

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

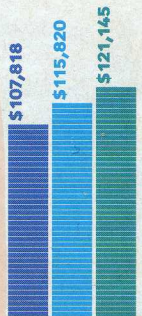
▶ CRESCENTA VALLEY IS THE CLASSIC all-around suburban school. It has a robotics team led by a rocket scientist, a championship softball squad, an award-winning Junior Air Force ROTC, and a science and medicine academy whose members work with emergency responders and hospital technicians. One quality 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.

Hawthorne Math & Science Academy

HAWTHORNE

HAWTHORNE // CHARTER // 9-12

▶ SINCE IT OPENED IN 2003, Hawthorne has overcome lousy facilities and a high dropout rate (nearly 50 percent its first year) to become one of the best-performing schools in Southern California. "We're gonna work you," says principal Joaquín Hernández. "Don't do your homework and it's an automatic trip to the office and a call home." Many kids live at or near the poverty line; the 2007 valedictorian was a teen mom. Hawthorne has started to attract private school transfers because of its API scores.

La Cañada High School

LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

LA CAÑADA UNIFIED // 9-12

▶ TUCKED IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE San Gabriel Mountains, La Cañada benefits from serving an affluent, close-knit community. Its performances on the API and AP exams rank among the best in the state, and parental involvement is unusually strong. The Institutes for the 21st Century is a mentoring program that pairs students with bankers, geologists, and legislators. The theater department, which operates like a miniconservatory, teaches everything from sound design to stage combat.

Mira Costa High School

MANHATTAN BEACH

MANHATTAN BEACH UNIFIED // 9-12

▶ GENERATIONS OF AEROSPACE families and more recently many celebrities have moved to Manhattan Beach because of the ocean, the weather, and the area's great schools. Mira Costa is hailed for its high test scores, its music and drama programs (the orchestra and choir have performed at Carnegie Hall), and its powerhouse sports teams. Students produce an award-winning video newscast.

Palos Verdes High School

PALOS VERDES ESTATES

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA UNIFIED // 9-12

Palos Verdes Peninsula High School

ROLLING HILLS ESTATES

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA UNIFIED // 9-12

▶ DISTRICT RESIDENTS CAN ATTEND either campus—the choice often depends on where a student's friends are and whether one prefers Palos Verdes' block schedule of three two-hour classes or Peninsula's seven-class day. PV promotes student independence through the Senior Project, which involves writing research papers, testing theories in the field (for instance,

analyzing emergency room access and then volunteering in an ER), and presenting findings to a panel of faculty and community members. PV's nationally recognized video news unit broadcasts twice a week. The technology club competed against colleges like Caltech in a contest to build and race unmanned vehicles from Barstow to Las Vegas. Peninsula has a reputation for academic intensity; last year it produced 27 National Merit Scholarship semifinalists. Classes include gourmet cooking and glassblowing. The science program continues to produce Westinghouse (now Siemens) Scholarship finalists, and the Latin team has won the state competition 13 times in 16 years. Athletes can join the crew, equestrian, roller hockey, lacrosse, or surfing teams.

San Marino High School

SAN MARINO

SAN MARINO UNIFIED // 9-12

▶ WITH ITS IMMACULATE GROUNDS and a phalanx of new academic and athletic facilities, San Marino could pass for a small college. A recently completed \$40 million renovation and construction project was financed largely through bonds and fund-raising—one sign of how avidly residents support the school. Such community interest translates into extraordinary pressure to succeed, which feeds the demand for AP and honors courses and extracurricular activities. Besides academics, the visual and performing arts are major draws.



BASIC TRAINING

▶ Want to instill a sense of discipline in your son through reveille, demerits, and lots of marching? Sorry. L.A. County doesn't have any military high schools. The closest is Army and Navy Academy in Carlsbad.



