

Private School Choices: An Education Designed for Success

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According to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), there are five key questions parents should ask when evaluating your child's school. When researching your public and private school options these are questions that can help guide you in your educational decision making process.

1) *Are there high-quality and committed teachers?* Teachers should possess the background education, teaching skills, and content knowledge necessary for your child's success. By asking teachers about their discipline philosophy, curriculum, and training, you will be able to assess whether their classroom will be a good fit for your family.

2) *Are the classroom lessons engaging for students?* In *The Myth of Laziness*, Dr. Mel Levine discusses the importance of individualizing your approach for each child. This is essential to ensure that their inherent desire to learn is fostered. If your child appears lazy, start by asking what needs are not being met in their current environment. There should be a multitude of options for children to learn classroom material. Are they provided with options for demonstrating their knowledge of materials presented in class? What techniques are used in the classroom to ensure students are actively engaged in their lessons?

3) *Does the school provide accountability standards for its staff and students?* What measures are being used to ensure high expectations are being followed for its school members? Are standardized and classroom assessments being used? A strong school will work to ensure all its members are performing in line with high-level expectations.

4) *What is the value of your child's education?* Are they learning both educational and social lessons that will allow them to become productive and successful citizens in the future? As Martin Luther King Jr. stated: "Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education."

5) *Are parents actively involved in the school?* Most successful schools provide a multitude of ways to have active participation of all school members. An open campus with many newsletters, conferences, and opportunities for families to volunteer their time and services are all-important aspects of a caring and involved school community.

Private schools are often the school of choice for many families because of the benefits they offer families. In general, private schools have smaller class sizes, more involved families and students, hands on learning opportunities, and higher academic and social standards.

Biography: Dr. Vanessa Ewing received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in Individual Differences in Cognition from the University of Northern Colorado. She has taught students aged 4-18 in traditional classroom settings,

specializing as both a special education teacher and as a gifted and talented coordinator. For the past ten years she has presented at numerous regional and national psychology and education conferences. In addition, Dr. Ewing has served as an instructor for graduate and undergraduate level teacher education and psychology courses at numerous colleges in the Denver metropolitan area.

Dr. Ewing is the Education Advisor at Broomfield Academy. Broomfield Academy's mission is to provide individualized programming for children helping them to be exceptional, accelerated and creative students. In addition to academic programming, service learning and character education are a part of the school curriculum.