

Guest Post: Types Of Admissions Letters By Kim Hamer

Description

Types Of Admissions Letters:

Just the thought of them makes many parents anxious. Speaking the words out loud can elicit a cold sweat. For the last 8 months you have been through the ringer known as the admissions process. The results of your efforts and the school's decision will be mailed to you soon. So, now is the time to prepare for your next step. The good news is that it's easier than the admission process itself.

Update: Many schools now email letters to parents. Some schools use a computer system where parents can log on to find out if their child has been accepted. And, a few schools still send letters using the post office.

There are three kinds of admissions letters school send out:

Acceptance, Wait-listed and Non-Accept.

Acceptance Letters: Remember applying to college and how your joy would be determined by the size of the envelope you got from a school? That is not always the case with private school acceptance letters. Sometimes they are just that: a standard letter, not an 8 x 11 envelope. If it is just an envelope, it will be followed with a thicker, larger envelope that will contain a contract, probably a fee schedule and a handbook. The most important thing you can do is READ the contract. Next week I will go into the types of typical clauses you'll find in a contract and how to choose the right school if you are accepted to more than one. Note: Many schools have now adopted the practice of emailing parents and the students (if they're in middle school) of their acceptance, as well as sending a letter. Emails will be received on Saturday.

Wait-list Letter: This letter states, "We like your child but feel other candidates are a better match." It is painful to read but not hopeless. If you are on a wait-list, it means that you still have the opportunity to get your child enrolled. There are a few key steps to take to help improve your child's chances of enrollment that I'll give you in an upcoming issue. Some schools send out wait-list letters instead of non-accept letters. This just pisses me off! Many schools do this under the guise of wanting to make sure that every parent feels good about their school. A school should have the courage to tell a family that they are not a good fit. I have met many a family who has lost all respect for a school when they find out that not one parent who applied received a non-accept letter. It's dishonest and disrespectful to an adult.

Non-Accept Letter: This is by far the hardest letter to receive and it always comes in a thin envelope. Expect a wide range of emotions to surface: panic (What will I tell my child?), rage (How dare they?) and sorrow (What will we do?). For mothers, it often leads to a feeling of failure. Give yourself time to grieve, for that is what you will probably do and that's ok and normal. In a few weeks I will share with you what other mothers have said about getting through their own disappointment. So there you have it, the three kinds of admission letters. One last thing to keep in mind is that this is just like getting or not getting a job (or auditioning). You will never know why a school accepted or didn't accept your child. This can be very difficult to live with at first, but know that calling a school and demanding that they explain themselves is NOT a good idea, even if it feels like it might be at the time.

Simple Action Steps: NOW is the time to be going back to the schools that you really liked. You will have two weeks before contracts are due, so go back and take a second look at your favorite schools.

1. Call up your top 3 school choices.
2. Ask to attend an event: a pajama story time, a performance or even an auction.
3. When you are at these events, talk to the parents and observe the kids. Are they exhibiting skills, behaviors and attitudes that you want your child to exhibit? Are the parents friendly and open? Some of my clients have changed their minds about a school just from doing a simple visit like the ones suggested above.

Kim Hamer is the former owner of Get Into Private School. She closed her business a few months ago to take a wonderful job with charter schools. We wish Kim the best in her new endeavor. Kim's kids attended Windward and PS#1.

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