

The Elite 40

When we compiled our first-ever school rankings last year, we considered private and public schools separately. Almost as soon as we were finished, we began to wonder whether it was possible to identify the best schools in the area by comparing all of them together. To answer the question, we again turned to statisticians I. Elaine Allen and Christopher A. Seaman. Looking at the available data, they found that by concentrating on academic variables (such as SAT scores and number of AP classes offered) and classroom environment data (such as class size and student-faculty ratio)—and leaving cost out of the equation (due to the difficulty of making private tuition and public-school spending comparable)—they could produce a statistically valid snapshot of our most elite schools regardless of their type.

It's important to bear in mind, however, that within the list itself, the differences measured are often quite small—any school could fairly exchange places with schools 10 positions higher or lower. Accordingly, we offer these rankings not as the final word on school quality, but as a starting point for parents searching for educational options for their children. Of course, if the reaction to last year's rankings is any guide, they will be the starting point for any number of arguments, too. (You can find an explanation of our methodology on page 99.)

On the following pages, we've highlighted some useful "top five" lists from the main chart and broken out the area's top public schools by county. We've also done a second round of calculations on our data, this time keeping money in the mix, to recognize schools that give the best academic value for every dollar spent.

KEY

- GEN Gender (male, female, coed)
- DT Day student tuition
- % FA Percentage of students receiving financial aid
- SAT V/M Average verbal and math SAT scores
- S:F R Student-faculty ratio
- ACS Average class size
- # AP Number of Advanced Placement courses
- % PSE Percentage of students going on to post-secondary education
- ATS Average teacher salary
- indicates public school

RANK	SCHOOL	TOWN	GEN	DT	% FA	SAT V/M	S:F R	ACS	# AP	% PSE
1	The Haverford School	Haverford	M	\$23,200	28%	650/660	8:1	15	19	100%
2	The Shipley School	Bryn Mawr	C	\$21,675	20%	658/658	8:1	15	17	100%
3	The Hill School	Pottstown	C	\$25,250	40%	625/633	7:1	12	25	100%
4	The Episcopal Academy	Merion	C	\$22,375	14%	650/660	7:1	16	17	100%
5	The Baldwin School	Bryn Mawr	F	\$22,050	16%	660/683	8:1	16	11	100%
6	The Agnes Irwin School	Rosemont	F	\$22,350	16%	645/655	7:1	15	14	100%
7	William Penn Charter School	Philadelphia	C	\$20,550	28%	658/650	9:1	15	14	99%
8	Holy Ghost Preparatory School	Bensalem	M	\$12,700	30%	620/637	10:1	18	20	100%
9	Springside School	Philadelphia	F	\$20,850	23%	630/630	8:1	16	18	100%
10	Germantown Friends School	Philadelphia	C	\$20,100	19%	669/643	9:1	18	N/A	95%
11	Chestnut Hill Academy	Philadelphia	M	\$20,400	41%	609/664	7:1	16	14	100%
12	Devon Preparatory School	Devon	M	\$13,500	16%	632/635	10:1	15	16	100%
13	Friends' Central School	Wynnewood	C	\$21,400	26%	645/644	9:1	15	12	99%
14	Akiba Hebrew Academy	Merion Station	C	\$20,100	28%	644/659	7:1	16	8	100%
15	Academy of Notre Dame de Namur	Villanova	F	\$14,900	11%	626/629	8:1	18	17	100%
16	Malvern Preparatory School	Malvern	M	\$20,750	30%	619/643	9:1	18	15	100%
17	Germantown Academy	Fort Washington	C	\$20,835	24%	626/633	15:1	15	15	100%
18	Abington Friends School	Jenkintown	C	\$19,240	33%	630/600	10:1	14	14	99%
19	Moorestown Friends School	Moorestown	C	\$17,500	27%	620/620	9:1	18	12	100%
20	● Masterman High School	Philadelphia	C	N/A	N/A	642/654	19:1	30	10	98%
21	Mount Saint Joseph Academy	Flourtown	F	\$10,800	33%	621/594	10:1	19	14	100%
22	● Conestoga High School	Berwyn	C	N/A	N/A	584/596	15:1	23	26	94%
23	La Salle College High School	Wyndmoor	M	\$13,000	35%	610/594	11:1	19	16	99%
24	St. Joseph's Preparatory School	Philadelphia	M	\$13,600	45%	612/621	17:1	26	15	99%
25	● Cherry Hill High School East	Cherry Hill	C	N/A	N/A	564/586	12:1	22	25	98%
26	Friends Select School	Philadelphia	C	\$20,995	38%	597/590	10:1	15	N/A	100%
27	Villa Maria Academy	Malvern	F	\$11,700	12%	590/590	9:1	15	14	100%
28	Westtown School	Westtown	C	\$22,110	33%	585/615	8:1	15	10	100%
29	George School	Newtown	C	\$24,700	42%	597/604	7:1	14	9	100%
30	Merion Mercy Academy	Merion Station	F	\$11,000	25%	601/573	10:1	17	13	100%
31	● Lower Merion High School	Ardmore	C	N/A	N/A	583/598	13:1	24	18	93%
32	● Strath Haven High School	Wallingford	C	N/A	N/A	577/592	14:1	22	18	90%
33	● Harrington (Lower Merion) High School	Rosemont	C	N/A	N/A	576/599	12:1	22	15	92%
34	● Haddonfield Memorial High School	Haddonfield	C	N/A	N/A	575/578	12:1	23	15	98%
35	● Radnor High School	Radnor	C	N/A	N/A	572/600	13:1	20	15	90%
36	Bishop Eustace Preparatory School	Pennsauken	C	\$11,300	35%	583/586	14:1	21	10	100%
37	● Upper Dublin High School	Fort Washington	C	N/A	N/A	557/590	16:1	21	17	94%
38	● Unionville High School	Kennett Square	C	N/A	N/A	575/580	16:1	21	13	98%
39	Country Day School of the Sacred Heart	Bryn Mawr	F	\$13,200	31%	590/570	6:1	15	5	100%
40	● Moorestown High School	Moorestown	C	N/A	N/A	554/569	12:1	24	20	93%

