

# Elite Private High Schools Serve as 'Feeder System' Into Top Colleges, Magazine Reports

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Despite increased emphasis on student diversity, "a college feeder system is alive and well in America" wherein students at elite private high schools are "spoon-fed" tips on how to get into the Ivy League, according to a report published in the September issue of *Worth* magazine.

The magazine reviewed four years of freshman classes at Harvard, Princeton, and Yale Universities from the 1998-2001 high-school graduating classes and determined that less than 3 percent of all high schools in the United States -- 930 out of 31,700 -- had four or more students attend those universities. The magazine then ranked those feeder high schools by the percentage of their graduating classes that ended up at one of those three universities -- the "Ivy Elite," as the report calls them.

Private schools monopolized the rankings, with 94 of the top 100 feeder schools coming from the private sector. The report also compiled a separate list of the top 50 public schools; the lowest-ranking of those placed 294th on the overall list.

The report says that private schools have a number of advantages, including stronger, more-personal relationships with college admissions officers. As an example, the dean of Harvard College, Harry R. Lewis, is a trustee at Roxbury Latin School, a Massachusetts prep school that ranked as the No. 1 feeder school in the country with 21.11 percent of its students attending Harvard, Princeton, or Yale. (The 100th-ranked feeder school, St. Mark's School of Texas, a private school in Dallas, admitted an average of 4.31 percent of its students into those three universities.)

According to *Worth*, the top feeder schools also have an advantage in the ratio of students to college

counselors. Elite private schools provide one counselor for every 40 to 60 students, according to the report, while at public schools the average is 490 students per counselor.

The fact that parents pay for private school -- and are therefore more likely to be able to afford private-college costs -- also was cited in the magazine's report as part of the elite "pipeline." The top 10 feeder schools ranged in annual costs from \$14,000 at Roxbury to \$24,115 at the fourth-ranked Groton School, which is also in Massachusetts.

In describing the "elaborate dance" among elite private schools and colleges, *Worth* cites a case in which a student at Phillips Academy, in Massachusetts, had been accepted by Harvard under its early-admission plan, but also wanted to apply to Princeton, his parents' alma mater. According to the magazine, Phillips counselors at first told the student that he had to attend Harvard, even though its acceptance was nonbinding. The students' parents had to persuade the school to allow their son to apply to Princeton.

In another case, the *Worth* report says that admissions officers from Amherst College visited the 39th-ranked feeder school -- the Lawrenceville School, in New Jersey -- to critique students' admissions essays before the essays were sent. Paul S. Statt, a spokesman for Amherst, declined to comment on the claim, saying that he could neither confirm nor deny *Worth's* "vague" reference.

*Worth* gathered the information using the "facebook" freshman directories of Harvard, Princeton, and Yale to track down the new students' high schools. The [full report](#) is available online at the magazine's Web site.

**The magazine's top 10 feeder schools, all of which are private, and the percentages of their**

**graduating classes who attended either Harvard, Princeton, or Yale:**

1. Roxbury Latin School, West Roxbury, Mass.; 21.11 percent.
2. Brearley School, New York; 20.90 percent.
3. Collegiate School, New York; 20.00 percent.
4. Groton School, Groton, Mass.; 17.86 percent.
5. Dalton School, New York; 17.58 percent.
6. Spence School, New York; 17.16 percent.
7. Horace Mann School, the Bronx, N.Y.; 16.77 percent.
8. Winsor School, Boston; 16.74 percent.
9. Milton Academy, Milton, Mass.; 15.84 percent.
10. Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass.; 15.68 percent.

**The highest-ranking public feeder schools, with their overall ranking and the percentages of their graduating classes who attended either Harvard, Princeton, or Yale:**

26. Hunter College High School, New York; 9.36 percent.
59. Princeton High School, Princeton, N.J.; 6.30 percent.
71. Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Alexandria, Va.; 5.89 percent.
81. Scarsdale High School, Scarsdale, N.Y.; 4.91 percent.
87. Bronxville High School, Bronxville, N.Y.; 4.71 percent.
90. Millburn High School, Millburn, N.J.; 4.64 percent.
101. University of Illinois Laboratory High School, Urbana, Ill.; 4.26 percent.
102. Academy for Advancement of Science and Technology, Hackensack, N.J.; 4.21 percent.
120. Stuyvesant High School, New York; 3.67 percent.
142. Weston High School, Weston, Mass.; 3.22 percent.