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Literature / Research on Grade Configurations

Resources

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What the Research Says (or Doesn't Say) About K-8 Versus Middle School Grade Configurations
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+ "No Easy Answers"

> "There are no easy answers to these questions nor is there any conclusive evidence that one grade configuration is better than another.
>
> Howley, C.

The Adolescent Learner

Kelly Gibson, School Psychologist

Dana Iera, School Psychologist

Adolescent *Biological* Development

- Puberty occurs earlier.
- Hormonal changes lead to changes in appearance, self-image, reactions of others, and behavior (Steinberg, 2005).
- In 1910, average age of puberty was at about 12-14 years of age.
- As of 2008, most children reach puberty by 11 years of age and it appears to start about 4 months earlier every decade. (Combs, 2008)

Characteristics of Early Adolescents (Combs, 2008)

- Desire for independence
- Growth in importance of the peer group
- Sexual, emotional, and social maturation
- Search for values and norms
- Resentment of authority figures
- Fluctuation of emotions
- Development of self-concept

Keep 6th Grade at Elementary Schools

Pros	Cons
■ No change from how it is now	■ Limited rotation options for 6th grade students
■ Opportunities for instructional support including tier time	■ Departmentalization
■ Social skill instruction with elementary counselors	■ Fewer Extracurricular Activities
■ Immature sixth graders have additional year of elementary	■ Hinders independence (lines, school rules for young students)
	■ Quick transition in/out of Jr. High doesn't allow students to identify with school

+ Move 6th Grade to Oblock

| Pros	Cons
■ Greater transition period (3 years vs. 2 years)	■ Requires a change by the district/community
■ More space at elementary schools	■ Some 6th graders may still need elementary environment (social, instructional, etc.)
■ Better fit developmentally	
■ Opportunity for specialization for teachers	
■ 5th graders have greater opportunities for leadership	

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Enrollment

Current Enrollment
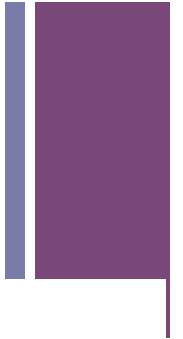
As of 9/25/13	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Enroll
Pivik	95	99	73	75	73	71	70			**556**
Center	62	49	49	43	69	65	64			**401**
Holiday Park	62	69	74	57	70	83	64			**479**
Regency	44	25	42	25	22	39	41			**238**
Adlai	49	38	39	47	63	56	59			**351**
TOTAL ELEM.	*312*	*280*	*277*	*247*	*297*	*314*	*298*			***2025***
Oblock								306	317	**623**

Plum Borough School District Forecasts per Grade: 2013-2022 Fertility/Aging/Embedded Growth Scenario with Current Retention and Birth to Kindergarten Ratios and Current Fertility Levels [Scenario I]

K	G1	G2	G3	G4	%)	G6	Total K-G6	G7	G8	Total Jr. High	G9	G10	G11	G12	Total Sr. High	Sr. High Alt. Sch
278	275	238	295	302	291	294	1973	322	348	670	326	336	342	321	1325	12
292	278	279	240	298	304	296	1987	301	323	624	361	324	328	33	1346	12
291	292	282	282	242	299	309	1997	303	302	605	335	359	317	319	1330	12
264	291	296	285	285	243	304	1968	317	304	621	313	333	351	309	1306	12
279	264	295	299	288	286	247	1958	312	318	630	316	311	325	342	1294	12
279	279	268	298	302	289	291	2006	253	313	566	330	314	304	317	1265	12
279	279	283	271	301	304	294	2011	298	254	552	325	328	307	296	1256	12
279	279	283	286	273	303	309	2012	301	299	600	264	323	320	299	1206	12
279	279	283	286	289	274	308	1998	317	302	619	310	262	316	312	1200	12
279	279	283	286	289	290	278	1984	316	318	634	313	308	256	308	1185	12
279	279	283	286	289	290	295	2001	285	317	602	330	311	301	249	1191	12

Area Grade Configurations

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In reviewing the Pittsburgh Business Times top ranked school districts, the K-5 span is the most prevalent, representing 7 of the 14 schools. In regard to the middle level span, 7 district employ a 6-8 span while 5 employ the 7-8 model.

