At an independent school

As a parent, you have an opportunity to choose a school with a mission—a school’s philosophy, values, and approach to teaching—that is right for your child, resulting in an education that will pay dividends for a lifetime. This brochure is designed to provide you with an overview of independent schools and to help you make the right investment in your child’s future.
Key Findings of the 2002 U.S. Department of Education Report

- Among private schools, 80 percent had enrollments of fewer than 300 students.
- Teachers at private schools report having significant influence on teaching practices and school policies.
- Teachers at private schools report being satisfied with teaching at their school.
- A majority of teachers at private schools express positive opinions about their school head and their school’s leadership.
- Private school students generally perform higher than their public school counterparts on standardized achievement tests.
- Private high schools typically have more demanding graduation requirements than do public high schools.

Why are independent schools successful? Here’s what the research says.

- Close-knit communities
- Individualized attention for students
- Supportive learning environments
- High-quality and committed teachers
- Hands-on learning opportunities
- Educational experiences beyond the classroom
- Actively engaged parents

How do you find the right school for your child?

Search for a school that is a good “fit” for your child.

- Read informational materials such as school literature and independent school guidebooks.
- Browse individual school websites.
- Visit a range of schools.
- Talk with admissions representatives, faculty, and students.
- Take a school tour.
- Accompany your child to a school sporting event, school play, or science fair to experience co-curricular options.

Ask questions.

- Are there high-quality and committed teachers?
- What is the student-to-teacher ratio?
- Do students feel challenged by their school?
- Are there strong partnerships among parents, teachers, and students?
- Does the school have a climate that supports achievement?
- What is the tuition?
- What student financial aid is available?
- How does the school measure quality and meet high standards?

U.S. Department of Education Study Confirms Private Schools Are on the Right Track

Finishes Private Schools’ Average Student-Teacher Ratio of 13:1 Leads to Greater Student Success in College

Recent U.S. Department of Education study shows that private schools are on the right track by placing such a strong emphasis on small school and class size. The report, The Condition of Education 2002, suggests that small and intermediate-sized schools and relatively small classes have advantages, often leading to higher achievement for students.

The report finds that teachers can better communicate consistent goals to their students and collaborate more effectively on raising student achievement in small learning environments commonly found in private schools.

What are independent schools?

There are approximately 2,000 independent schools across the United States. As part of the private school community, these schools provide more than 700,000 students from pre-kindergarten through high school with a unique and high-quality education.

Independent schools are “independent” because they have distinct missions and are primarily supported by tuition payments, charitable contributions, and endowment revenue.

Independent schools include coeducational and single-sex institutions, as well as boarding and day schools. Each school meets high accreditation standards and is held accountable by its Board of Trustees.

At this point, you’re likely asking yourself several questions: How would an independent school education benefit my child? How will I know if this is the right choice for my child? Why should I choose an independent school? Read on for some encouraging answers.

Interested in learning more about independent schools? Go to www.isadvocacy.org/parents.

Learn about independent schools in your area and across the nation. You’ll be a few clicks away from resource links, guides, and information about day, boarding, and single-sex schools that will help you find the right “fit” for your child.

Learn about independent school accreditation. In general, independent elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. are accredited by regional, and/or state associations.

Learn about making a quality education affordable. Scholarships, loan programs, and need-based financial aid may be available.

America’s Independent Schools

www.isadvocacy.org/parents