See raw numbers for all 106 schools we surveyed and links to data sources for every area school at phillymag.com.

Top of the Class

Most Expensive Day Tuition

1. The Hill School **\$25,250**
2. George School **\$24,700**
3. The Haverford School **\$23,200**
4. The Episcopal Academy **\$22,375**
5. The Agnes Irwin School **\$22,350**

Top Public High Schools by County

SCHOOL	SPENDING	SAT V/M	S:F R	ACS	ATS	# AP	% PSE
PENNSYLVANIA							
Bucks							
1. New Hope-Solebury	\$12,459	569/574	12:1	20	\$69,878	11	90%
2. Central Bucks East	\$8,570	550/562	20:1	25	\$68,541	18	90%
3. Council Rock North	\$10,628	551/572	16:1	24	\$79,745	13	92%
Chester							
1. Conestoga	\$11,670	584/596	15:1	23	\$66,474	26	94%
2. Unionville	\$10,722	575/580	16:1	21	\$66,397	13	98%
3. Great Valley	\$11,371	542/546	14:1	21	\$66,493	19	86%
Delaware							
1. Strath Haven	\$10,939	577/592	14:1	22	\$64,482	18	90%
2. Radnor	\$13,843	572/600	13:1	20	\$72,602	15	90%
3. Garnet Valley	\$10,604	526/540	14:1	20	\$52,397	15	87%
Montgomery							
1. Lower Merion	\$16,813	583/598	13:1	24	\$78,136	18	93%
2. Harriton (Lower Merion)	\$16,813	576/599	12:1	22	\$78,136	15	92%
3. Upper Dublin	\$9,941	557/590	16:1	21	\$62,180	17	94%
Philadelphia							
1. Masterman	\$8,551	642/654	19:1	30	\$59,403	10	98%
2. Central	\$8,551	537/570	22:1	31	\$59,403	21	86%
NEW JERSEY							
Burlington							
1. Moorestown	\$10,103	554/569	12:1	24	\$52,794	20	93%
2. Shawnee	\$11,707	536/551	11:1	27	\$50,927	16	92%
3. Cherokee	\$11,707	532/556	13:1	28	\$50,927	14	93%
Camden							
1. Cherry Hill East	\$10,717	564/586	12:1	22	\$50,143	25	98%
2. Haddonfield	\$10,658	575/578	12:1	23	\$57,763	15	98%
3. Eastern	\$10,613	545/566	11:1	21	\$54,704	19	92%
Gloucester							
1. Woodbury Junior-Senior	\$11,145	517/511	9:1	17	\$48,268	12	84%
2. Gateway Regional	\$11,019	516/533	10:1	16	\$42,725	10	79%
3. Clearview Regional	\$9,020	518/524	13:1	19	\$46,655	8	82%

