

Local high schools score national rankings

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Three Grant County high schools earned national rankings in the U.S. News & World Report annual Best High Schools list.

The report was released earlier this week and showed that Madison-Grant High School, Mississinewa High School and Oak Hill High School all earned recognition in college readiness categories.

"I believe this is the first time we've received a rank with them, so we're very excited," said Madison-Grant Superintendent John Trout. "With our dual credit pieces, with our integration of technology pieces, with our direction of moving toward an early college high school I think a lot of that programming did come into play."

Madison-Grant High School earned a bronze rating, with 58 percent of students proficient or advanced in algebra and 63 percent of students proficient or advanced in English. Those scores amount for a college readiness index of 13.9.

The U.S. News & World Report list looks at three main categories when assigning a rank to a school. The first is overall student performance on state exams, then the percentage of disadvantaged students who are proficient in the two subjects and finally, college-ready student performance that is based on AP or IB exams.

"It's a true credit to the teaching staff at Madison-Grant High School," Trout said. "They have just done an absolutely outstanding job. I think we're doing such a good job of preparing our students to be successful in high school. All the credit, I believe, should go to the teaching staff and administrators for what they have done in bringing our school to this level."

Trout also praised the other two high schools for their inclusion on the list.

"The collaboration pieces between the districts are really starting to improve," he said. "I have nothing but respect for the leadership in those districts. It's a true credit to the work they are doing. Grant County should be proud."

Oak Hill High School earned a silver rating and was ranked at both the state and national level. They were ranked 45th in the state and 2,244 nationally.

"This positive recognition after being judged nationally on our performance compared to what is statistically expected for Indiana students, how our disadvantaged students are performing and college-readiness performance of Oak Hill High School students is a confidence boost," said Oak Hill Superintendent Joel Martin. "We are meeting the needs of individual students and this is a direct reflection of many factors...not the least of which is classroom teacher time and effort."

According to the report, 81 percent of Oak Hill High School students were proficient in English and 54

percent were proficient in algebra. The college readiness index was 22.3

Mississinewa High School had the highest rankings among the three Grant County schools. Mississinewa was ranked 39th in the state and 2,103 overall nationally.

"That's very exciting news," said Lezlie Winter, assistant superintendent of Mississinewa schools. "I do think we're starting to see the benefit of the programs we've put into place through the years. Our Advanced Placement exams helped us a lot."

High school students at Mississinewa were 57 percent proficient in English and 64 percent proficient in algebra. The college readiness index was at listed at 24.

"We're very proud of the leaders at the high school and of the teachers," Winter said. "We feel that when the high school gets recognized, then that is a reflection of the total philosophy of our school system and that the kids are getting the foundation they need to have success at that level."

This year's list included the most Grant County schools to earn a rating from U.S. News & World Report. Last year, only Marion High School made the list with a bronze rating.

"They're not only a year behind, they're over a year behind in the data," said Marion High School Principal Keith Burke. "In 2011-2012, Marion's data was a little higher than it was in 2012-2013. It is tricky when you look two years back to put together this year's list."

Burke said Marion's excellent test scores last year should help the school rise higher in the rankings for next year's report.

"It was excellent last year to be on the list but the thing that excites me about the future is that the 2013-2014 data is the highest it's ever been," he said.