



# America's Best High Schools Methodology

## ***How we got from 21,069 public high schools to the top 100***

By [Robert Morse](#)

Posted December 4, 2008

The 2009 *U.S. News & World Report* America's Best High Schools methodology, developed by School Evaluation Services, a K-12 education data research business run by Standard & Poor's, is based on the key principles that a great high school must serve all its students well, not just those who are bound for college and that it must be able to produce measurable academic outcomes to show that the school is successfully educating its student body across a range of performance indicators.

We analyzed 21,069 public high schools in 48 states using data from the 2006-2007 school year. This is the total number of public high schools in each state that had grade-12 enrollment and sufficient data to analyze primarily for the 2006-2007 school year. A three-step process determined the best high schools. The first two steps ensured that the schools serve all their students well, using state proficiency standards as the measuring benchmarks. For those schools that made it past the first two steps, a third step assessed the degree to which schools prepare students for college-level work.

The first step determined whether each school's students were performing better than statistically expected for the average student in the state. We started by looking at reading and math results for all students on each state's high school test. We then factored in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students (who tend to score lower) enrolled at the school to find which schools were performing better than their statistical expectations.

For those schools that made it past this first step, the second step determined whether the school's least-advantaged students (black, Hispanic, and low income) were performing better than average for similar students in the state. We compared each school's math and reading proficiency rates for disadvantaged students with the statewide results for these disadvantaged student groups and then selected schools that were performing better than this state average.

Schools that made it through the first two steps became eligible to be judged nationally on the final step, college-readiness performance, using Advanced Placement and/or

International Baccalaureate test data as the benchmarks for success. (AP is a College Board program that offers college-level courses at high schools across the country.) This third step measured which schools produced the best college-level achievement for the highest percentages of their students. This was done by computing a "college readiness index" based on the weighted average of the AP and/or IB participation rate (the number of 12th-grade students who took at least one AP and/or IB test before or during their senior year, divided by the number of 12th graders) along with how well the students did on those tests. The latter part, called quality-adjusted AP and/or IB participation, is the number of 12th-grade students who took and passed (received an AP score of 3 or higher or an IB score of 4 or higher) at least one of the tests before or during their senior year, divided by the number of 12th graders at that school. For the college readiness index, the quality-adjusted participation rate was weighted 75 percent in the calculation, and 25 percent of the weight was placed on the simple AP and/or IB participation rate. Only schools that had values greater than 20 in their college readiness index scored high enough to meet this criterion for gold and silver medal selection. The minimum of 20 was used because it represents what it would take to have a "critical mass" of students gaining access to college-level coursework.

The top 100 high schools nationwide with the highest college readiness index scores were ranked numerically (ties were broken using the average number of AP and/or IB exams passed per test taker) and awarded gold medals. The next 504 top-performing high schools nationwide based on their college readiness index scores earned silver medals. An additional 1,321 high schools in 48 states that passed the first two steps were awarded bronze medals. Seventeen more high schools in nine states received an honorable mention medal if they would have scored high enough on the college readiness index to earn a gold medal but didn't fully meet Steps 1 and 2.

Analysts from School Evaluation Services developed the methodology and compiled the analysis. At [schoolmatters.com](http://schoolmatters.com), SES provides one of the largest, most easily searchable collections of education data ever available. AP is a trademark owned by the College Board, which was not involved in the production of and does not endorse this product.

### **Why Some States (and D.C.) Weren't Included**

Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Washington, D.C., did not make sufficient data for the 2006-2007 school year available. Their schools were evaluated for honorable mention, but none met the criteria.

## Criteria for Medals

Gold Medal:

Top 100 schools nationally based on the College Readiness Index

Silver Medal:

all other schools with a college readiness index of at least 20 but that are not ranked in the top 100 nationally

Bronze Medal:

either do not offer AP or IB or do not achieve a college readiness index of at least 20 but successfully meet the other two key performance indicator criteria

Honorable Mention:

schools that achieved very high levels of college readiness but only partially met state test performance criteria

College-ready student performance data derived from data provided by the College Board and/or International Baccalaureate of North America.

Advanced Placement student performance data derived from data provided by the College Board. Copyright © 2009. Data provided by the College Board. All rights reserved. [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

International Baccalaureate student performance data derived from data provided by International Baccalaureate of North America. Copyright © 2009. Data provided by International Baccalaureate of North America.

## Best High Schools Kentucky: Silver Category Awards

*U.S. News & World Report*—in collaboration with School Evaluation Services, a K-12 education and data research and analysis business that provides parents with education data on [schoolmatters.com](http://schoolmatters.com)—analyzed academic and enrollment data from more than 21,000 public high schools to find the very best across the country. These top schools were placed into silver categories.