+ Area Grade Configurations

District	Grade Spans			
Upper St. Clair	K-4	5-6	7-8	9-12
Mount Lebanon	K-5	6-8	9-12	
North Allegheny	K-5	6-8	9-10	11-12
Hampton	K-5	6-8	9-12	
South Fayette	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
Fox Chapel	K-5	6-8	9-12	
Peters	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-12
Quaker Valley	K-5	6-8	9-12	
Franklin Regional	K-5	6-8	9-12	
Pine-Richland	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-12
Seneca Valley	K-4	5-6	9-10	11-12
Penn Trafford	K-5	6-8	9-12	
Bethel Park	K-4	5-6	7-8	9-12
Norwin	K-4	5-6	7-8	9-12

Span	Number of Schools
K-2	1
K-3	2
K-4	4
K-5	7
K-6	0

PBSD Assessment Data

+ 6th & 7th Grade Reading
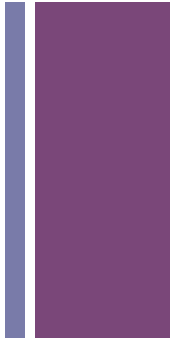
Grade 6 Reading		Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below
2013		44.3	34.4	17.9	3.4
2012	77.2	43.3	34.1	15	7.6
2011	81	51	30	13	6
2010	81	49	32	11	8
Grade 7 Reading		Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below
2013	83.5	55.6	27.9	12.7	3.8
2012	85	53	32	11	5
2011	90	60	30	9	2
2010		51	35	9	4

6th & 7th Grade Math

Grade 6 Math		Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below
2013		55.3	33.3	8.2	3.1
2012	84	58	26	4	4
2011	87	65	22	3	3
2010	86	62	24	6	6
Grade 7 Math		Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below
2013	83.2	56.2	27	11.7	5.1
2012	86	57	29	10	3
2011	88	64	24	9	4
2010		59	27	11	4