Top Five Boys' Schools

SCHOOL/AFFILIATION/OVERALL RANK

1. The Haverford School, nonsectarian, 1
2. Holy Ghost Preparatory School, Catholic, 8
3. Chestnut Hill Academy, nonsectarian, 11
4. Devon Preparatory School, Catholic, 12
5. Malvern Preparatory School, Catholic, 16

Top Five Girls' Schools

1. The Baldwin School, nonsectarian, 5
2. The Agnes Irwin School, nonsectarian, 6
3. Springside School, nonsectarian, 9
4. Academy of Notre Dame de Namur, Catholic, 15
5. Mount Saint Joseph Academy, Catholic, 21

Top Five Coed Schools

1. The Shipley School, nonsectarian, 2
2. The Hill School, nonsectarian, 3
3. The Episcopal Academy, Episcopalian, 4
4. William Penn Charter School, Quaker, 7
5. Germantown Friends School, Quaker, 10

Highest Combined SATs

1. The Baldwin School, 1343
2. The Shipley School, 1316
3. Germantown Friends School, 1312
4. (tie) The Episcopal Academy, 1310
The Haverford School, 1310

Most Extracurricular Activities, Private

1. Westtown School, 68
2. St. Joseph's Preparatory School, 51
3. The Hill School, 47
4. Germantown Friends School, 43
5. The Haverford School, 40

Most Varsity Sports, Private

1. (tie) The Episcopal Academy, 30
The Hill School, 30
2. (tie) Bishop Eustace Preparatory School, 28
Friends' Central School, 28
3. William Penn Charter School, 27



Bang for Your Buck

Fifteen high-value schools that offer—based on tuition dollar or tax dollar spent—the best overall mix of high SATs, AP classes, and number of teachers. (• indicates a public school.)

RANK	SCHOOL
1	• Masterman High School
2	St. Joseph's Preparatory School
3	• Conestoga High School
4	Holy Ghost Preparatory School
5	• Central High School
6	The Baldwin School
7	The Haverford School
8	The Shipley School
9	The Episcopal Academy
10	Germantown Friends School
11	William Penn Charter School
12	Germantown Academy
13	Devon Preparatory School
14	• Cherry Hill High School East
15	Academy of Notre Dame de Namur

How We Prepared the Rankings

Philadelphia magazine researchers first looked at SAT data for all private and regular public high schools in the eight-county Philadelphia region. (We didn't include technical or charter schools.) Schools whose combined average SATs fell below 1028, the national average for the class of 2005, were removed from consideration. For the remaining 106 schools, we compiled the latest available information for 16 variables for private schools and 11 for public. (Not all variables were used in the final analysis.)

Our primary source for private-school data was school websites; when a number couldn't be found online, we supplemented with information from *Peterson's Private Secondary Schools 2007*. We then called each school at least twice to offer an opportunity to confirm or amend the data; some schools declined to talk to us. Data for Pennsylvania public schools, mainly from the 2004-'05 school year, was obtained from the state Department of Education website, from Standard & Poor's SchoolMatters.com website, and from the *Philadelphia Inquirer's 2006 Report Card* on the Schools database (inquirer.philly.com/specials/2006/report_card). Data for New Jersey, also from 2004-'05, was obtained from the state Department of Education website.

We then sent our data to I. Elaine Allen, associate professor of statistics and entrepreneurship at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and Christopher A. Seaman, a doctoral student in mathematics at City University of New York. The rankings were calculated using a combined database of private and public schools and validated doing separate analyses for private and for public schools. If a school had no data for a particular variable, the mean of the variable was substituted so as not to bias the analyses. Two factors were identified and combined for ranking: an academic achievement factor that included SAT scores, percentage of students attending post-secondary education, and number of AP courses offered (split between academic achievement and environment), and a school environment factor that included student-faculty ratio, average class size, and number of AP courses (split between academic achievement and environment). To combine these into an overall rank, the achievement factor was weighted 75 percent and the school environment factor was weighted 25 percent. To ensure comparability between variables, all the combined variables were standardized to create the same metric for comparisons. An additional analysis included a third factor, educational costs (day tuition and percentage of students receiving financial aid for private schools, and operational spending per student for public schools), to identify public and private schools that provide both high achievement and many opportunities for students at a reasonable cost. When combined with the other two factors, the weighting was 50 percent for academic achievement, 25 percent for educational environment, and 25 percent for costs.