

EDUCATION APRIL 26, 2016 11:25 AM

# Arlington, Westlake charter schools rank high in U.S. News report

## HIGHLIGHTS

Eight Tarrant County schools make top 100 in the state

Three Keller schools among the state's top 150

Sixteen Fort Worth-area schools among state's top 200



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FORT WORTH — Charter schools in Arlington and Westlake are among the top 60 high schools in the nation, and six other Tarrant County schools made the top 100 in Texas, according to annual rankings in *U.S. News & World Report*.

Summit International Preparatory in Arlington is ranked 22nd in the nation and fourth in the state, and Westlake Academy in Westlake ranks 58th nationally and ninth in the state.

Two Dallas-based schools are ranked No. 1 and No. 4 nationally. The top ranking went to the School for the Talented and Gifted, and the School of Science and Engineering is fourth.

The 2016 Best High Schools rankings are based on college readiness, which takes into account the number of students who take and pass AP tests. It also includes graduation rates. The list includes public high schools, including charter and magnet schools.

Summit International Prep, which is part of the Uplift Education charter system, has a 100 percent AP testing participation rate, a 97 percent graduation rate and a 94 percent minority rate.

Uplift Education CEO Yasmin Bhatia said the system's campuses are strategically placed in low-income, high-minority areas to encourage college readiness.

"We're proud of opening up access to students who historically haven't had access to this path before," Bhatia said. "Seventy-two percent of this year's graduating seniors are first-generation college students with a 100 percent college acceptance rate."

Mechelle Bryson, executive principal/director of education at Westlake Academy in Northeast Tarrant County, calls the national ranking a “work in progress.”

“Our greater aim has been to build a school culture where educators use data continuously, collaboratively and effectively to improve teaching and learning,” Bryson said.

Tarrant County schools among the top 100 in Texas include:

- Harmony Science Academy in Euless (No. 28 in Texas, No. 155 in U.S.)
- Fort Worth Harmony School of Innovation in Fort Worth (No. 43 in Texas, No. 284 in U.S.)
- Colleyville Heritage High School (No. 71 in Texas, No. 653 in U.S.)
- Grapevine High School (No. 75 in Texas, No. 674 in U.S.)
- Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts (No. 79 in Texas, No. 702 in U.S.)
- Keller High School School (No. 100 in Texas, No. No. 885 in U.S.)

Two other Keller district high schools, Timber Creek and Central, ranked 137th and 149th in Texas, respectively. Both were unranked in 2015.

“We encourage all of our students to take rigorous courses that are designed to prepare them for the [AP] assessment,” said Jeff Bradley, director of college and career readiness for Keller schools. “Our teachers put a lot of time and effort in for the kids to help them be successful and showing increase in our participation.”

Tarrant County-area schools among the top 200 in Texas include:

- Aledo High School (No. 122)
- Trophy Club Byron Nelson High School (No. 129)
- Mansfield High School (No. 161)
- Arlington Martin High School (No. 165)
- Hurst Bell High School (No. 167)
- Euless Trinity High School (No. 179)

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