

Q & A With Sandy Eiges, Educational Consultant: Experience and Results When You Need It Most!

Description

1. Your company, LA School Scout, has a terrific reputation. Do you have an area of expertise that you specialize in?

Thanks so much! I think my reputation stems from the quality of what I offer my families, in terms of my in-depth knowledge of schools, preschool through 12th grade, public and private. I meet with the schools individually, I get to know them, I re-visit them over and over again, so that I can make a great match between schools and families.

And of course from the family's perspective, my background in social work gives me an added advantage. I have the ability to elicit enough from a family interview, and the child observation or Kindergarten readiness assessment, to give me a real intuitive sense of what schools might work for a particular family – even if it's not on their radar. So I suppose you can say that my real expertise is in being a very successful matchmaker!

2. The economy hasn't recovered from the recession and this has impacted private elementary schools in various ways. What can parents who are applying for fall 2011 expect?

The economy hasn't recovered from the recession, and yet people are still applying to private schools – this hasn't changed, and this won't change for fall 2011 applicants. While public schools, including charters and magnets, are accepting higher numbers of applicants and increasing their class size, private schools are still very committed to small class size.

What we are seeing, however, are more open spots in the higher grades, from 4th grade and up. I get quite a few families who are relocating to L.A., and I've got to say, I've had no problem placing those families in great schools this past year, even if they were mid-year placements. And some of these placements were tough! A third-grader with no previous formal schooling or English; a fourth-grader with a learning disability, an under-achieving 7th grader, 8th and 10th grade siblings requiring placement at the same school – the list goes on.

4. This is the \$600 million dollar question: why do you think so many wonderful families get rejected from LA private elementary schools?

If families are not getting into their school of choice – did they apply to the right school? Did they apply to more than one school? I encourage people to consider more than one or two options. Is there a match between what the school is looking for and your child? Is there a match between what you want – the kind of school that appeals to you – and what school would suit your child? These are not always one and the same.

If all of the answers are yes, then other factors might be at work. Some years there are too many applicants of one sex, and schools generally try to put together a gender-balanced classroom. Some years there are too many children born in the same month – schools try to have a range of ages within the same classroom.

Some years there are so many siblings that there just aren't enough spaces for all of the qualified applicants. This is sad, but it happens.

5. In general, how are your fees structured?

I work with families in a variety of ways, based on their particular need and budget, whether it's for a one-time phone consultation or throughout the process of applying to private schools. So, for example, I can offer a one-time consultation as a sounding board about current school problems, or to help a family develop a school list. I can also help the family manage the entire school application process, including Kindergarten readiness assessments, application review and interview preparation. A rush/relocation placement might include developing a list of after-school activities and summer camps, as well as placement of international students.

6. What are some of the private elementary schools your clients have attended?

My families have been accepted in schools all over the greater Los Angeles area:

Archer, Berkeley Hall, Brawerman, Brentwood, Buckley, Calvary Christian, Campbell Hall, Carlthorp, Chaminade, Children's Community School, Claiborn, Crespi, Crossroads, Curtis, Delphi, Echo Horizon, Good Shepherd, Harvard-Westlake, High Point Academy, Hollywood School House, John Thomas Dye, Laurence, Le Lycee Francais de Los Angeles, Loyola, Marlborough, Mirman, New Roads, Oakwood, Pacific Hills, Park Century, Pasadena Waldorf, Pilgrim, PS#1, Seven Arrows, Sierra Canyon, Stephen S. Wise, St. James, St. Matthews, St. Timothy's, Turning Point, UCLA Lab School, Viewpoint, Waverly, Wesley, Westland, Westmark, Westside Neighborhood School, Wildwood, Willows and Windward

7. Is it possible for a family to rehabilitate a parent interview or other part of the application process that they think has gone wrong?

That's a difficult question. A parent interview gone wrong – that depends on what actually happened at the interview. For better or worse, there are plenty of applicants to choose from out there, and I would always recommend that parents put their best foot forward. Manners are always in order.

So if you felt so comfortable in the interview that you used inappropriate language, no, you are probably not going to be able to fix that. As to what else might have gone wrong, you would have no idea what that is. There are some great tips on how to manage the application process in *Beyond the Brochure*.

Should you need more direct help, though, and a partner in the process of finding the right school, contact Sandy at sandy@LAaschoolscout.com, or through her website at www.LAschoolscout.com.

Category

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