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TRANSITION PROCESS:
Checklist for Parents Looking at Schools

Criteria to Consider Before Visiting Schools

- Desired class size
- Desired school size
- Location
- Teaching methodologies
- Reporting System (letter grades, un-graded evaluations)
- Public schools vs. Private schools
- Structured vs. Unstructured classes and Independent vs. Teacher-Directed instruction
- Available technology
- Ethnic diversity
- Tuition
- Religious affiliation
- Co-ed or All boys/All girls
- Commute Time
- Resources Specialist Programs (RSP) (special education help)
- Need for before and/or after school care
- Extracurricular programs: sports, drama, fine arts, other
- Proximity to public transportation; available carpool option
- Need for on-site tutoring, speech & language, etc.

Questions to Ask When Visiting Schools

- Does the school have a particular philosophy or educational approach?
- Do you have an RSP specialist on your staff?
  - Are they full time?
  - Are they able to instruct teachers to provide accommodations for students?
- How is technology used to support teaching and learning at school?
- How large are the classes?
- What is your homework policy?
- What extra curricular opportunities (sports, clubs, community service) are available for students?
- How do parents get involved in school?
- Copy of daily schedule
- What are some of the schools greatest accomplishments? What are some of the biggest challenges this school faces?

Information to Know/Have When Visiting Schools

- Your child’s portfolio and current work samples
- Your child’s academic strength and areas of needs
CHOOSING A SCHOOL:

By: Rhonda Whitney

Before going to a school, make yourself a checklist. I used the WOW criteria developed by Jan Nickerson while she was doing a job search (Nickerson, 1994). I had a checklist of qualities I was looking for in a school and my criteria are based on Sue Thompson’s recommendations (1996). Every checklist will be different, but seeing mine might help you design one for your child.

Rate the items listed below from 1 to 5:

1—An item rated “1” is a DEAL BREAKER (This is a condition that, if it isn’t present, the school is off the list, even if you love everything else. For example, “Would have to move to a district where the housing prices starts at $499,000 for 1000 square feet of space” [don’t laugh, that’s California Real Estate]).

2—Substandard

3—Neutral

4—Good

5—Great! Judging by this criterion, the school walks on water!

Remember that using the following checklist, a score of “1” in any category means it’s a deal breaker. Even if all other areas are great (a 5) but one category has a score of “1”, the schools is off the list of consideration. After evaluating several schools, the school with the highest score (and no ones) is the school of choice.

Items

___ Is the school open to accommodations?
___ Does the teacher smile, appear friendly and welcoming?
___ Do the children appear comfortable?
___ Do children raise their hands easily?
___ Are all members of the class participating?
___ How does the school handle discipline? Are the interventions given in a positive constructive manner or are they negative and belittling?
___ Is there some evidence that social interactions are considered a priority?
___ Is written work balanced with more hands on, experiential work?
___ Will there be stable instruction? Will my child have the same teacher all year?

Items

___ Can a child demonstrate his or her knowledge orally?
___ What is the resource teacher like?
___ How is the resource room utilized?
___ Is the support staff supportive and child-friendly?
___ Is the size of the campus manageable for my child?
___ Does each child have his or her own space (desk, cubby, etc.) so that a child can learn by role where to put stuff and where to find it?
___ Is the school planning on major remodeling/changes within the next three years?
___ Does the school value unique learning or insist on a standard?
___ Does the room have a schedule of the daily events posted for all the children to see?
CHOOSING A SCHOOL: Continued

Other pointers I picked up were from a book called “Stress and your Child” by Bettie Youngs (1985). She provides a checklist that was very helpful and which we used to construct the following:

1. Listen to your children when he or she talks about school. Learn as much as you can about what stresses your child at school and stands in the way of success. We found that, in retrospect, our son was telling us for months that he was unhappy at school, far more seriously than just not liking school. He didn’t know how to behave, how to have a good day, or how to succeed. He also told us that the most important thing he wanted us to look for in a teacher was “Was she smiling?”, and it turns out that that is the single most reliable predictor of a teacher a child will remember fondly years later (Brooks, 1997).

2. Inspect the school. Go when the teachers are expecting your visit. Does she welcome you, smile, and ask you who you are? Is the school clean? Can you find your way around easily? What kinds of signs and messages decorate the walls?

3. Do your children like and admire their teachers?

4. Do your children believe their teachers like and admire them? Do they think the teachers are fair?

5. Do your children grow anxious at night when they know there is school the next day?

6. Do your children talk about friends at school?

7. Do your children mention that other students taunt them?

8. Do most of your child’s comments focus on academic failures and fears? (I got in trouble today and probably will tomorrow, too.)

9. Do your children seem afraid of the school environment?

___ Is the volume of worksheet work limited?
___ Look at the work posed around the room. Does the teacher grade on what is missing (i.e. - 5) or what is right (+10). That’s a subtle message of positive support?

