

Better Understanding the API—Handout 1

The API is calculated based on the performance level results of students on the STAR exams. Results range from 200 to 600 with the Basic Range defined as 300 to 349. The cut points for advanced or far below basic are approximately 250 and 400, although they vary from year to year.

Based on their score, students are assigned a performance level rating of Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic, or Far Below Basic. Those performance level ratings are then assigned a numerical value of 1000 for advanced, 875 for proficient, 700 for basic, 500 for below basic and 200 for far below basic.

All of the individual student results are then averaged with a heavier weight going to English and Math, (and a smaller weight going to Science and Social Studies which is also given in 8th grade only). Scores are not weighted for the make up of the school population. Year to year, each grade is also assigned a calibration factor to account for differences that may occur in test difficulty. Those factors are added as the last step in the calculation.

Here's an example:

650 students score 345 on all of their tests and are assigned an API value of 700 for basic for each test. Together, they have an average API of 700 (or an **actual 2013 API of 739** as there is a calibrating factor that varies year to year based on test difficulty).

In another school of 650 students, half of the school scores 350 and the other half scores 300 for an average scaled score of 325. Half of the school is assigned 700 points for Basic and half of the school is assigned 875 points for Proficient. The school is assigned an API of 788 (**or an actual 2013 API of 827**)

In this example, the second school had an API that was 88 points higher and will earn it high regard and even State recognition awards. But in reality, the students actually averaged 20 points lower performance on the actual test!

This is one of the drawbacks to the step function that the State uses for API calculations. Because of the nature of the calculation, schools with smaller populations may tend to fluctuate up and down from year to year. District scores will fluctuate, but not as widely, and State scores will fluctuate mildly because as the size of the group gets larger, score results like those in the example are less likely to occur.

Due to fluctuations, multi-year trends will be more informative than year to year comparisons. Likewise, subgroup scores can fluctuate even more when there are only a few students in the subgroup. For gauging school performance, the larger the subgroup, the more the year to year change will mean and the more reliable the measurement!.

Britton is very proud to be one of very few County schools with 2 consecutive years of double digit growth!

API Examples—Handout 2

Here are some real examples taken from the list of similar schools on the CDE website:
The largest subgroup in terms of the school’s overall enrollment is shown in **bold**.

	State	Britton	Ex1.	Ex2.	Ex3	Ex4	Ex5	Ex6	Ex7
Overall API	790	802	809	812	857	811	813	858	837
Afr. Amer	708								
Am Indian	743								
Asian	906	936*	---	870	---	723	---	924	848
Filipino	867								
Hisp/Latino	744	728	760	775	835	781	812	751	806
Pac Island	774								
White	853	893*	834	820	863	833	844	---	859
2 or more	---								
% EL		32%	2%	26%	10%	13%	2%	47%	14%

Britton’s Hisp/Latino subgroup score is disproportionately affected by the high percentage of those students who are also EL and therefore comparisons based on this number can be easily misinterpreted or misleading. Britton’s EL students are almost all also Hisp/Latino. Ex 2 and Ex 6 have many Asian EL students.

You will notice that although Britton has the lowest overall API of the example schools, it also has the highest Asian student score and the highest White student score of any of these schools.

For a fair Hisp/Latino comparison, look at Ex 1 and Ex5 with very low numbers of EL students and compare to 831....that’s the API for Britton’s English Fluent Latino students.

You can see how State ranking based on single number API’s can be very misleading. But there is some good news. The State just passed AB 484 earlier this month and it requires that the API become a more fair and representative measurement. It allows for up to 39% of the API to be based on other factors than standardized testing. Those changes will take effect in 2 years.

List of example schools:

- Ex1. McKinleyville MS, Humboldt County
- Ex2 Alvarado MS, Alameda County
- Ex3 Ione MS, Amador County
- Ex4 Bidwell J.H.S., Chico
- Ex5 Sierra JHS, Stanislaus
- Ex 6 Garvey MS, LA
- Ex 7 Daniel Savage, Stanislaus

