

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Saturday, December 6, 2008

City Schools Among Maryland's, Nation's Best: Five Schools Make *U.S. News*' List of Top High Schools

(Baltimore, MD) — *U.S. News & World Report* issued its second annual listing of America's Best High Schools today, and once again, Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) showed well. Of the 1,925 American schools that earned a gold, silver or bronze medal, five were City Schools' own. City Schools also led the state, as the Maryland jurisdiction with the largest number of schools on the list; Worcester County followed with four schools, and Montgomery County had three.

Baltimore City College and Baltimore Polytechnic Institute both won silver medals, and Baltimore Freedom Academy, Paul Laurence Dunbar High School and Western High School won bronze. City, Poly, Dunbar and Western won those very same distinctions last year, while this is Baltimore Freedom Academy's first time on the list.

"We are incredibly proud of these five schools. They show continued excellence and progress, two critical qualities we are striving to attain for all 198 of our schools," said Andrés A. Alonso, Chief Executive Officer of City Schools. "City Schools' place on the *U.S. News* ranking reflects—and reinforces—the results we saw earlier this fall in the State of Our High Schools report. Perhaps most notably, our most disadvantaged students are making historic academic gains and more and more of our kids are leaving high school ready for work and college. To receive national recognition for this progress is affirmation that our high schools are moving forward and on the right path."

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“We are excited that Baltimore Freedom Academy has joined the list of America’s top high schools,” said Khalilah Harris, Executive Director of the Baltimore Freedom Academy (BFA) Foundation, and one of the original founders of the school. “From its inception, BFA has cultivated an environment where students focus on problem solving and critical thinking, and our efforts to provide an innovative education are certainly paying off.”

Baltimore Freedom Academy will look to duplicate its high school success, as it phases in a middle school over the next three years.

U.S. News issued its first-ever list of America’s Best High Schools in late 2007. This year’s list follows the same basic methodology as last year’s list. *U.S. News* analyzed 21,069 high schools in 48 states, and awarded 1,925 of those schools medals based on their ability to serve all students well and to show academic progress in support of that mission. A “best” high school is one where student achievement exceeds expectations given the poverty level of its students, as measured by state tests in the core subjects or reading and math; where proficiency rates on state tests for its least advantaged students (those who are African-American, Latino and economically disadvantaged) exceed state averages; and where students are prepared for college, as measured by participation in and performance on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams.

Gold- and silver-medal schools meet all three of these criteria; the gold schools are the Top 100 high schools in the country, and the silver schools are the remaining top-performing high schools in this category. Bronze medal schools meet the first two criteria, but fall short on the college-readiness measure.