

CLINTON HERALD

EDUCATION

Bronze status big step for CHS

Clinton makes debut in national ranking

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CLINTON — This year's Best High School Rankings, issued every year by U.S. News, includes Clinton High School for the first time. The national rankings analyze student-teacher ratios, college readiness, and math and reading proficiency. CHS scored well enough to be among 98 Iowa schools receiving distinction.

Clinton received a bronze medal, putting it among 2,688 schools in the country. Silver medals were awarded to 1,519 schools and there were 500 gold medal winners.

For CHS Principal Karrine Tharaldson Jones, making the list realizes a changed educational approach that's five years in the making.

"We have worked tirelessly over that time, and we have finally come around the corner where a majority of our kids are taking part in post-secondary education," Tharaldson Jones said. "We have encouraged kids and rewritten courses so they are appealing, so they are rigorous.

It's been a long time in the making." CHS has a 12:1 student-teacher ratio, near the state average, according to U.S.

News data. More than a third of the school's advanced placement students passed college level exams. In math, 83 percent of the student body is proficient; 85 percent are proficient in reading.

Those statistics were all factored into U.S. News' analytic formula, the results of which were published April 21.

Tharaldson Jones said that six years ago, her faculty shifted focus after an "epiphany." This resulted in raising student expectations and encouraging more post-secondary education in the classroom.

"Generally speaking, kids will meet your expectations if they're low," she said. "They'll meet them if they're high. We're getting to a point where we're producing results with schools that have many more resources. You can do great things with any kid, and we have great kids. But now, we've uncovered that expectation." The principal hopes the school can continue to raise the bar, and will strive toward silver and gold medals. Twelve Iowa schools met gold standards this year.

"We want to be the best," Tharaldson Jones said.

CHS was the only area school in Iowa and Illinois to receive recognition.