PVAAS Data

Growth

~ Measures a student's growth across time; i.e., across years

~ Not related to a student's demographics

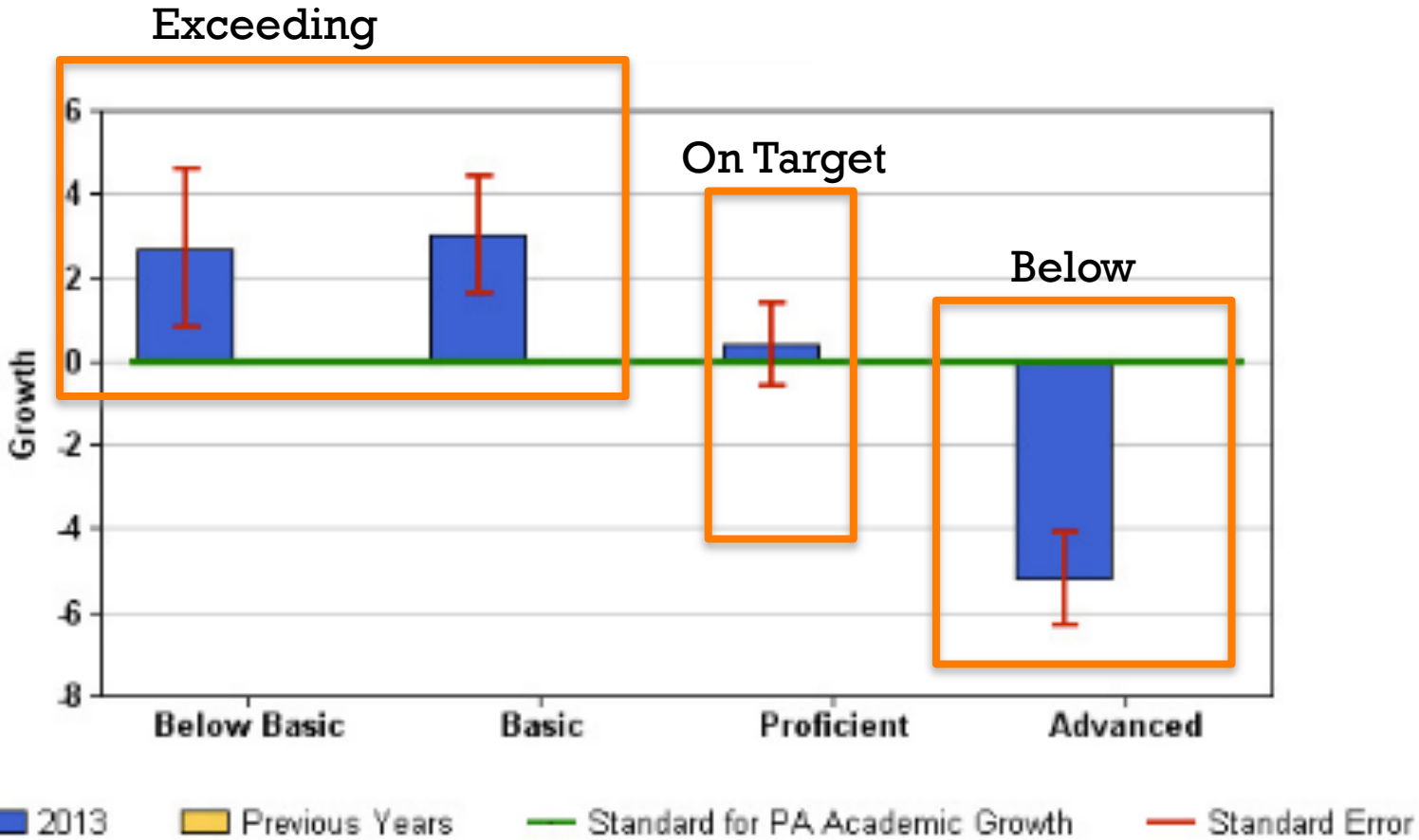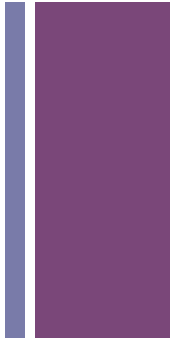~ Compares student performance to his/her own prior performance
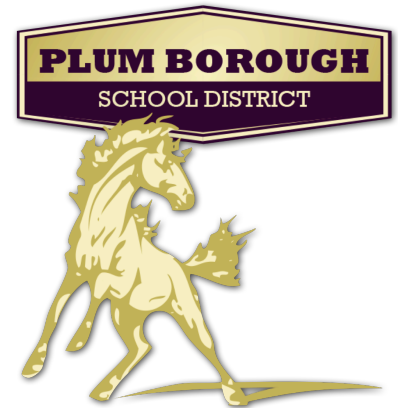
EXAMPLE PVAAS
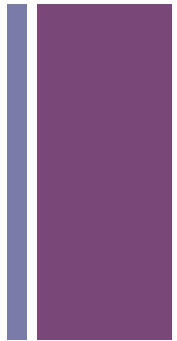
Green Line is the Standard for PA
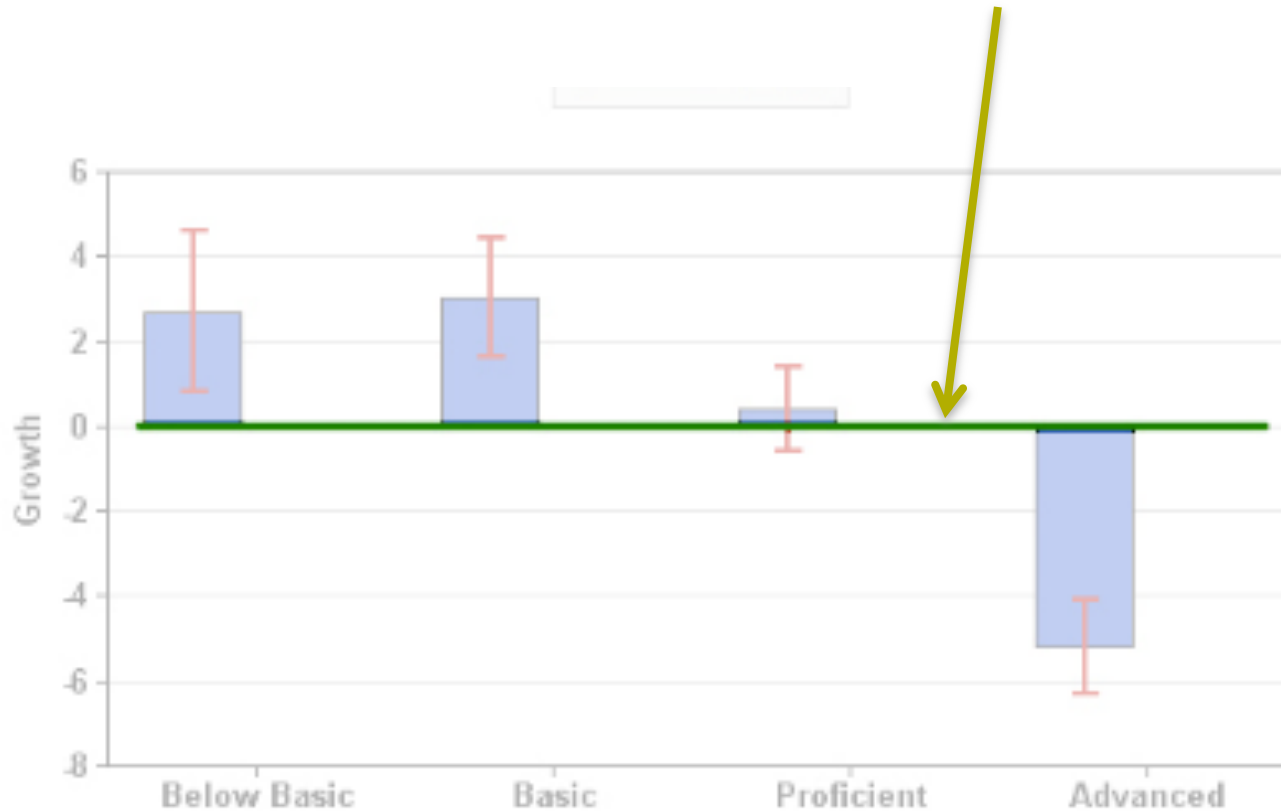
EXAMPLE PVAAS, Not PBSD Data, Sample purposes

