

HISD PRESS RELEASE

Two HISD schools ranked among the most challenging in the nation by Challenge Index

April 14, 2021 – The nation’s only index that ranks high schools’ ability to challenge their students will be published next month, and two Houston Independent School District campuses made the list in more than one category.

Carnegie Vanguard High School is ranked number five on the latest Challenge Index list of top 20 high schools, as well as number 2 on the Index’s list of Top 10 Magnet Schools and number 3 on the list of Top 10 Southern Schools.

Additionally, Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy is ranked number 10 on the list of Top 10 Magnet Schools.

The Challenge Index 2020 will be published in the May 2021 edition of Education Next. It is also available [online](#).

“We are extremely proud of Carnegie Vanguard and YWCPA for being recognized as the most elite schools in America,” said HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan. “It requires hard work of administrators, teachers, and students to obtain such an impressive achievement.”

Carnegie Vanguard serves grades 9-12. As a Vanguard Program, all students are gifted and talented, and all students take Advanced Placement core classes as part of the curriculum. The school consistently has been ranked as a top public high school in the United States by several major magazines and journals.

Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy was named a U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School in 2020. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes high student achievement and exemplary progress in closing achievement gaps.

YWCPA provides a unique learning environment for female students in grades 6-12. It focuses on college readiness and science, technology, engineering, and math. All core curriculum classes are Pre-Advanced Placement or Advanced Placement.

First published in 1998, the Challenge Index has appeared in Newsweek and The Washington Post. It is the only list that compares private and public schools. It does not rely on test scores. It ranks high schools by a simple ratio: the number of Advanced Placement, International

Baccalaureate, or Cambridge tests given at school each year, divided by the number of seniors who graduated that year.

Education journalist Jay Matthews compiles the list. He believes participation in college-level AP, IB, and Cambridge tests is a measure of learning depth.

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The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, with 280 schools and more than 209,772 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area, with more than 27,000 employees.

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