

Collierville, Houston High schools rank among nation's "most challenging high schools"

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Collierville High and Germantown's Houston High School were two of 12 Tennessee high schools to make The Washington Post's list of the country's most challenging high schools.

The list, released this week, includes any public high school with at least a one-to-one ratio of college-level classes taken per graduating student.

The top school in the country was BASIS Oro Valley, in Oro Valley, Arizona, with over 20 advanced classes per graduating student. Houston was ranked the 953rd hardest school with a 2.435-to-one ratio, and Collierville was ranked 1,052nd with a 2.307-to-one ratio. That puts both schools in the top 5 percent in the country out of roughly 22,000 public schools.

The list included about 10 percent of all schools. Magnet and charter high schools were only included if they do not draw a high concentration of top students that skew their average ACT and SAT results above a 29 or 2000, respectively. While the data also displays each school's percentage of students who qualify for the federal free and reduced school lunch program, that did not factor into the rankings.

Only 12 schools in Tennessee — out of a total of roughly 2,300 nationwide — made the list. Arkansas had 74 schools on the list, but Mississippi just one, located in Biloxi.

Germantown Municipal School District Supt. Jason Manuel said the rankings are nice to see, but are not the district's focus. He said the biggest question is, "Are (students) successful when they leave our campus, for whatever they choose to do?"

The school boasts a 96 percent rate for students who graduate from Houston and enroll in either a two- or four-year degree program.

Houston offers 26 advanced placement or dual-enrollment classes in areas including physics, economics, government, studio art, foreign languages and history, according to the school's website. Collierville's website lists 28 advanced placement and dual-enrollment classes, with a large focus on foreign languages and both macro and microeconomics.

HARDEST HIGH SCHOOLS IN TENNESSEE

Hume-Fogg Magnet, Nashville – Rank 85

Martin Luther King Magnet, Nashville - 101

Brentwood, Brentwood - 172

Hillsboro, Nashville - 205

Ravenwood, Brentwood - 500

West, Knoxville - 834

Farragut, Knoxville - 875

Houston, Germantown - 953

Collierville, Collierville - 1,052

Morristown West, Morristown - 1,076

Dobyns-Bennett, Kingsport - 1,830

Source: The Washington Post