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Article Published August 23, 2016

## Valley Regional Ranks Among Top Schools in U.S.

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As high school students return on Wednesday, Aug. 31, they can enter their classrooms knowing that Valley Regional High School (VRHS) isn't just a good school, it is, in fact, a great school. Earlier this month, *Newsweek* released its annual list of the top 500 public high schools in the nation. Sixteen schools from Connecticut made the list, including VRHS, which ranked 389th in the nation.

"I'm very, very proud of our standing and what we've done," said Superintendent of Schools Ruth Levy. "It's a collective effort of so many people."

The determination is based on a number of factors: college readiness, college acceptance rate and enrollment (86 percent at VRHS), SAT and ACT participation and performance rate, number of students taking AP classes and their performance, and students engaged in dual enrollment by taking classes for additional credit at the University of Connecticut or Middlesex Community College.

Although the recognition was specific to VRHS, Levy emphasized that it's the result of a much wider effort. From consistent leadership to excellent administration and staff, Levy spread the praise throughout the school system—and also to a community that supports education.

"We have excellent staff members who are very dedicated and care deeply about providing excellence for our students," she said. "We have three towns and three communities that support our district, support our initiative, support our children, and that makes a huge difference. In addition to that, our board supports us through allowing us to do many of the initiatives that keep us on top as well as supporting the resources we need to make it happen."

In particular, Levy noted that success at the high school level is dependent upon what comes before it.

"I think probably beyond everything else that this is the result of a K-12 effort. This doesn't just happen at the high school, it happens in elementary school on up through high school," she said. "It's a culmination; it doesn't just happen."

Levy also praised the students at VRHS and their own hard work.

"We have great kids—we really have wonderful students," she commented. "I'm proud to be a part of all this and proud to work with the people that I do to make this happen for our children."

The achievement was the school's fourth recognition of this type.