of privatization and school vouchers, and from such powerful conservative bastions as the Wall Street Journal editorial board and the Hoover Institution.

Along with San Francisco, many districts nationwide have had problems with the company, and its contracts have also been severed in Sherman and San Antonio, Texas; Goldsboro, N.C.; and Lansing, Mich. Edison's one Minneapolis school will also close at the end of this school year, ending the company's presence there.

##

API scores for San Francisco  
Unified School District elementary schools,  
listed from highest to lowest

<http://api.cde.ca.gov/>

1. Clarendon8902. Alamo8803. Lawton8754. Stevenson8435.  
Jefferson8386. Alice Fong Yu8377. Claire Lilienthal8368. West  
Portal8339. Argonne83110. Ulloa81911. Commodore  
Sloat81611. Longfellow81613. Rooftop81214. Yick Wo80615.

Francis Scott Key80516. Peabody79517. Sutro79418.  
Lakeshore78919. Cabrillo78620. George Moscone77621.  
McCoppin77522. Lafayette76522. Sunset76524. John Yehall  
Chin74925. Garfield74226. E.R. Taylor72927. Spring  
Valley72428. Gordon Lau71328. Redding71330. William de  
Avila71131. Rosa Parks69032. Jean Parker68733. S.F.  
Community68534. Sunnyside67735. Grattan67635.  
Guadalupe67637. Alvarado67537. Jose Ortega67539. Visitacion  
Valley67440. Bessie Carmichael66841. Cobb66242. Creative  
Arts Charter64743. Miraloma64644. Cleveland63945. Buena  
Vista63846. Sheridan63747. McKinley61747. Treasure  
Island61749. John Swett59950. Monroe59851. El Dorado59652.  
21st Century59552. Glen Park59554. Cesar Chavez59455.  
Bryant59155. Carver59155. Daniel Webster59158. Junipero  
Serra58959. Tenderloin Community58360. Malcolm X56461.  
Golden Gate54962. Harvey Milk54563. Bret Harte53564.  
Charles R. Drew51964. Marshall51966. John Muir50467.  
Sanchez50168. Paul Revere49969. Leonard R. Flynn49870.  
Edison Charter 487 Note: Five San Francisco schools have not  
been given scores yet because of what the San Francisco  
Chronicle describes as “data problems”: Fairmount, Hillcrest,  
New Traditions, Sherman and Starr King.

PASA is an advocacy organization and our press releases  
reflect our point of view. Our material is reported and  
written in accordance with professional standards for  
accuracy. Any problems called to our attention will be  
corrected or responded to publicly as appropriate.