

Principal's Note FOR CURRENT STUDENTS AND ALUMNI – May 16, 2018

Hello, TAG Family!

Last week was a BUSY week! Not only did our students take AP and STAAR exams, but we also welcomed all of our new, incoming TAG families into the TAG family at our New Student Orientation. It's amazing how quickly the school year flies by, as it feels like just yesterday that we were welcoming our current freshmen to TAG! Meanwhile, during all of the excitement, US News and World Report released their yearly rankings for 'Top High Schools in America.' This year, TAG was ranked as #11 in the nation, which is a phenomenal honor for all of our students, staff, and community. It's always wonderful and welcome when outside organizations shine a bright light on the life-changing work that happens here at TAG day-in and day-out.

Now, I'm sure that many of you might see that and your first thought be "What happened? I thought we were #1 or #4 and why do we keep falling?" This is a completely valid question and it's understandable to worry whether the school is falling in the rankings for any particular reason. However, let me assure you that even as US News and World Report changes its methodology and changes how it ranks, TAG is doing phenomenally by its students and continues to improve each and every year. As I have said before, if it ever comes time to make a choice between pursuing national rankings or doing what's right for our students, we will choose to do what's right for our students. For example, one of the changes to the methodology of how rankings are calculated now includes the straightforward percentage of students who pass the AP exams (last year we had 85% with every student taking all of their exams). We could very easily make this number 100%, instead of 85%, by simply not allowing students who don't feel confident on the exam to take the exam, but we believe that this runs counter to the best interests of our students. All of our students have worked hard in their classes and deserve a chance to take their AP exams to earn credit.

Rankings alone never tell the whole story. That's why we caution our students to look beyond rankings of colleges, and explore the programs and the outcomes, because rankings rarely tell the whole story. Over the same time frame that our US News and World Report Rankings have moved from #1, to #4, to #11, let me share with you some data that tells a much more impressive and much for complete story of the amazing work being done at TAG. Take a look at the chart below.

State of TAG

2012-13 to Present



	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
AP Qualifying Rate	72.9%	78.6%	82.1%	83.5%	85%	TBD
ACT Composite	28*	30*	29	30	31	TBD
SAT Composite	1287	1297	1339	1380	1420	TBD
Low SES	26.7%	26.2%	30.9%	33.3%	35.2%	41%

* Optional for seniors

Unfortunately in America, where you have a school with a higher number of students coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, you have lower achievement. At TAG, we have seen the opposite occur. Over the past five years, EVERY academic achievement metric has risen. This is an outstanding testament to the quality of the work of our amazing students, dedicated teachers, and supportive community. These results coupled with our student's experiences and outcomes are the true rankings that matter.

Regardless of what the rankings may say each and every year, I am proud to work here at TAG, a school that I believe is the best in the world and I look forward to continuing to help improve TAG every day and every year going forward!

Best,

Ben Mackey