GRADE 6 MATH PVAAS

Report: **District Performance Diagnostic**
District: **Plum Borough School District**
Year: **2013**

Test: **PSSA**
Subject: **Math**
Grade: **6th Grade**

LEARN HOW TO USE THIS REPORT *(Flash required)*
Performance Diagnostic Reports

Select Subgroups

			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Math	Standard for PA Academic Growth		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2013	Growth	14.4	6.1	4.9	2.0
		Standard Error	6.9	1.3	0.9	0.9
		# of Students	7	25	96	153
		% of Students	2.5	8.9	34.2	54.4
	Previous Years	Growth				
		Standard Error				
		# of Students				
		% of Students	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Predicted Performance Level Group

Growth is defined as average gain.
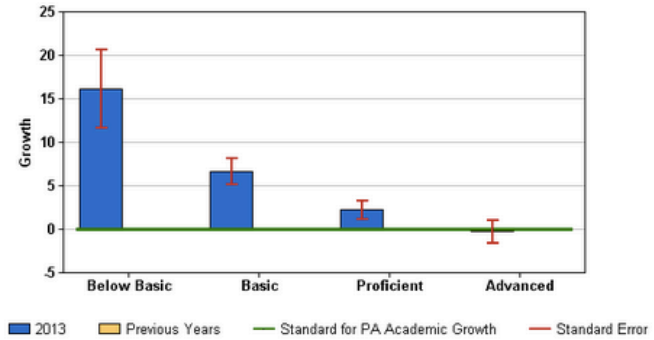
+ GRADE 6 READING PVAAS

Report: **District Performance Diagnostic**   Test: **PSSA**
District: **Plum Borough School District**   Subject: **Reading**
Year: **2013**   Grade: **6th Grade**

LEARN HOW TO USE THIS REPORT *(Flash required)*
Performance Diagnostic Reports

Select Subgroups

			Predicted Performance Level Group			
			Below Basic	**Basic**	**Proficient**	**Advanced**
Reading	Standard for PA Academic Growth		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2013	Growth	16.1	6.6	2.2	-0.3
		Standard Error	4.5	1.5	1.1	1.3
		# of Students	6	49	116	105
		% of Students	2.2	17.8	42.0	38.0
	Previous Years	Growth				
		Standard Error				
		# of Students				
		% of Students	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

GRADE 7 MATH PVAAS

Report:	**District Performance Diagnostic**	Test:	**PSSA**
District:	**Plum Borough School District**	Subject:	**Math**
Year:	**2013**	Grade:	**7th Grade**

