Understanding K-12 School Options in Metro Atlanta

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Overview

- Perspective
- School Factors to Consider
- Considering Your Child
- Educational Settings & Terminology
- Research Suggestions
- Resources
- NOTE: AAAIS Standard
Perspective

- Although parents are often most comfortable with what they have experienced in their own schooling, it is helpful to consider all options based on your child.

- The best predictor of how a child will do next year is how he or she did in the spring of the previous year. A crystal ball is the only predictor for young children.

- Each school has pros and cons, opportunities and limitations. No school offers everything. It is important to understand and accept that fact.
Perspective

- Parents want their children to have a challenging, hands-on, engaging, fun, safe, school with caring and bright teachers.

- Schools aim to provide the above.

- Therefore, selecting a school is about the details.
School Factors to Consider

- What philosophies, ideologies, and experiences are important to you and your family?
  - Must be public education or only private?
  - Religious schooling or secular?
  - Diversity (race/ethnicity, socioeconomic, gender, learning styles)?
  - Type of curricular design and delivery (by age)?
  - Structure of the learning environment?
  - Emphasis on the arts, sports, test scores, or community service?
  - Tracking?

- What is the financial situation for your family?
School Factors to Consider

- What role do you want to play in your child’s education? Does that match with what the school asks of its parents?

- Logistics
  - Location and transportation
  - Extracurricular (JH & HS)
  - After care options
  - Facilities
School Factors to Consider

- Organizational structure of the school and the role teachers play in decision making.

- The school community
  - Who attends the school?
  - Is it a neighborhood school or do most commute?
  - What kind of community activities exist?
  - How does the school communicate with families?

- What support can you provide at home vs. what do you want from the school?
Considering Your Child

• How much of each does your child need:
  ◦ Structure and routine?
  ◦ Independent choice?
  ◦ Guidance and reinforcement?
  ◦ Challenge?
  ◦ Learning support for special issues? If so, what kind?
  ◦ Movement in a day?
  ◦ Behavioral support?

• How does your child respond to adults?
• How does your child respond to learning?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Key terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>Gifted</td>
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<td>Charter</td>
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<td>Special Needs</td>
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Research Suggestions

- Visit schools.
- Sit in classes!
- Talk with parents.
- Learn about level of parent involvement.
- Go to open houses.
- Attend school events (concerts, plays).
- Find out about admissions process.
- Consider test scores with caution.
Resources

- Atlanta Public Schools (charter school information)
- Dekalb County Schools
- Fulton County Schools
- Gwinnett County Schools
- Atlanta Magazine “Best High Schools”
- Greatschools.org (info & rankings)
- Abetterchance.org (application support)
Questions?

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