

Priya Nambiar: From Brentwood School Admissions to Educational Consultant

Description



I'm excited to welcome Priya Nambiar of [Nambiar Advising](#) to the blog today! I asked her a few questions about private school admissions and she shared her answers below. Thank you, Priya!"Christina

How does your 8 years of experience as a former Associate Director of Admissions for Middle and Upper Schools at Brentwood and your work at Viewpoint School help you serve your clients?

Through my experience at Brentwood School and at Viewpoint School, where I was the Associate Director of Admissions before Brentwood, I understand what it feels like to admit one student over another. It was extraordinarily difficult to choose some students and deny others " especially when it was due to limited class space. I've been in the trenches in those decisions committees, so I have some unique insights into those admissions nuances.

Also, all schools have slightly different processes, but ultimately it's always about "fit". I appreciate what it means to find the right school for a specific child, not just a "bumper sticker school" that's more about prestige or bragging rights rather than what's best for the student. I understand how a family and student would want to do everything possible to impress an admissions office. Yet, Los Angeles has so many wonderful schools that match different types of families and students. Not everyone will be happy at every school. Experiencing this from the perspective of an admissions officer makes me emphasize the importance of finding the right environment for each child.

What does finding the "right fit" in a school mean to you? Why is this so important?

The right fit can be composed of many elements: academics, student and family culture, social and emotional development, athletics, arts programs, class size, and more. It's about the connection a student and family has with the school on multiple levels. And that's what makes it so important " when that connection occurs, children and families thrive. The school becomes more about shaping a life experience and goes far beyond tests and grades.

Each school “whether is K-12, K-6, K-8, or 9-12” has its own culture. The challenge is to understand both the student and schools well enough to identify where the best connections will happen.

What services do you provide to your clients?

I work with families applying to everything from Kindergarten to 12th grade, from independent private schools to public schools, and with children with special needs and learning differences.

I provide a variety of services to try to accommodate different families’ needs. I have an initial two-hour consultation where I meet with the family and student, research potential schools, review timelines and required materials, and provide guidance to help them navigate this often-confusing process. I offer a full package that entails in-depth work with the family and student in all aspects of the admissions process, including essay review and editing, advocacy when appropriate, and more. This is a more involved, customized service where I work with the family for everything they might need.

Additionally, I offer interview preparation sessions (in-person one- to two-hour sessions that prepare students and parents for their interviews) as well as group seminars (two-hour sessions for 15-30 people hosted at a family’s home where I provide an in-depth overview of the admissions process).

Can you give us a few reasons why a student might get wait-listed?

Students can get wait-listed for several reasons. Sometimes there truly is not space for them, even if they are very qualified. There may be another student with a similar profile that was chosen over them. As schools want to create a balanced class, sometimes wait-list decisions are about timing and that specific school year. For example, suppose four male oboe players are applying in your year. If your child is a male oboe player, he may be waitlisted. Had it been another year, the result could have been different.

Schools also want to ensure that students are academically qualified, will fit in socially and find friends, be kind to others, and contribute to the extracurricular life of the school. Some children will be a great fit for some of these parameters, but not for others. Additionally, schools want to have full bands, performing arts programs, sports teams, students interested in journalism, and other extracurricular elements. Applicants will look attractive to a school based on what the school needs to fill.

What about a declined admission letter?

Similar to the wait-list, students can be declined admission for several reasons. Sometimes a school will deny students if they won’t be successful there academically. A child’s grades, ISEE scores, school visits, and assessments will imply that potential. But keep in mind that all schools are different. While a child may not be an academic fit for one school, he or she may be a perfect fit for another.

Also, sometimes a school will deny students admission even if they are academically qualified, if other class factors are involved. For example, the class simply may have too many boys (or girls, or artists, or goalies, etc.). This might seem random or too dependent on happenstance, but unfortunately it’s a reality of the admissions process.

Additionally, wait-list vs. deny is a challenging decision. While you want the student to know that they are qualified, you don't want to give them hope if there isn't any. If the fit just isn't there, you want to make sure they get excited about the school or schools they *do* get into. Sometimes you shouldn't wait to sign a contract because you feel there is a chance at the school where you're wait-listed.

You've been an educational consultant for 3 years. What do you like most about it?

I love my work. As an educator for over 20 years, I love learning about my client families and students and identifying where they would thrive. It's exciting to then combine that understanding with my knowledge of the schools and the different ways they approach education. All of this comes together to help families and students find the best school matches. I have helped families get into **Berkeley Hall, Brentwood, Brawerman, Buckley, Campbell Hall, Carlthorp, Chadwick, Harvard-Westlake, John Thomas Dye, Laurence, New Roads, Oakwood, PS1, Turning Point, Village, Vistamar, Willows, Wildwood, Westland**, and more school across Los Angeles. It's incredibly rewarding and fulfilling to see these kids get into schools and begin a journey that could help them realize their potential.

[Priya Nambiar](#) has spent over a decade in private school admissions and over 20 years in education. For eight years, she was the associate director of admissions for middle and upper school at Brentwood School. She understands the stress and anxiety that applying to competitive schools creates. She also understands what private schools are looking for in a candidate's application. Additionally, Priya is a mom of twin daughters who attend a private elementary school. She has experienced first-hand the application process as a parent and as an admissions officer. With her direct experience and dedication to education, she hopes to reduce the stress that families experience and to match parents and children with the best schools for them.

You can find out more about Priya at www.nambiaradvising.com or by email at: priya@nambiaradvising.com or by phone: 323-630-7182

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