

Guest Blogger Jenny: Applying out from Mirman School for 7th grade

Description



Applying Out: When Does A List of Schools Go From Comprehensive to Absurd?

If you currently have a child going into 6th grade this Fall, you probably realize that she might be “applying out” to another school. It’s a sad fact that, just when you’ve gotten over the trauma of applying to private elementary school, you’re forced to do the horrible thing all over again. We’re so sorry.

My daughter Anna is going to go through this process, not because she doesn’t love her current school (she attends Mirman), but because, if she gets into Marlborough, she won’t have to be on a bus two hours every day. Maybe she can do an afterschool sport, since we’re eastsiders and Marlborough is far more geographically desirable. I figure that if she doesn’t get accepted, she’ll just stay at Mirman. For her, the process is fairly low risk.

For other kids who attend elementary only private schools, the risks go up. They have to get in somewhere, and the competition is fierce. Yet, I recently witnessed something that really made me question the way these private schools steer students.

One of Anna’s friends attends a very well known private elementary school. She has to apply out. Her parents met with an advisor at the school recently, who gave them a list of schools picked

specifically for their daughter. Sounds all well and good.

Except that, upon hearing the list, I was mystified (I have no idea if her parents were mystified as well). This list of seven or eight schools ran the gamut from Marlborough to Campbell Hall to Windward to New Roads.

Now, these are all good schools. But, it's like a big list of apples and oranges. So, this girl's a good enough student to handle the academic competitiveness and traditionalism of single sex Marlborough, but is self directed and artsy enough for the way loose atmosphere at New Roads? This list made no sense; it seemed scattershot. Again, all these schools are good, but a family that feels comfortable at Marlborough might not fit in quite as well at a New Roads.

Plus, keep in mind that while applying to dozens of colleges is easy now with that one common application, applying to private schools in Los Angeles is a constant and intense process. Each application costs money, each requires personal references and transcripts, and each school requires multiple events ranging from tours and info nights to interviews and student visiting days. Multiply that process seven or eight times, with each disparate school wanting to hear different things, and you've got a new full time job for the next year. Add to this the pressure put on your kid, and 6th grade becomes the lost year.

Personally, I think you're better off narrowing your school application focus to schools you and your kid really like, that fit your values and your kid's abilities and interests. The more you dilute your efforts, the less effective those efforts will be. Plus, when it comes to your kid, not all private schools are created equal. And the last thing you want is your child in an environment that's just not right for her.

So, if your elementary school dribbles out a "hand selected" list of potential schools for your kid, peruse it closely. If some recommendations seem silly, they probably are. Eliminate some. And then focus your energy on the best choices. In the end, quality will win out over quantity.

Jenny Heitz has worked as a staff writer for Coast Weekly in Carmel, freelanced in the South Bay, and then switched to advertising copywriting. Her daughter started 4th grade at Mirman School in 2010. She previously attended 3rd St. Elementary School. Jenny has been published in the Daily News and on Mamapedia, The Well Mom, Hybrid Mom and A Child Grows In Brooklyn. She now writes about gift ideas and products on her blog, [Find A Toad](#).

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