IRON RIVER—The West Iron County school district is one of only three Upper Peninsula districts to earn statewide recognition as an Academic State Champion. __PUBLIC__

“This type of recognition reflects strongly on the efforts our staff has made to improve our relationship with students, improve our teaching and increase student achievement,” Superintendent Chris Thomson said.

“We know there is still much work to be done, and we will continue to strive to get better,” he said, “but this type of accolade supports that our efforts are on the right track and are being recognized.”

Of the 560 Michigan school districts assessed by the Center for Michigan and Bridge Magazine, only West Iron County, Calumet and Chassell schools were selected for the honor from the Upper Peninsula. West Iron ranked 42nd statewide.

Traditional public school districts and charter schools were considered for recognition, with rank based upon how much value schools add to students’ expected achievement.

“I am very proud of the staff at Stambaugh Elementary School,” elementary Principal Michelle Thomson said. “They have worked very hard at implementing a school-wide writing program and a more intense math program.

“This is starting to show in our state results. Stambaugh Elementary School staff has worked on aligning math and language arts to the new common core standards. We are ready for the switch in 2014 from grade level contents expectations.”

Schools were evaluated based upon a database created to review school academic performance. The academic measures, all drawn from official state figures, were: MEAP exams in the fourth and eighth grades, MME exam in the 11th grade and the ACT results for spring 2012. All data utilized were from the 2011-12 school year.

High school Principal Mike Berutti said he is “proud of both the staff at WIC Schools and their commitment to academic excellence, and also our students as they continue to strive towards school success.”