A STUDENT'S COSTS FOR ONE YEAR AT LONG BEACH POLY

▶ Tuition: \$0
Fees: \$0
Books: \$0
Commuting: \$360
Cafeteria: \$360
Team uniform: \$90
Grad night: \$75
Yearbook: \$65
(2007-8)

PARENTS' GUIDE: THE INS AND OUTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES



MORE THAN HALF OF TEENS who go online use social networking sites like MySpace. **Take a tour:** Jaana Juvonen, a professor of developmental psychology at UCLA, recently coauthored a study involving 1,454 kids ages 12 to 17 who are heavy Internet users. She recommends asking your child for a social networking tutorial. Beyond getting you up to speed, "you're giving your kid a chance to tell you something you don't know," she says. **Stay tuned:** Fearful your child is posting too much information? Try to avoid snooping. Instead, Juvonen says to ask your child for full access to her Facebook page. Ask her why she wants to share personal details, whether it's a diary entry or a racy photo, and try to listen. "You want to understand what they want to convey on their site," says Juvonen. **Provide perspective:** More than 70 percent of kids Juvonen surveyed reported being bullied online, and many, fearing they'd lose their Internet privileges, don't tell their parents. Her advice is to maintain a dialogue in which you talk about other kids (kids won't want to talk about themselves), which will still help prep your child for the worst.

PRIVATE

➤➤ Many of L.A.'s independent prep schools can cost more than \$20,000 a year, but in return they provide college-level courses, imaginative extracurricular activities, small class sizes, and numerous amenities. Here are the 10 that made our top tier.

Archer School for Girls

BRENTWOOD

INDEPENDENT // GIRLS // 6-12

▶ STUDENTS RUN THE CAMPUS store and curate gallery exhibits at Archer, which was started 13 years ago by three girls' school graduates who wanted to create a model for modern single-sex education. The curriculum embraces the belief that girls "thrive on making connections" between ideas—so, for instance, archaeology and ancient history are taught together. Archer promotes off-campus learning through events such as "Arrow Week," during which students can shoot a documentary or build houses with Habitat for Humanity. For nine years the school has occupied an elegant 1931 Spanish colonial revival building on Sunset Boulevard. Each May Day seniors and their fathers erect a maypole on the front lawn, a tradition inherited from the building's former residents, the women of the Eastern Star retirement home.

Buckley School

SHERMAN OAKS

INDEPENDENT // 7-12

▶ AFTER ISABELLE BUCKLEY OPENED her first nursery school in L.A. in the 1930s, *Time* magazine called her a "counter-revolutionary with a passion for sound minds, manners and morals." Today Buckley School remains devoted to its founder's "4-Fold Plan of Education," which gives equal weight to academics, the arts, athletics, and moral education. The course work tilts toward the liberal arts but includes such topical additions as Mandarin and 21st-century leadership. Despite its size (18 rustic acres on the grounds of a former

country club), Buckley retains a sense of hominess: Milk is provided to each student at the request of Isabelle Buckley.

Chadwick School

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA

INDEPENDENT // K-12

▶ PERCHED ON A HILL OVERLOOKING the Pacific, Chadwick sprawls across grounds so vast, they include a canyon and hiking trails. The heart of the 45-acre campus is a tranquil expanse known as Vanderlip Lawn. The Upper School is based in Roessler Hall, one of the oldest buildings at Chadwick, which was founded in 1935. More recent additions to the campus are a 35,000-volume library, computer labs, a performing arts complex, and a sports pavilion. Outdoor education is mandatory for upper-grade students. Seniors may participate in a 21-day backpacking trip in the Sierra that includes a few days spent going solo, or they can perform community service.

Flintridge Prep School

LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE

INDEPENDENT // 7-12

▶ FLINTRIDGE PREP'S CURRICULUM is a mix of the poetic and the pragmatic; students have written a collective novel inspired by William Faulkner, deciphered the intricacies of multivariable calculus, or spent a year immersed in the basics of accounting and investment. Teachers at the 75-year-old school are known for their accessibility and, students say, for trying to make sure that attending Prep is a fulfilling experience and not just a conduit to college. That said, the academic standards are tough, and juniors and se-

niors take weekly classes in which the progress of their university applications is monitored.

