

# Saratoga schools rank among best in the California

## Redwood hits 972 on API charts

By BRIAN BABCOCK

The latest academic performance scores are in, and the Saratoga Union School District has tied for the highest score of any district in the state.

The district, along with Las Lomas School District in Atherton, scored a 967 in the state Department of Education's 2008-09 Academic Performance Index. The district's 15-point gain in 2009 is the highest since 2005, when it raised its score by seven points from the previous year.

The API, released Sept. 15, measures academic performance with a scoring system ranging from 200 to 1,000, with 800 being a targeted goal for all California schools.

Forty-two percent of all California schools are now at or above the 800 target, while Santa Clara County schools posted an overall median score of 807. The scores are based on the results of the Standardized Testing and Reporting Program and the California High School Exit Examination.

All four schools in the Saratoga Union School District, which are well above the county's target score, are within 20 points of each other.

Redwood Middle School showed the highest gain, posting 972, up from 954 in 2008. The next biggest gain was posted by Saratoga Elementary School, which raised its score by 12 points, from 951 to 963.

Argonaut Elementary School made a marked improvement as well, going from 960 in 2008 to 970 this year, while Foothill Elementary posted a score of 952.



Photograph by George Sakkestad

**Third graders at Argonaut Elementary School participate in a computer literacy class, working on computers funded through the Saratoga Education Foundation. Students in the Saratoga Union School District recently tied for the highest totals in the state when academic performance scores were released.**

Although pleased with the scores, superintendent Lane Weiss said there are other ways of assessing academic success.

"This is just one measure of a student success," said Weiss, who oversees 2,250 students in the district. "We should be cautious of judging all of our student success in a test score. It's just one snapshot."

The arts, technology and the sci-

ences are other areas that the district emphasizes to ensure students receive a well-rounded education, he said.

"We believe that a balanced curriculum is critical," Weiss said. "We want our students to be caring, responsible citizens."

The district's faculty and staff won't sit back and revel in the high numbers.

"We don't want to be complacent. We are continually trying to improve," Weiss said.

Marshall Lane and Blue Hills elementary schools also showed improvement. Marshall Lane, part of the Campbell Union School District, had an API score of 928, while Blue Hills, part of the Cupertino Union School District, posted a score of 971.

Saratoga High School scored a 933 API, up five points from 2008. Saratoga is one of the highest-rated high schools in the county.

"Saratoga is climbing into academic achievement space that is very rare for high schools. There are lots of elementary schools that are 900-plus, but not that many high schools," said superintendent Cary Matsuoka.

Matsuoka also oversees Los

Gatos High School, which scored an 874 API, up from 846 in 2008.

"We're very pleased," Matsuoka said. "That's a big gain—28 points."

Asked why Saratoga's students achieved a score that is 59 points higher than Los Gatos, Matsuoka said, "Los Gatos isn't under-achieving. These are different communities, different student bodies, different schools. My goal as an educator is to help every student reach their potential."

Prospect High School, which had made a 36-point improvement in 2005, lost 15 points and dropped to a 740 API score.

There is a correlation between the number of English-speaking students at a school and its performance in the API, said Terry Peluso, executive director of student services and assessment for the Campbell Union High School District. Other factors include socioeconomic status and the number of apartments in a neighborhood, which would mean a higher student turnover rate.

Prospect's 15-point loss could be explained by a high turnover rate at the school, Peluso said.

Judy Peterson and Chris Vongsarath contributed to this report.

## SHS to celebrate 50th anniversary

Saratoga High School will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a two-day commemoration. Beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Oct. 9 a catered reception will be held where teachers from the first four years of the school's history and alumni from 1959 to 2008 are expected to attend.

Memorabilia, such as the first school newspapers, early yearbooks, class photos, and pictures of the school during its construction, will be on display.

During halftime of the Falcons' home game against Milpitas, teachers from 1959 to '62—wearing red, white

and blue boutonnières—will be presented with a school certificate from principal Jeff Anderson thanking them for their service to the school.

On Oct. 10 a "daddy-daughter" basketball game will be held on the new sports court and a guided tour of the school will be held along with a panel discussion on the school's past, present and future.

Saratoga High School is located at 20300 Herriman Ave., and can be contacted by calling 408.867.3411. For more information on the 50th anniversary celebration, visit [www.saratogahigh.org](http://www.saratogahigh.org).

### Academic Performance Index

SCHOOL	2008	2009
Argonaut Elementary	970	960
Blue Hills Elementary	971	967
Christa McAuliffe Elem.	N/A	N/A
Foothill Elementary	952	943
Marshall Lane Elementary	928	918
Saratoga Elementary	963	951
Redwood Middle School	972	954
Prospect High School	740	756
Lynbrook High School	926	920
Saratoga High School	933	928