



Questions Parents Should Ask

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) suggests parents ask the following questions when considering which school their children should attend:

- Is the school accredited and by whom?
- What is the school's mission and does its philosophy appeal to you?
- Does the school have a special or particular educational focus?
- Are academics rigorous?
- Is the environment competitive? Nurturing? Are there high expectations?
- Does the school meet your child's needs?
- How large is the school and its student body?
- Where is the school located and what are your transportation options?
- What variety of learning experiences are available at the school -- in class, on the playing field, in extracurricular activities, and in community service? Are extracurricular activities obligatory?
- Does the school seem to have a diverse student body and faculty? How is this important to me?
- Do the school materials discuss parental involvement? Is the school willing and eager to involve parents?
- For high schools, what are the graduation requirements? What percentage of students enter colleges -- and what kind of colleges do they attend?
- Is college counseling effective? (Look at rates at which school grads achieve their first and second college choices.)
- What is the tuition and how flexible are the school's financing options?
- What is the school's application process? Are deadlines drawing near?
- How, and how often, does the school communicate with the family?
- Do the students you see seem productive, engaged, and happy?
- How do the teachers interact with their students?
- What will students at your child's age be expected to study?
- What are the backgrounds and experiences of the faculty?
- Does the school provide its teachers with opportunities for continuing professional development?
- How does the school measure individual achievement and progress?
- Is the campus clean, well lighted, and secure?
- What kind of leadership and governance does the school have?
- Are faculty and staff involved in decision-making and curriculum development?
- Does what you see reflect the school's stated mission?
- What kind of counseling and support services are offered?
- Does the school feel like a community? Are students interacting with teachers outside as well as inside the classroom?
- Can you picture your child growing in this environment?