Harvard-Westlake School

BEL-AIR/NORTH HOLLYWOOD

INDEPENDENT // 7-12

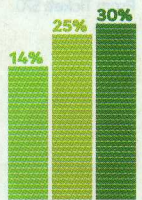
▶ HARVARD-WESTLAKE'S REPUTATION as one of the nation's leading prep schools is built on its abundant resources and a demanding curriculum that includes 105 advanced placement sections. Mindful that universities care about more than test scores, Harvard-Westlake requires community service and offers an unusual range of extracurricular activities and classes. The Upper School in North Hollywood may not be as scenic as the Middle School in Bel-Air, but its facilities would be the envy of many colleges. The science center has an electron microscope, and the weight room is so well equipped that athletes return to work out even after they've graduated and turned pro. Formed by the 1991 merger of two of L.A.'s top private schools, Harvard-Westlake has twice as many high school students as most of its peers, and some parents say it can be easy for kids to get lost in such a highly competitive crowd.

Marlborough School

HANCOCK PARK

INDEPENDENT // GIRLS // 7-12

▶ THE BIGGEST CHEERS AT THIS spring's awards ceremony were given to a basketball all-star and the Most Valuable Mathlete. At Marlborough, girls say, they can feel free to be jocks or nerds.



APPLICANT ACCEPTANCE RATES AT 3 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

■ POLYTECHNIC
■ CROSSROADS
■ HARVARD-WESTLAKE
(2007-8)



PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO SAY THEY'VE CHEATED ON A TEST

➤➤ Nearly 60 percent also say they've committed plagiarism, according to a six-year survey of 24,000 teens by Rutgers University professor Donald McCabe.



A STUDENT'S COSTS FOR ONE YEAR AT MARLBOROUGH SCHOOL

- » Tuition: \$26,750
 - Fees: \$250
 - Books: \$750
 - Uniforms: \$150
 - Commuting: \$2,000
 - Prom Ticket: \$70
- (2007-8)



TIME TO HIT THE SHOWERS

- » There's bad news for everyone who hates gym class. A new California law has toughened the requirements for high school physical education. Starting with this year's freshmen, the state discourages students from skipping marching band, dance, or drill team for PE. They also can't opt out of their last two years—which many do now to squeeze in more courses—unless they pass a fitness test.

The faculty, which includes 17 Ph.D.s, has developed such distinctive electives as courses in Arabic literature and *Anna Karenina* and a research program that enables students to work with scientists at UCLA and other institutions. Marlborough, which is nearing its 120th anniversary, is the oldest independent girls' school in Southern California. The sense of history is strong. Seventh graders write poems to alumnae, and decades of senior class photographs line one hallway. Substantial donations from two families have fueled a \$65 million modernization of the campus.

Oakwood School
NORTH HOLLYWOOD

INDEPENDENT // K-12

▶ STUDENT MURALS ADORN THE walls. Kids ponder script changes as they lounge on shady redwood benches. CalArts graduate students teach Super 8 filmmaking and the jaw harp. Oakwood's emphasis on the arts is part of a broader mission: to blend a college prep curriculum with individualized learning, a commitment that dates to the school's founding by progressive parents in 1951. The dissatisfaction with the rigidity of mainstream education is reflected in the variety of mentorships and independent projects Oakwood offers as well as in the special studies courses (subjects include anime and baseball) that are devised by teachers, alumni, and students.

Polytechnic School

PASADENA

INDEPENDENT // K-12

▶ ASK STUDENTS WHAT DISTINGUISHES Poly from its peers, and they mention its intimate atmosphere. Everybody—children, teachers, and the college counselor—knows everybody and, it seems, has known one another for years. Poly was founded in 1907 as a combination academic-manual arts training school, and it added a high school in 1959. It has since emerged as one of Southern California's elite prep schools. Poly, says Head of School Deborah E. Reed, tries to extend learning "beyond the traditional classroom" through arts programs, community service, and river camping treks. Generations of alumni return for the spring musical, one of many traditions celebrated on the leafy campus, which sits next to Caltech.

Vivian Webb School & Webb School of California

CLAREMONT

INDEPENDENT // GIRLS // 9-12

INDEPENDENT // BOYS // 9-12

▶ WITH ITS NAVY DRESS BLAZERS and an honor code that cautions against cowardice, the Webb School of California resembles an old-fashioned East Coast prep school. It was started in 1922 as a boys' boarding school; in 1981,

a girls' school was established. Despite the traditional trappings, Webb, as the two schools are known, takes a nonconventional approach to single-sex education; boys and girls study separately until junior year. Day students make up one-third of the enrollment. Webb's curriculum is particularly strong in the social and natural sciences: Within the 75-acre campus stand an observatory and a paleontology museum, most of whose fossils were discovered by students, faculty, and alumni.