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| <a href="#"><u>Beechwood High School</u></a>       | Silver |
| Kenton County, Fort Mitchell, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Bowling Green High School</u></a>   | Silver |
| Warren County, Bowling Green, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Dupont Manual High School</u></a>   | Silver |
| Jefferson County, Louisville, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Highlands High School</u></a>       | Silver |
| Campbell County, Fort Thomas, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Louisville Male High School</u></a> | Silver |
| Jefferson County, Louisville, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>North Oldham High School</u></a>    | Silver |

Oldham County, Goshen, KY  
[South Oldham High School](#) Silver  
Oldham County, Crestwood, KY

**Best High Schools 2009 Search: All Kentucky Schools—Silver & Bronze**

*U.S. News & World Report*—in collaboration with School Evaluation Services, a K-12 education and data research and analysis business that provides parents with education data on [schoolmatters.com](http://schoolmatters.com)—analyzed academic and enrollment data from more than 21,000 public high schools to find the very best across the country. These top schools were placed into gold, silver, bronze, or honorable mention categories.

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| <a href="#"><u>Beechwood High School</u></a>       | Silver |
| Kenton County, Fort Mitchell, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Bowling Green High School</u></a>   | Silver |
| Warren County, Bowling Green, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Dupont Manual High School</u></a>   | Silver |
| Jefferson County, Louisville, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Highlands High School</u></a>       | Silver |
| Campbell County, Fort Thomas, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Louisville Male High School</u></a> | Silver |
| Jefferson County, Louisville, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>North Oldham High School</u></a>    | Silver |
| Oldham County, Goshen, KY                          |        |
| <a href="#"><u>South Oldham High School</u></a>    | Silver |
| Oldham County, Crestwood, KY                       |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Barbourville City School</u></a>    | Bronze |
| Knox County, Barbourville, KY                      |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Bardstown High School</u></a>       | Bronze |
| Nelson County, Bardstown, KY                       |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Central High School</u></a>         | Bronze |
| Jefferson County, Louisville, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Corbin High School</u></a>          | Bronze |
| Whitley County, Corbin, KY                         |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Dawson Springs High School</u></a>  | Bronze |
| Hopkins County, Dawson Springs,<br>KY              |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Eminence High School</u></a>        | Bronze |
| Henry County, Eminence, KY                         |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Evarts High School</u></a>          | Bronze |
| Harlan County, Evarts, KY                          |        |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| <a href="#"><u>Frederick Fraize High School</u></a> | Bronze |
| Breckinridge County, Cloverport, KY                 |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Graves County High School</u></a>    | Bronze |
| Graves County, Mayfield, KY                         |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Hancock County High School</u></a>   | Bronze |
| Hancock County, Lewisport, KY                       |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Harlan High School</u></a>           | Bronze |
| Harlan County, Harlan, KY                           |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Hazard High School</u></a>           | Bronze |
| Perry County, Hazard, KY                            |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Hickman County High School</u></a>   | Bronze |
| Hickman County, Clinton, KY                         |        |
| <br>  |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Jackson City School</u></a>          | Bronze |
| Breathitt County, Jackson, KY                       |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Johnson Central High School</u></a>  | Bronze |
| Johnson County, Paintsville, KY                     |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Magoffin County High School</u></a>  | Bronze |
| Magoffin County, Salyersville, KY                   |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Owensboro High School</u></a>        | Bronze |
| Daviess County, Owensboro, KY                       |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Paintsville High School</u></a>      | Bronze |
| Johnson County, Paintsville, KY                     |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Paris High School</u></a>            | Bronze |
| Bourbon County, Paris, KY                           |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Phelps High School</u></a>           | Bronze |
| Pike County, Phelps, KY                             |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Pineville High School</u></a>        | Bronze |
| Bell County, Pineville, KY                          |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Russell County High School</u></a>   | Bronze |
| Russell County, Russell Springs, KY                 |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Walton-Verona High School</u></a>    | Bronze |
| Boone County, Walton, KY                            |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Whitley County High School</u></a>   | Bronze |
| Whitley County, Williamsburg, KY                    |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Williamsburg City School</u></a>     | Bronze |
| Whitley County, Williamsburg, KY                    |        |
| <a href="#"><u>Williamstown High School</u></a>     | Bronze |
| Grant County, Williamstown, KY                      |        |

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# North Oldham High School

## Oldham County School District Oldham County

1815 S Hwy 1793  
Goshen, KY 40026  
Telephone: (502) 228-0158

*College Readiness Index* 51.6

*Poverty-Adjusted Performance Index* 1.60

*Disadvantaged Students Performance Gap* Not Available

For more information, visit this school on the [SchoolMatters](#) website.

