

Published May 11, 2012, 12:00 AM

TrekNorth, BHS get ranked among state's best

BEMIDJI – Two Bemidji high schools have been recognized as Silver Medal High Schools for efforts in preparing students for college.

By: [Brian Matthews](#), Bemidji Pioneer

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According to the U.S. News & World Report, TrekNorth High School ranked eighth and Bemidji High School ranked 29th on the list of best high schools in Minnesota.

TrekNorth Executive Director Dan McKeon said the school is proud of its ranking because the schools ranked around them are large metro public schools that are able to levee the tax base and provide more resources to its students.

“One of the things I am really proud of is that we are doing more with less,” McKeon said. “I think the reason we are able to do more with less is because of the work ethic of the teachers we have here.”

The magazine teamed with the American Institute of Research, using the state's math and proficiency tests, Advanced Placement participation and student to teacher ratio to rank the schools.

TrekNorth's college readiness was above the state's average and with 45.3 percent of the school's students take AP courses. The U.S. News & World Report study didn't provide a percent for the state.

“AP is the backbone of our school and we do well there because we have an unusually high percentage of our students taking those courses,” McKeon said.

Bemidji High School Principal Brian Stefanich said the Bemidji High School also takes pride in their AP offerings, offering 11 courses, with 36 percent of its students taking at least one AP exam while in school.

“We encourage our students to take AP courses,” Stefanich said. “It is just about getting the word out on all the opportunities that we have here.”

Both schools ranked above the state average in reading proficiency based on 2009 to 2010 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment tests. Bemidji High School had a proficiency rating of 83 percent in reading, and TrekNorth had 87 percent.

Mathematics proficiencies were lower – at 18 percent proficient for TrekNorth and 45 percent proficient for Bemidji High School. McKeon said mathematics is a focus statewide and the gap between reading and math has gotten a little smaller since the 2009 to 2010 results.

McKeon and Stefanich agreed the rankings are nice, but they would like to continue becoming more effective with a higher percentage of students.

Minnesota had eight Gold Medal Schools, 42 Silver Schools and 96 Bronze. Nationally, TrekNorth ranked 507 and Bemidji High School ranked 1,123 out of the 20,000 schools the magazine ranked.

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