LEARN HOW TO USE THIS REPORT *(Flash required)*
Performance Diagnostic Reports

Select Subgroups

■ 2013   □ Previous Years   — Standard for PA Academic Growth   — Standard Error
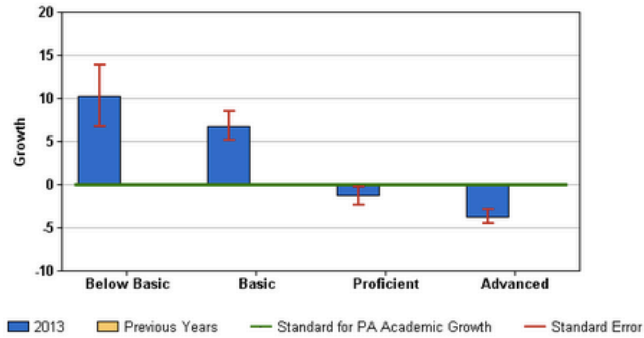
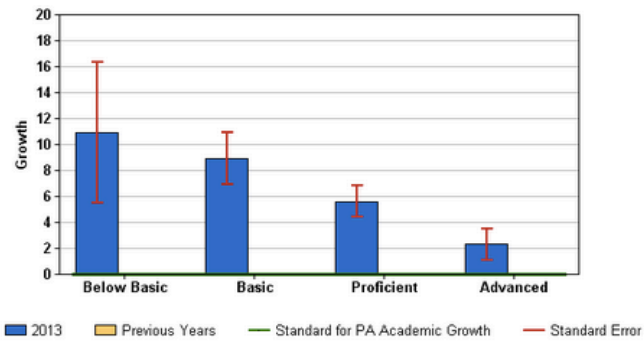|			Predicted Performance Level Group			
			Below Basic	**Basic**	**Proficient**	**Advanced**
Math	Standard for PA Academic Growth		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2013	Growth	10.3	6.8	-1.3	-3.7
		Standard Error	3.6	1.7	1.1	0.8
		# of Students	13	27	76	183
		% of Students	4.3	9.0	25.4	61.2
	Previous Years	Growth				
		Standard Error				
		# of Students				
		% of Students	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Growth is defined as average gain.

GRADE 7 READING PVAAS

Report:	District Performance Diagnostic	Test:	PSSA
District:	Plum Borough School District	Subject:	Reading
Year:	2013	Grade:	7th Grade

LEARN HOW TO USE THIS REPORT *(Flash required)*
Performance Diagnostic Reports

Select Subgroups

Legend: 2013 | Previous Years | Standard for PA Academic Growth | Standard Error

			Predicted Performance Level Group			
			Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Reading	Standard for PA Academic Growth		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2013	Growth	10.9	8.9	5.6	2.3
		Standard Error	5.4	2.0	1.2	1.2
		# of Students	7	41	118	126
		% of Students	2.4	14.0	40.4	43.2
	Previous Years	Growth				
		Standard Error				
		# of Students				
		% of Students	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

MATH PVAAS

6th
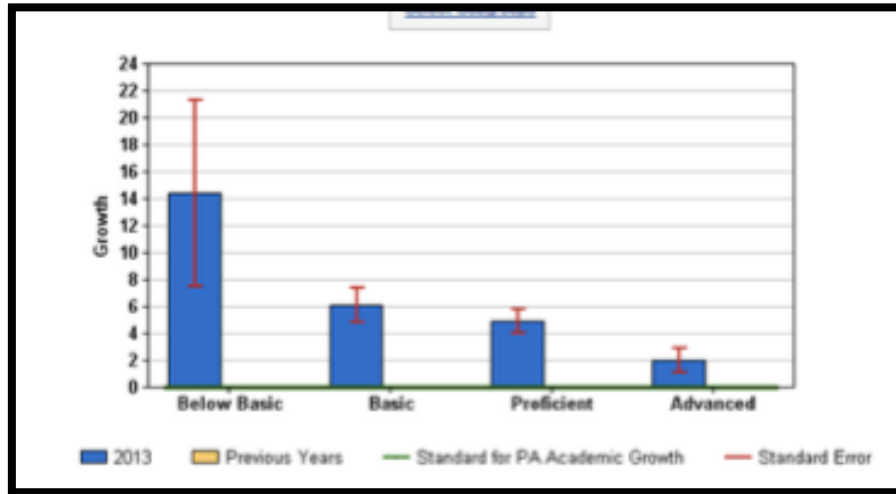
7th
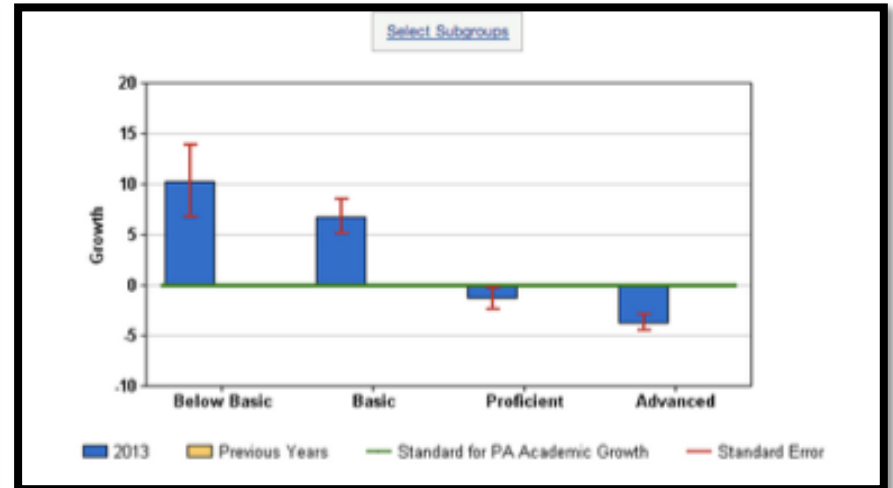
READING PVAAS