Westridge School

PASADENA

INDEPENDENT // GIRLS // 4-12

▶ WESTRIDGE BEGAN IN 1913 AFTER two mothers asked Mary Lowther Ranney, a teacher and architect, if she would create a nurturing learning environment for their daughters. Enrollment has risen to more than 500, and the school has moved from Ranney's home to a nine-acre campus dotted with architectural gems designed by Greene & Greene and Marston, Van Pelt & Maybury, among others. Westridge, however, remains what one parent calls "a safe and welcoming place for girls"—albeit one that has grown increasingly competitive academically. The science, music, and drama programs are especially notable. Each year high school students spend time exploring the world beyond Pasadena, be it on trips to downtown Los Angeles or historic Rome.

PARENTS' GUIDE: TIME MANAGEMENT FOR BUSY FAMILIES



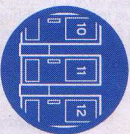
BORED TEENS GET INTO TROUBLE, and overscheduled teens burn out. **Let them sleep:** Teenagers' internal clocks are different from adults'. They're off by about two hours, says Michele Kipke, professor of pediatrics and preventive medicine at USC's Keck School of Medicine, and "they're out of sync with the way we structure the day for kids." They're not sleepy until midnight, their changing bodies need nine hours of sleep, and school starts at 7:30 or so. Then there are extracurricular activities and heaps of homework to manage. "Help them decide what activities will be supportive of getting them into college, what activities are fun, and balance that with enough time to study to get good grades, rest, and if they have to, work," says Dorian Traube, an assistant professor at USC's School of Social Work. If they're sleeping too little, cut an activity. **Unite and conquer:** Schedule time to eat together. Sharing dinner really is one of the best ways to keep the family unit united. "It's about having the connection to family," says Kipke. "The research is clear that the sense of connectedness and sense of belonging is going to build resilience and help children develop successfully."

HONOR ROLL

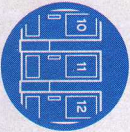
There are more than 550 public and private high schools in Los Angeles County. Which one is right for your child? We've picked 47 of L.A.'s best, based in part on a statistical analysis that measures academic performance and how well students are prepared for college. The highest scorers are indicated by a ★. The chart also includes our choices for specialized and nontraditional schools. All information is the most current available.

PUBLIC

	GRADE RANGE	TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	API SCORE	NUMBER OF AP SECTIONS	STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	AVERAGE SAT SCORE
★ Anderson W. Clark Magnet High · Glendale Unified (magnet)	9-12	1,066	848	23	21:1	1596
Arcadia High · Arcadia Unified	9-12	3,628	859	78	25:1	1710
★ Beverly Hills High · Beverly Hills Unified	9-12	2,419	824	46	22:1	1746
★ Calabasas High · Las Virgenes Unified	9-12	2,024	848	34	27:1	1690
★ California Academy of Math and Science · Long Beach Unified (magnet)	9-12	594	942	22	31:1	1747
Cerritos High · ABC Unified	9-12	2,105	815	48	24:1	1660
★ Crescenta Valley High · Glendale Unified	9-12	2,993	861	68	23:1	1646
★ Gretchen Whitney High · ABC Unified	7-12	1,020	982	15	26:1	2004
Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy · LAUSD	9-12	330	828	6	29:1	1432
★ Hawthorne Math & Science Academy · Hawthorne (charter)	9-12	518	845	14	23:1	1286
★ La Cañada High · La Cañada Unified	9-12	2,238	895	42	25:1	1771
L.A. Center for Enriched Studies · LAUSD (magnet)	6-12	1,543	824	44	25:1	1553
L.A. County High School for the Arts · L.A. County and Cal State L.A.	9-12	574	831	5	31:1	1580
★ Mira Costa High · Manhattan Beach Unified	9-12	2,384	855	45	25:1	1715
★ Palos Verdes High · Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified	9-12	1,865	850	134	23:1	1669
★ Palos Verdes Peninsula High · Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified	9-12	2,355	871	91	23:1	1764
★ San Marino High · San Marino Unified	9-12	1,137	911	26	21:1	1821
★ Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies · LAUSD (magnet)	4-12	1,720	844	23	27:1	1528
★ South Pasadena High · South Pasadena Unified	9-12	1,542	842	21	25:1	1697
★ West High · Torrance Unified	9-12	2,138	812	22	24:1	1599



