



What's Happening with Class Rank?

By Kevin McMullin, Collegewise Founder and President

As I've written [before](#), the class rank debate rankles a lot of high-achieving students and their parents. Whether or not a school assigns a numerical ranking to each of its graduating seniors is a decision that almost always leaves some high-achieving segment feeling as if they're now at an admissions disadvantage, no matter how often self-purported experts like me or even the [colleges themselves](#) reassure them otherwise.

My advice regarding class rank remains the same: (1) what your school does around this issue is not in your control, and (2) reassign that mental energy to things that are in your control. That's where you can make the most impact.

According to this *Washington Post* [piece](#) by the venerable Jay Matthews, "A 1993 survey by the National Association of Secondary School Principals found that only 7 percent of high schools had abolished class ranking. Seventeen years later, however, that figure had climbed to 50 percent." That, and several other surveys cited in the piece, show that high schools are divided roughly equally on how they treat both class rankings and the idea of awarding a single valedictorian.

So, whatever decision your school makes with class rank, remember that roughly half the high schools in the country are doing the same thing. And that wouldn't be the case if their highest achievers were left at an admissions disadvantage because of it.

Want more expert application tips from Kevin? Check out his blog at wiselikeus.com.

