
Blaine H.S. ranked in top 5 percent nationally

Listings are based on the ratio of AP tests to number of grads

KIRA MILLAGE
THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

BLAINE — Blaine High School recently found out it's not only one of the top high schools in the state, it's one of the top high schools in the country.

The small high school made Newsweek's list of the top 5 percent of high schools in the country, with more than 1,300 on the list. Blaine's rank was 752, according to the Newsweek Web site.

In the state, Blaine was ranked 10th and had the highest percentage of free and reduced lunch students of the top 10 schools. Sehome High School also made the list at 912th statewide and 13th in the state.

"It feels pretty good to be (752) in the country in little ol' Blaine," said Principal Dan Newell. "To throw us in there with 40 percent free and reduced lunch is amazing."

The ranking is determined by the ratio of the number of Advanced Placement exams taken in 2006 to the number of graduating seniors that same year. Schools need at least an equal number of each, or a ratio of 1.0, to make the list. Blaine, which offers AP classes in 12 subjects, had a ratio of about 1.6, with 191 tests taken and 121 students graduating.

But this isn't the first year Blaine has had more AP tests given than students graduating. This is just the first year it's been noticed.

Since the 2002-03 school year, the high school has had a ratio higher than 1.0, with 123 tests given that year. This past school year, students took 248 tests.

The school decided to ramp up its AP offerings in 2001 when the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction gave out grants to schools with lower-income students to try to attract those students to advanced classes. Blaine received more than \$30,000 over four years to train AP teachers.

"One of the benefits to being a small school is you can make things happen," said Karen Mulholland, counselor at the school. "It's a climate of openness to change."

Reach Kira Millage at kira.millage@bellinghamherald.com or call 715-2266.