



America's Best High Schools

Presentation to the
Abington Board of School Directors
December 9, 2008

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America's Best High Schools

Exclusive rankings of the top 100 public schools and what makes them great

Students at No. 44
Walt Whitman
High School
in Beltsville,
Maryland



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AMERICA'S BEST HIGH SCHOOLS



At top schools, success in math and science is a priority

By Eddy Ramirez

Joseph Carpenter, a senior engineer for a global defense and technology company, has given three teams of engineers a challenge: Each team must design and build a robot that can successfully complete a search-and-rescue mission after a terrorist attack. The teams don't have much time. Carpenter expects a "proof of concept"—or evidence that each team can build a robot—in two months. On a whiteboard he has written some words of encouragement. "Why do something ordinary when you can do something extraordinary."

The engineers who will attempt to pull off Carpenter's challenge are not actually engineers. They are high school seniors who attend the California Academy of Mathematics and Science, a highly successful public magnet school outside Los Angeles that ranks 26th on *U.S. News's* America's Best High Schools

list. *U.S. News* and School Evaluation Services, a K-12 data research and analysis business run by Standard & Poor's, analyzed 21,069 public high schools for this edition of the rankings. From that group, 1,925 schools earned an award.

CAMS and several other high schools that cracked this year's top 100 are making a strong push to prepare more students for careers in the so-called STEM fields: science, technology, engineering, and math. They are responding

to what many educators, business leaders, and politicians see as a crisis in America: Once a leader in math and science education, the United States now is far behind other countries. Out of 30 industrialized nations, American teens rank 25th in math and 21st in science. The country trails at least 19 countries that produce more scientists and engineers.

"We do produce students

GOLD MEDAL SCHOOLS

- 1 Thomas Jefferson High School Alexandria, Va.
- 2 Oxford High Cypress, Calif.
- 3 Pacific Collegiate Charter Santa Cruz, Calif.
- 4 High Technology High School Lincoln, N.J.
- 5 Design and Architectural Senior High Miami

The complete list of gold medal schools, plus the silver and bronze medal winners, with profiles of each, is at www.usnews.com/highschools.

U.S. News and World Report: **America's Best High Schools**

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America's Best High Schools

Key Principles of the Methodology

“A great high school must serve all of its students well, not just those bound for college and 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.”

America's Best High Schools

The Analysis and Selection Process

- **Analysis of 21,069 public high schools in 48 states using data from the 2006-07 school year**
- **These 21,069 schools had a sufficient grade 12 enrollment to provide data in 2006-07**
- **A three-step process was used to analyze the data and identify the best high schools**
- **Recognition categories of gold, silver, bronze and honorable mention high schools identified**

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First Step of the Analysis Process:

- **Determine if each school's students perform better than statistically expected for the average student in the state**
 - **Utilize reading and math results for all students on each state's high school test**
 - **Factor in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled to determine which schools perform better than expected**

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Second Step of the Analysis Process:

- **Determine whether the school's least-advantaged students (black, Hispanic, and low-income) were performing better than average for similar students in the state**
 - **Compare proficiency rates in reading and math on statewide tests**
 - **Selected schools that performed better than the state average**

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Third Step of the Analysis Process:

- **Review college-readiness performance using Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate test data as the benchmarks for success**
 - **Compute a college-readiness index based on a weighted average of AP/IB test participation in the senior year**
 - **Include a quality-adjusted participation rate that incorporates student results AP/IB tests**

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Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals

- **Gold medals for the top 100 schools nationwide with the highest college readiness were ranked numerically**
- **Silver medals for next 504 top-performing high schools based on their college-readiness index**
- **Bronze medals for the 1,321 high schools that passed the first two steps**

America's Best High Schools Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals Southeast Pennsylvania

- **Gold medal: Masterman High School**
- **Silver medals: Central Bucks East and Central Bucks West, Central, Conestoga, Great Valley, Harriton, Lower Merion and Radnor, High Schools**
- **Bronze medals: Abington, Bodine, Carver, and Girls' High Schools**

U.S. News and World Report
America's Best High Schools:
Information on the Websites

<http://www.usnews.com/sections/education/high-schools/index.html>

[http://www.philly.com/philly/hp/news_update/20081205 Masterman High makes Top 100.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/hp/news_update/20081205_Masterman_High_makes_Top_100.html)



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