

CHS makes the grade in rankings

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COVENTRY — Coventry High School was recently designated as a top high school in the state via the Washington Post's annual rankings of the nation's high schools.

Coventry placed 19 out of the 25 ranked schools in Connecticut and 1,429 out of 2,000 for schools ranked nationwide.

Only 9 percent of the country's 22,000 public high schools are ranked in the Post's survey — with a total of 2,000 qualifying schools accounted for.

Originated by education columnist Jay Mathews in 1998, the High School Challenge looks to compare schools by a Challenge Index Score.

The score is calculated by dividing the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate Education exams at each school by the number of graduating seniors.

The exams require teachers to spend more time teaching critical thinking and analytical writing and are much longer than high school finals.

CHS Principal Michele Mullaly said, with the help of the Project Opening Doors grant, the school "opens the door to students" looking for a challenge.

Project Opening Doors (POD) is a partnership between the public and private sectors that seeks to increase Connecticut students' participation and achievement in AP courses and better ensure their success in college.

The high school also has many partnerships that allow students to take advantage of college courses, while still in high school.

Through the UConn Early College Experience (ECE) program, the high school is able to offer 26 college credits — credits which are transferable to other colleges.

Through the Manchester Community College High School Partnership Program, the school offers nine courses, or 27 college credits, which also can be transferred from MCC to other colleges.

The school also maintains partnerships with Goodwin College, University of Saint Joseph and the University of Hartford, which students may earn college credits.

Currently, the high school offers 10 AP classes ranging from European history to calculus.

Lead guidance counselor and AP coordinator Heather Mackintosh said the students are doing "very well" on assessments.

"Participation is increasing even though enrollment is down," Mackintosh said.

Both Mullaly and Mackintosh said they are "proud" of what their students are doing.

"I couldn't be more proud of the kids," Mullaly said. "They all recognize the importance."

Mackintosh said the students "take their education seriously."

Mullaly said students who take AP courses and college credits are less likely to dropout from college and tend to finish college quicker.

"This is not only rewarding for the kids, but for us as well," Mullaly said.

