

# PUBLIC

» Despite all of the bleak news about dropout rates and budget cuts, L.A. has many high-performing public schools whose college placement records are comparable to those of their private counterparts. Here are the 12 that made our top tier.

## Anderson W. Clark Magnet High School

LA CRESCENTA  
GLENDALE UNIFIED // MAGNET // 9-12

▶ THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY magnet has attained U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon status in both the high-achievement and high-poverty categories. Students may chart mercury levels in Los Angeles Harbor and send underwater robots to monitor protected areas of the Channel Islands. Clark receives assistance from JPL, Raytheon, and NASA, among others. The school was founded ten years ago at an old junior high site that now is packed with T1 lines and Mac towers. Not everything involves chemistry labs or cyberspace. In June, Clark presented its first film festival, which highlighted works from its cinematography program.

## Arcadia High School

ARCADIA  
ARCADIA UNIFIED // 9-12

▶ ARCADIA IS A HAVEN FOR OVER-achievers who pursue what the school newspaper calls “the AHS lifestyle—functioning at 3 a.m., dedicating countless weekends to studying and balancing extra-curricular activities.” The curriculum is loaded with college prep courses, but it also offers culinary arts and sports medicine. Although it sprawls over 40 acres, the school can seem crowded because of an enrollment of 3,600 and the constant schedule of club and team events. Music programs are popular; Arcadia has three show choirs and a 400-member band that has played at the 2004 presidential inauguration and in 14 Tournament of Roses parades.

ICONS: PETER MOEY

## Beverly Hills High School

BEVERLY HILLS  
BEVERLY HILLS UNIFIED // 9-12

▶ LARGE, TEEMING, AND HIGH PER-forming—that’s not quite the image of Beverly Hills High promoted by 90210. The school has 2,400 students, more than 40 percent of whom speak a primary language other than English (Korean and Farsi are the most common). Everyone is assigned to one of three “houses” overseen by an assistant principal and several counselors. Even so, students say, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed by the number of choices: nearly 200 courses, including 46 advanced placement sections and 82 electives. Beverly Hills has its own television station and recently opened a science and technology center. Its theater and music productions are, as might be expected, nearly professional in quality—a number of students have ended up working in Hollywood.

## California Academy of Math and Science

CARSON  
LONG BEACH UNIFIED // MAGNET // 9-12

▶ CAMS ENABLES STUDENTS TO TAKE the equivalent of five years of science as well as courses in logic, university-level calculus, digital electronics, and computer design. Juniors and seniors also can attend classes at Cal State Dominguez Hills, where the academy is located. Students are selected from public and private schools in the South Bay and southeastern Los Angeles County. As with many specialized campuses, athletics and other extracurricular activities are not a strong suit; kids pick CAMS because they want to focus on their studies.

## Crescenta Valley High School

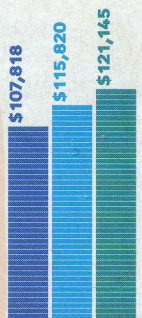
LA CRESCENTA  
GLENDALE UNIFIED // 9-12

▶ CRESCENTA VALLEY IS THE CLASSIC all-around suburban school. It has a robotics team led by a rocket scientist, a championship softball squad, an award-winning Junior Air Force ROTC, and a science and medicine academy whose members work with emergency responders and hospital technicians. One quality that sets CV apart is its commitment to helping struggling students through aggressive assessment, tutoring, and incentive programs. The 1930s-era campus was expanded six years ago.

## Gretchen Whitney High School

CERRITOS  
ABC UNIFIED // 7-12

▶ PARENTS FROM SOUTH KOREA and India have moved to the Cerritos area in hopes of getting their children into Whitney. The former community learning center has been transformed into one of the top public schools in the United States through selective admissions—it only accepts the district’s highest-scoring students—and a dedication to traditional educational values. Whitney keeps beating its record for the Academic Performance Index (it was number one in the state for the school year ending in 2007). “From the day you enter Whitney’s doors, college prep will be one of the uppermost priorities,” says a graduate. “But the students here aren’t just nerds. A lot of people join drama or the yearbook for fun and not just to pump up their résumés.”



AVERAGE SALARIES OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 3 DISTRICTS

■ LOS ANGELES UNIFIED  
■ ALHAMBRA UNIFIED  
■ PALOS VERDES PENINSULA UNIFIED  
(2005-6)



### HOME AWAY FROM HOME

» Students from 26 countries board at Southwestern Academy in San Marino. Nearly all the students who room at Flintridge Sacred Heart in La Cañada Flintridge are South Korean or Chinese. Webb in Claremont is the least global; most of its boarders are Californians.

