

LI schools get high marks

Four rank in list of top 300 high schools in nation

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Four public high schools on Long Island are in the top 300 nationally in U.S. News & World Report's annual list of "Best High Schools," released Tuesday, which this year reflects a huge increase in the number of schools named in the rankings.

Jericho High School leads the way among the Island's schools, placing 134th nationally and 17th in the state, and is the only one on the Island in the top 200.

The other three Long Island schools in the top 300 are Garden City High School, Great Neck South High School and Manhasset High School. Garden City ranks 214th nationally and 25th in the state, while Great Neck South places 222nd in the nation and 26th in the state, and Manhasset ranks 228th in the nation and 28th in the state.

The top national high school on the list is Academic Magnet High School in North Charleston, South Carolina. The No. 1-ranked school in New York State is Townsend Harris High School, a public magnet high school for the humanities in Flushing, Queens.

This year, U.S. News & World Report made changes in its methodology and expanded the

number of schools it ranks from 2,700 to 17,245, out of more than 23,000 reviewed.

"By evaluating more schools than ever before, the new edition expands that focus so all communities can see which schools in their area are successfully serving their students — including historically underserved populations," said Anita Narayan, managing editor of education at U.S. News.

The 2019 "Best High Schools" ranking considered six indicators: college readiness; the breadth of college-level curriculum; math and reading proficiency; math and reading performance; learning outcomes and performance among underserved students; and graduation rates.

The new methodology assigns weights to the six factors and produces an overall score that determines the ranking. Previously, U.S. News had a four-step process in which the final step used college readiness as the basis of a school's ranking.

In a release accompanying the rankings, U.S. News explained, "With the revamped methodology, most schools' ranks changed significantly between 2018 and 2019 because of the broader competition in terms of the number of schools being newly ranked — more than 14,500. Consequently, a school's rise or fall in the 2019 rankings does not necessarily reflect a difference in its underlying data. Since the methodology changed so significantly

this year, a school's ranking in the 2019 Best High Schools ranking can't be compared with its rankings in any previous U.S. News ranking."

Last year, six high schools on Long Island were in U.S. News' top 200 nationally, with Jericho placing highest among them at 98th in the nation and 16th in the state. The other five, with their 2018 national and state rankings, were Cold Spring Harbor High School (143/21); Garden City (169/24); The Wheatley School in the East Williston school district (180/27); Great Neck South (195/29); and Manhasset (200/31).

The first list of U.S. News "Best High Schools" was posted online on Nov. 30, 2007, the organization said.

FBI: Tip came in minutes before synagogue attack

The Associated Press

POWAY, Calif. — The FBI said it got tips about a social media post threatening violence against Jews just minutes before a gunman killed a worshipper and wounded three others at a Southern California synagogue — an attack that makes him "part of the history of evil that has been perpetrated on Jewish people for centuries," the suspect's family said Monday.

The tips to an FBI website and hotline included a link to the anonymous post but did not offer specific information about its author or the location of the threat. The bureau said employees immediately tried to determine who wrote it, but the shooting occurred before they could establish his identity.

John T. Earnest, 19, was charged with murder and attempted murder in Saturday's attack as well as arson in connection with a nearby mosque fire last month. He was expected in court Tuesday.

His parents said their son and five siblings were raised in a family that "rejected hate and taught

that love must be the motive for everything we do," adding they were shocked and mystified.

"Our son's actions were informed by people we do not know, and ideas we do not hold," the family said in its first public comments.

They said they were cooperating with investigators to help "uncover many details of the path that he took to this evil and despicable act." They do not plan to provide their son with legal representation, according to their attorney, Earll Potts. A public defender will likely be appointed.

Earnest burst into the Chabad of Poway synagogue Saturday on the last day of Passover, a major Jewish holiday that celebrates freedom, and opened fire with an assault-style rifle on the crowd of about 100.

Lori Kaye, a founding member of the congregation, was killed. Rabbi Yishoel Goldstein was shot in the hand. Noya Dahan, 8,



Mayor Steve Vaus hugs Oscar Stewart at the funeral for Lori Kaye, who was slain Saturday in Poway, Calif.

and her uncle Almog Peretz suffered shrapnel wounds.

Kaye, 60, was remembered for her kindness Monday at a memorial service at the packed synagogue in Poway, a well-to-do suburb north of San Diego.

Earnest fled when the gun jammed, calling 911 to report the shooting and surrendering a short time later, authorities said.

He was a star scholar, athlete and pianist whose embrace of white supremacy and anti-Semitism has dumbfounded the people closest to him.

Earnest made the dean's list both semesters last year as a

nursing student at California State University, San Marcos. In high school, he had stellar grades and swam on the varsity team.

His father, John A. Earnest, is a popular physics teacher at the public high school he attended in San Diego.

Owen Cruise, 20, saw the younger Earnest every day during senior year at Mt. Carmel High School, when they were in calculus and physics together. They were also members of the school's amateur radio club.

Earnest was a nationally recognized pianist who brought au-

diences to their feet when he played at talent shows, Cruise said. He did a rendition of "Pirates of the Caribbean" and played Chopin and Beethoven.

"Crowds would be cheering his name," Cruise said Monday. "Everybody loved him."

Earnest showed no signs of harboring dark thoughts or racist views, Cruise said, adding that he had friends who were Jewish and black.

Cruise, now a sophomore at the University of California, San Diego, said Earnest lived at home and saw his parents every day.

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