

## **REDBANK LISTED AMONG TOP U.S. HIGH SCHOOLS**

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Leader-Vindicator Staff Writer (Reprinted by permission of the L-V)

NEW BETHLEHEM , December 19, 2007. A recent analysis by U.S. News and World Report places Redbank Valley High School on a prestigious roster of what it considers to be the best secondary schools in the nation.

The study, which analyzed academic data from 18,790 high schools in 40 states, awarded Redbank Valley a bronze medal rating, indicating that students there were performing better than statistically expected for the average student in Pennsylvania.

A bronze rating also means economically disadvantaged students at the school perform better than average compared with similar students across the state.

"I'm extremely proud of the efforts of our teachers and students," Redbank Valley high school principal Steve Dobransky said this week. "It's nice to have that effort recognized."

Only two Pennsylvania schools received a gold medal rating, while 19 others were awarded silver medals.

Three other nearby high schools -- Ridgeway Area High School in Elk County, East Forest Jr./Sr. High School in Forest County, and Leechburg Area High School in Armstrong County -- also garnered a bronze medal rating.

Redbank Valley superintendent Dr. John M. Cornish II said he didn't even know the study was taking place until he got a congratulatory phone call from his Forest Area School District counterpart Duane Vicini.

"I'm just basically thrilled," Cornish said. "We've been working really hard, and it's been a group effort by everyone, the students, staff and board."

Cornish said the achievement brings pride to the community and validates the district's educational policies and decisions.

"And that might be able to sell a home," he added, noting that a top-rated school district could prove to be a selling point for the area.

The America's Best High Schools study analyzed data from the 2005-2006 school year and based its methodology on "the key principles that a great high school must serve all its students well, not just those who are bound for college, and that it must be able to produce measurable academic outcomes that show the school is successfully educating its student body across a range of performance indicators."

Reading and math proficiency results from each school were compared to the statewide average both for disadvantaged students and for students as a whole. Schools that exceeded statistical

expectations in the first two steps -- 1,086 of them nationwide -- were awarded bronze medals and became eligible to be judged further according to college readiness performance and Advanced Placement data.

The country's top 100 high schools -- the gold medal winners -- were those with the highest "college readiness index scores." Another 405 schools were awarded silver medals based on their high college readiness performance.

School Evaluation Services, a K-12 education data research business run by Standard and Poor's, collaborated with U.S. News and World Report to produce the formula that determined the school rankings.