## Detailed Information ([methodology](#))

### School Data

*Grades Served* 9-12  
*Magnet School* No  
*Charter School* Not Available  
*Admissions Type* Open Enrollment  
*NCES Locale Type* Suburb, Large Territory  
*Receives Title I Funding* No

### Demographic Data

*Enrollment* 803  
*Minority Enrollment (% of total)* 2.9%  
*Disadvantaged Student Enrollment (% of total)* 2.1%

### Overall Student Performance

*State Test Performance Index* 103.5  
*Poverty-Adjusted Performance Index* 1.60

## Disadvantaged Student Performance

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Disadvantaged Students' State Test Proficiency Rate</i>     | Not Available |
| <i>Disadvantaged Students Performance Gap</i>                  | Not Available |
| <i>Non-disadvantaged Students' State Test Proficiency Rate</i> | 81.4          |
| <i>Current State Test Achievement Gap</i>                      | Not Available |

## College-Ready Student Performance

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <i>College Readiness Index</i>               | 51.6  |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted Exams Per Test Taker</i> | 2.1   |
| <i>Participation Rate</i>                    | 63.8% |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted Participation rate</i>   | 47.6% |
| <i>Participant Passing Rate</i>              | 74.6% |
| <i>Exams Per Test Taker</i>                  | 3.4   |
| <i>Exam Passing Rate</i>                     | 61.9% |

## Advanced Placement Student Performance

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| <i>Quality-Adjusted AP Exams Per Test Taker</i> | 2.1    |
| <i>AP Participation Rate</i>                    | 63.8%  |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted AP Participation Rate</i>   | 47.6%  |
| <i>AP Participant Passing Rate</i>              | 74.6 % |
| <i>AP Exams Per Test Taker</i>                  | 3.4    |
| <i>AP Exam Pass Rate</i>                        | 61.9%  |

## International Baccalaureate Student Performance

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Quality-Adjusted IB Exams Per Test Taker</i> | Not Available |
| <i>IB Participation Rate</i>                    | Not Available |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted IB Participation Rate</i>   | Not Available |
| <i>IB Participant Passing Rate</i>              | Not Available |
| <i>IB Exams Per Test Taker</i>                  | Not Available |
| <i>IB Exam Pass Rate</i>                        | Not Available |
| <i>IB Diploma Per IB Test Taker</i>             | Not Available |
| <i>IB Diploma Per Grade 12 Enrollment</i>       | Not Available |

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# South Oldham High School

## Oldham County School District Oldham County

5900 Hwy 329 Bypass  
Crestwood, KY 40014  
Telephone: (502) 241-6681

*College Readiness Index* 32.6  
*Poverty-Adjusted Performance Index* 1.08  
*Disadvantaged Students Performance Gap* 7.5

For more information, visit this school on the [SchoolMatters](#) website.

### Detailed Information ([methodology](#))

#### School Data

*Grades Served* 9-12  
*Magnet School* No  
*Charter School* Not Available  
*Admissions Type* Open Enrollment  
*NCES Locale Type* Rural, Fringe Territory  
*Receives Title I Funding* No

#### Demographic Data

*Enrollment* 1,064  
*Minority Enrollment (% of total)* 5.3%  
*Disadvantaged Student Enrollment (% of total)* 11.7%

#### Overall Student Performance

*State Test Performance Index* 95.4  
*Poverty-Adjusted Performance Index* 1.08

### **Disadvantaged Student Performance**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| <i>Disadvantaged Students' State Test Proficiency Rate</i>     | 45.2 |
| <i>Disadvantaged Students Performance Gap</i>                  | 7.5  |
| <i>Non-disadvantaged Students' State Test Proficiency Rate</i> | 74.2 |
| <i>Current State Test Achievement Gap</i>                      | 29.0 |

### **College-Ready Student Performance**

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <i>College Readiness Index</i>               | 32.6  |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted Exams Per Test Taker</i> | 1.8   |
| <i>Participation Rate</i>                    | 41.6% |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted Participation rate</i>   | 29.6% |
| <i>Participant Passing Rate</i>              | 71.1% |
| <i>Exams Per Test Taker</i>                  | 2.7   |
| <i>Exam Passing Rate</i>                     | 64.9% |

### **Advanced Placement Student Performance**

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| <i>Quality-Adjusted AP Exams Per Test Taker</i> | 1.8    |
| <i>AP Participation Rate</i>                    | 41.6%  |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted AP Participation Rate</i>   | 29.6%  |
| <i>AP Participant Passing Rate</i>              | 71.1 % |
| <i>AP Exams Per Test Taker</i>                  | 2.7    |
| <i>AP Exam Pass Rate</i>                        | 64.9%  |

### **International Baccalaureate Student Performance**

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Quality-Adjusted IB Exams Per Test Taker</i> | Not Available |
| <i>IB Participation Rate</i>                    | Not Available |
| <i>Quality-Adjusted IB Participation Rate</i>   | Not Available |
| <i>IB Participant Passing Rate</i>              | Not Available |
| <i>IB Exams Per Test Taker</i>                  | Not Available |
| <i>IB Exam Pass Rate</i>                        | Not Available |
| <i>IB Diploma Per IB Test Taker</i>             | Not Available |
| <i>IB Diploma Per Grade 12 Enrollment</i>       | Not Available |