



Harford County Public Schools

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Patterson Mill, C. Milton Wright and Bel Air high schools among America's top high schools

Three Harford County public high schools, Patterson Mill, C. Milton Wright and Bel Air, are part of an elite group of schools nationwide that are included in the "2011 America's Top High Schools" list compiled by *The Washington Post*. This recognition places these high schools in the top seven percent of the approximately 27,000 U.S. public high schools in the country rated this way.

The high school challenge, known as the "Challenge Index," identifies schools that offer a rigorous instructional program based on high numbers of students taking either Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) tests. The Challenge Index, which was devised by Post reporter Jay Matthews, divides the number of AP or IB tests taken by all students at a school by the number of graduating seniors. The resulting ratio score is used to rank schools in the survey.

"We are extremely proud of our three high schools for this recognition, and we are equally as proud of our staff for their dedication to the success of our students," said Superintendent Robert M. Tomback. "We are committed to encouraging our students to reach their highest level of achievement and preparing them for college."

The total number of AP participants and the number of tests given at Harford County high schools has increased each year since 2005. Last school year, participation in AP assessments increased from 1,986 in 2009 to 2,328 in 2010, a more than 17 percent increase. At the same time, achievement on AP exams continued to increase from 1,249 assessments receiving passing scores (3-5) in 2009 to 1,423 passing scores in 2010, a nearly 14 percent increase.

Patterson Mill, C. Milton Wright and Bel Air high schools accounted for more than 50 percent of AP exams taken in Harford County in 2010. As a part of school improvement efforts, schools are accelerating student performance to ensure greater participation in AP courses. In particular, the school system continues to address its goal of increasing minority student participation and success in all AP courses.

Patterson Mill, C. Milton Wright and Bel Air high schools will be recognized by the Board of Education of Harford County at a Board meeting when the school year resumes in the fall.

The complete list of The Post's top high schools may be found at <http://apps.washingtonpost.com/highschoolchallenge/schools/search/>.

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