6th
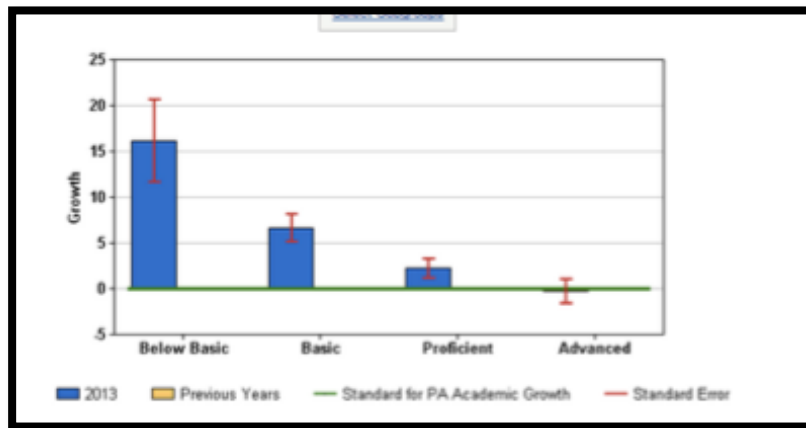
7th

+
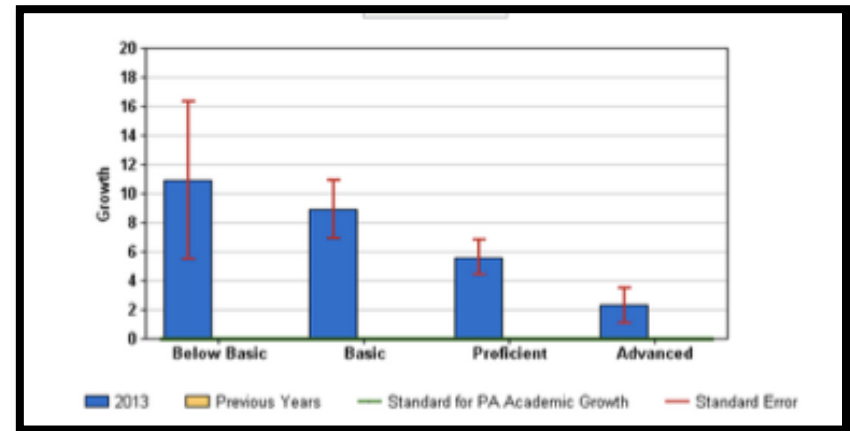
SCENARIOS

Scenario 1
No Change

Building	Enrollment
Pivik	636
Center	451
HP	700
Regency	238
Adlai	----
Oblock	623

This option would require a Building Renovation to Regency

Current Enrollment

Scenario 2
4 Elementary Schools, K-5
1 Middle School, 6-8

Building	Enrollment
Pivik	625
Center	300
HP	650
Regeny	152
Adlai	----
Oblock	921

This option would require Building Renovations to Regency & Oblock

Current Enrollment

Scenario 3
3 Elementary Schools, K-5
1 Middle School, 6-8

Building	Enrollment w/ 4 schools	Enrollment w/ 3 schools
Pivik	625	586
Center	300	434
HP	650	707
Regency	152	----
Oblock	921	921

This option would require Building Renovations to Center & Oblock

Current Enrollment

Scenario	Elementary Configuration	Oblock	Renovations	Costs
Scenario 1	4 K-6 Schools	7-8	Regency	?
Scenario 2	4 K-5 Schools	6-8	Regency & Oblock	?
Scenario 3	3 K-5 Schools	6-8	Center & Oblock	?