

# Fitchburg High in top 10% of challenging U.S. high schools

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FITCHBURG -- For the third year in a row, Fitchburg High School will be named by The Washington Post as one of the most challenging high schools in the country, according to Principal Jeremy Roche.

Superintendent of Schools Andre Ravenelle credits the district's partnership with MassInsight, a nonprofit agency that works with schools to close the achievement gap, for raising the number of tests taken by all students, particularly minorities.

"Everybody is looking for the magic bullet to help close the achievement gap," he said.

The Post determines the ranking annually by calculating the number of Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate and Cambridge tests given by the school each year. The number is divided by the number of graduating seniors and, with a few exceptions, schools with at least as many tests as graduates are named to the list.

According to Roche, about 10 percent of the roughly 22,000 public high schools in the U.S. made the Post's list this year.

The full 2016 list will be released by the Post's in the spring.

Ravenelle said participation in AP classes has been linked to better performance in college, regardless of the scores students earned in the classes.

"It's still so valuable because you have kids taking college coursework in high school," he said.

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