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High schools in Bucks and Montgomery counties dominate U.S. News rankings

By Gary Weckselblatt, staff writer Apr 26, 2017

High schools from Bucks and Montgomery counties led the way in the U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools rankings for Pennsylvania.

New Hope-Solebury, for the third straight year, finished second statewide behind Philadelphia's Julia R. Masterman Secondary School.

"It's all about consistency," said Steven Yanni, New Hope-Solebury's superintendent. "We have a pretty stable and consistent teaching force and administrative team. Every decision we make is in the best interest of our kids. We have not taken any opportunities away from kids, no matter what budget pressures we may face.

"Everyone is rowing in the same direction here. The common goal is making this place absolutely the best we can for our kids."

Lower Moreland High School ranked ninth and Council Rock North High School 15th. All three Central Bucks high schools, made the top 40, led by West (25), East (32) and South (40).

"It reflects the hard work of teachers and students and is consistent with rankings we've seen in the past," said Council Rock school board President Ed Tate about CR North's high ranking. "The district has been very deliberate over the years in providing a challenging and comprehensive curriculum. Also, our students receive tremendous support from their parents throughout their school years, and I think the ranking is also a reflection of that."

Central Bucks Superintendent John Kopicki said, "It's wonderful whenever you receive great news like this. It's a tribute to our teachers. Our faculty does a tremendous job, and our community supports our education system, with our parents, of course, being a big part of that."

Souderton, which finished 39th a year ago, improved to 30th this year.

"It's definitely a point of pride," Souderton Superintendent Frank Gallagher said. "We work hard here to engage our students. (U.S. News) is one measure that shows that the work and investment we're putting into traditional public education is working. The results are there."

Sixteen of the top 50 schools are from Bucks and Montgomery counties, including Wissahickon (22), Abington (49) and North Penn (50). A little further back were Quakertown (60), Neshaminy (62), Penridge (67) and Bensalem (90).

"We're very proud of the schools that were identified in the U.S. News & World Report rankings," said Linda J. Weaver, former second-grade special education teacher in Bristol Township and a representative of the Council for the Advancement of Public Schools. "And we know from many other objective measures that all of our Bucks and Montgomery counties' public schools provide a first-rate education that prepares students for the future and enhances the value of our communities."

U.S. News teamed with North Carolina-based RTI International, a global nonprofit social science research firm, to analyze 28,496 high schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia and rank the schools both by state and how they stacked up nationwide.

The multiple criteria included performance on state assessments, course offerings and college and career readiness.

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