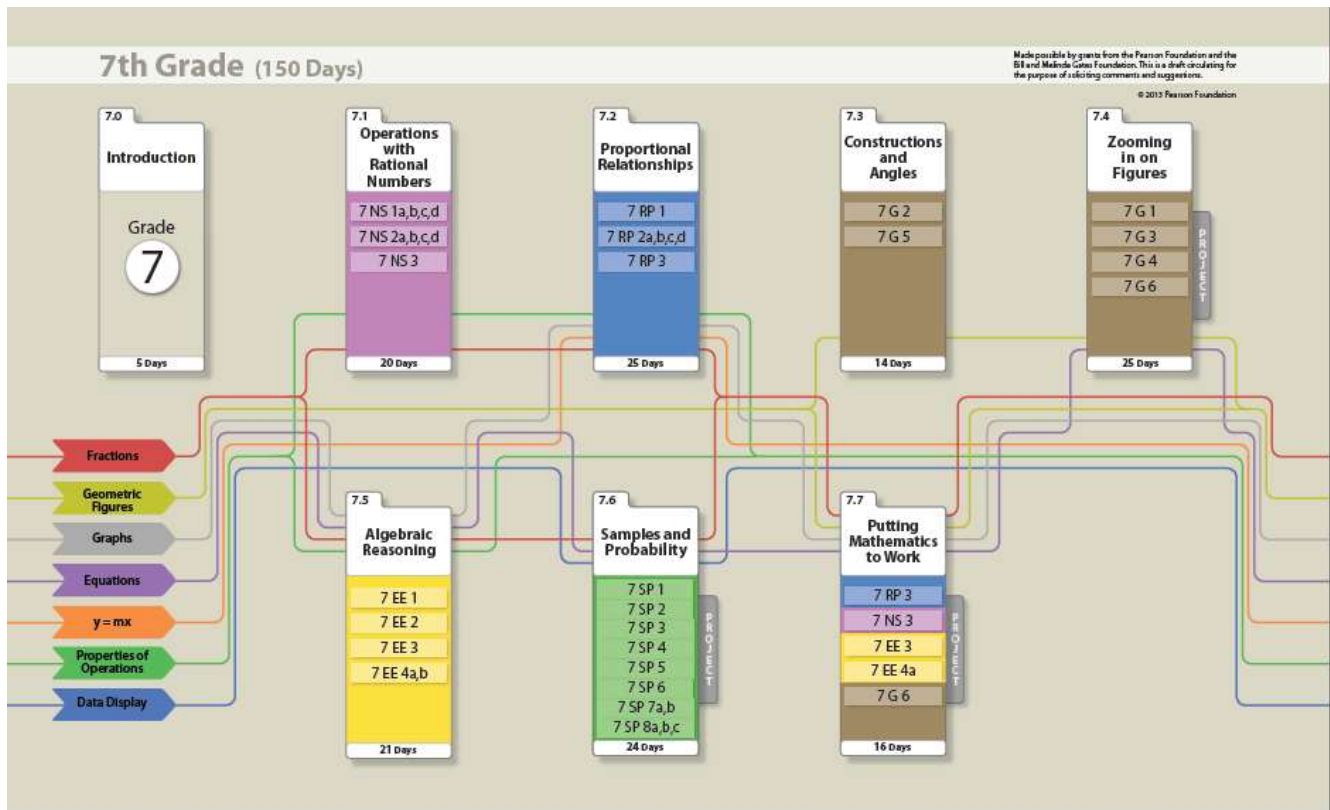
Subject Area Testing Comparisons: Handout 3

Average Scaled Score based on school wide results												
	Britton	Average	Britton	Murphy	S. Valley	Solorsano	Brownell	Davis	Bernal	Herman	Rancho	Maze
	Rank/10		MHUSD	MHUSD	GUSD	GUSD	GUSD	OGSD	OGSD	OGSD	HSD	HSD
API	6	806	802	786	787	840	820	763	862	830	803	770
API Change		3	24	-10	13	-15	-2	-16	-2	7	47	-15
ELA Grade 7	6	365	361	378	359	379	370	353	379	359	362	347
ELA Grade 8	5	360	359	355	345	376	364	352	377	364	355	349
Math 7	6	359	361	347	368	389	376	343	378	363	340	327
Gen Math 8	9	306	284	292	281	324	315	286	311	314	322	335
ALG 1 Grade 7	4	441	457	387				481	493	458	399	413
ALG 1 Grade 8	8	364	334	297	382	424	364	325	418	364	355	373
Geometry Grade 8	3	415	432	423				402	458	476	357	360
History/SS Grade 8	2	354	371	364	329	360	349	344	380	355	341	343
Science Grade 8	5	392	398	414	359	409	377	364	418	419	389	374
% in Gen Math 8		32	9	16	25	33	34	21	20	29	63	69
% in Alg 1 grade 7		9	10	19	0	0	0	10	17	11	12	14
% in Alg 1 grade 8		59	85	76	69	67	62	67	63	60	22	18
% in Geom Grade 8		6	6	7	0	0	0	9	10	9	12	11

The column to the left shows Britton's rank of the 10 local area middle schools in terms of average score on each test. This data does not take into account any subgroup or demographic differences between the schools. Relative rankings have some value to help determine how departments are performing relative to other departments within the same school. In this case, English and Science are performing about the same and History has very high achievement. As you can also see, math is disproportionately low; however, enrollment practices regarding when students are taking the tests are very different. Britton students are taking one to two grade level harder math tests at a much higher rate than other schools (as shown in the bottom block of data).

The tests will be changing under the common core implementation. The math class sequence has also changed. These changes will better prepare our students for both high school and the new assessments which will be field tested this Spring and become official the following year.

Common Core Math Classes---Handout 4



This is an example of the standards taught in 7th grade integrated math. The varieties of standards are drawn from Number Sense, Algebraic Processes and Reasoning, Geometry, Statistics and Probability, and applications involving all of these pieces. The content rigor and critical thinking level are much higher than in the traditional pre-algebra course. Additionally, the standards map for Math 1 (ninth grade) is being adapted to provide the enrichment and extension that occurs throughout grades 7 and 8 to facilitate students accelerating by course placement as they move from 8th to 9th grade.

To support students who are struggling in math, the school offers 8 hours of supervised Math Lab assistance before and after school each week (MTThF from 8 to 8:50 and MTWTh from 3 to 3:50) using the highly regarded Khan Academy program. We also offer math tutorial in place of an elective within the school day and the Homework Center (MTWTh after school) for additional help.

Strong math students are challenged through enrichment in the class activities which span a wider range of difficulty. Likewise, students are encouraged to participate in the Math club and Math competitions which occur throughout the year.

Handout #5

Write down one thing that you really like about our school and would like to see continued!

Write down one thing that you would like to see Britton do or do differently!

Please hand this sheet to a staff member when the activity is finished