PRIVATE



SCHOOL	GRADE RANGE	TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	UPPER-SCHOOL TUITION	NUMBER OF AP SECTIONS	STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	AVERAGE SAT SCORE
Archer School for girls • Brentwood (independent, girls)	6-12	500	\$27,200	18	7:1	1610-2000*
Brentwood School • Brentwood (independent)	K-12	993	\$26,200	33	18:1	2030
Buckley School • Sherman Oaks (independent)	K-12	750	\$27,695	24	7:1	1740-2020*
Campbell Hall • North Hollywood (independent)	K-12	1,090	\$24,910	22	15:1	DS
Chadwick School • Palos Verdes Peninsula (independent)	K-12	826	\$24,205	24	8:1	2033
Chaminade College Preparatory • Chatsworth/West Hills (Catholic)	6-12	1,246	\$10,500	40	15:1	1751
Flintridge Prep School • La Cañada Flintridge (independent)	7-12	500	\$21,600	22	8:1	2072
Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy • La Cañada Flintridge (Catholic, girls)	9-12	411	\$17,150	27	10:1	DS
Harvard-Westlake School • Bel-Air/North Hollywood (independent)	7-12	1,616	\$25,000	105	8:1	2085
Immaculate Heart • Los Angeles (Catholic, girls)	6-12	734	\$9,400	20	17:1	DS
La Salle High School • Pasadena (Catholic)	9-12	757	\$11,676	16	10:1	1710
Loyola High School • Los Angeles (Catholic, boys)	9-12	1,204	\$12,500	53	17:1	1837
Marlborough School • Hancock Park (independent, girls)	7-12	530	\$26,750	46	9:1	2008
Mayfield Senior School • Pasadena (Catholic, girls)	9-12	300	\$18,200	17	8:1	1782
Montclair College Preparatory • Van Nuys (independent)	6-12	336	\$15,000	12	10:1	1665
Oakwood School • North Hollywood (independent)	K-12	750	\$26,800	17	9:1	1963
Polytechnic School • Pasadena (independent)	K-12	855	\$23,750	37	10:1	DS
Providence High • Burbank (Catholic)	9-12	560	\$8,900	24	15:1	1591
Webb Schools • Claremont (independent, girls; independent, boys)	9-12	385	\$29,530	28	7:1	1940
Westridge School • Pasadena (independent, girls)	4-12	510	\$23,600	15	9:1	2170
ADDITIONAL NOTEWORTHY SCHOOLS						
Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences • Santa Monica (independent)	K-12	1,125	\$26,100	NA	14:1	1892
Frostig School • Pasadena (independent)	1-12	105	\$25,000	NA	6:1	NA
Summit View School • Culver City (independent)	2-12	182	\$27,000	NA	14:1	1100
Westmark School • Encino (independent)	4-12	167	\$27,000	NA	12:1	1580
Wildwood School • West Los Angeles (independent)	K-12	700	\$26,135	NA	15:1	NA

* Only a range of scores was provided. DS Declined to state. NA Not applicable

» **HOW THE BEST HIGH SCHOOLS 2008 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS WAS CONDUCTED:** Public schools in Los Angeles County were considered if their 2006-7 Academic Performance Index score was at least 800—the state Department of Education's minimum satisfactory score. They also had to meet minimum standards for size of enrollment and graduating class. Schools were excluded if they declined to participate or if data were not available. Our index is based on a weighted average of scores assigned to five variables: API score, student-teacher ratio, percentage of students going to college, dropout rate, and advanced placement ratio (this ratio represents the number of AP sections offered, divided by the number of graduates). Private schools had to meet similar standards to avoid exclusion; their index is based on a weighted average of scores assigned to a slightly different set of variables, including the average SAT score for students enrolled at the school. If a school was missing only its SAT result, the number was projected through a technique known as imputation. Statistician Brandi M.L. Shanata conducted the analysis. For more information, go to our Web site, Lamag.com.