___ How do I feel here? Am I welcomed? Do I feel comfortable?
___ Are peer relations fostered?
___ How is the resource room utilized

___ What is the principal like?
___ Will my child be with a consistent group of peers?
   Example: can my child have the same reading buddy all year or will they change every month? Will he or she be with the same desk mates or will they change?

___ What does the principal brag about—test scores; community or facilities?
___ Do children have down time areas such as the library, computer room, guided learning center where they can go, especially during recess and lunch?
# PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC:
Differences Between Public & Private Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td>Teachers in private schools are not required to have certification, and instead often have subject area expertise and an undergraduate or graduate degree in the subject they teach.</td>
<td>All teachers in public schools are usually either state certified or working towards certification. Certification ensures that a teacher has gone through the training required by the state, which includes student teaching and coursework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Body</strong></td>
<td>The student population at a private school is determined through a selection process; all students must apply and be accepted to that school. Although students may be from different neighborhoods, they will probably have similar goals and interests, which tend to create a fairly homogenous student body.</td>
<td>The children attending most public schools usually reflect the neighboring community. Once at school, students may be split up based on ability or interest, but in most public schools, there is a diversity of student backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Needs</strong></td>
<td>Private schools do not have to accept children with special needs and may choose not to. As a result, most private schools do not have special education programs or teachers trained to work with children with severe needs. Private schools will try to help all students they admit, but extra resources may also come at an additional cost.</td>
<td>Due to special education laws, public schools must educate all children, and provide programs to meet their special needs if necessary. This means most public schools have special education programs and teachers who are trained to work with students that have particular needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size</strong></td>
<td>Each private school varies in class size.</td>
<td>Many states recognize the value of small classes and have provided funding to keep class sizes small in grades K-2. As students become older, class size tends to get bigger in public schools, especially in large school districts and urban schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSITION PROCESS

Step #1: Set up an I.E. P.

If you live IN San Mateo County

♦ Families must request an IEP from their district of residence
♦ Send a Certified Letter to the Director of Special Education at your Elementary District, even if your child will be transitioning to high school
♦ On letter, CC: Charles Armstrong School and the Director of Special Education: Maria Lang-Gavidia
  2960 Hallmark Drive
  Belmont CA 94002

If you live OUTSIDE of San Mateo County

♦ Families must request an IEP for your child at Belmont Redwood Shores School District
♦ Send a Certified Letter to the Director of Special Education in BELMONT REDWOOD SHORES SCHOOL DISTRICT at:
  Ms. Maria Lang-Gavidia
  Director of Special Education
  2960 Hallmark Drive,
  Belmont, CA 94002
♦ On letter, CC: Charles Armstrong School and the Director of Special Education at your District of residence
  ♦ Remember this is always the elementary district even if your child will be transitioning to high school.

Sample letters available on next page
SAMPLE LETTER:
REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION
If you live IN San Mateo County

Date

Director of Special Education
Local Unified School District
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear ________,

I am the parent of ________ who is currently enrolled at the Charles Armstrong School in Belmont, CA. This school delivers specialized instruction to children with a diagnosed Learning Disability. I am planning to transition my child back to Local School in the fall of 2014.

I am writing to make a referral for assessment for special education services for ________ as required by 5 C.C.C. Sec. 3021(a). He/she may be eligible for special education services. I am requesting that ________ be given a comprehensive assessment by the school district and that an IEP meeting be schedule for him/her.

I look forward to receiving an assessment plan within 15 days. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

__________

CC:   Belmont Redwood Shores School District
      Director of Special Education Services
      Maria Lang-Gavidia
      2960 Hallmark Drive
      Belmont, CA 94002
Date

Ms. Maria Lang-Gavidia  
Director of Special Education  
Belmont Redwood Shores School District  
2960 Hallmark Drive  
Belmont, CA 94002

Dear Ms. Lang-Gavidia,

I am the parent of __________ who is currently enrolled at the Charles Armstrong School in Belmont, CA. This school delivers specialized instruction to children with a diagnosed Learning Disability. I am planning to transition my child back to Local School in the fall of 2014.

I am writing to make a referral for assessment for special education services for ______ as required by 5 C.C.C. Sec. 3021(a). He/she may be eligible for special education services. I am requesting that ________ be given a comprehensive assessment by the school district and that an IEP meeting be schedule for him/her.

I look forward to receiving an assessment plan within 15 days. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

___________

CC: Local Unified School District  
    Director of Special Education  
    Their Name Here  
    Address  
    City, State, Zip

**MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING FORMS (PAGES 10-15)**
CONSENT TO RELEASE OR EXCHANGE INFORMATION

NAME OF STUDENT ____________________________  BIRTHDATE ________________

DISTRICT/SCHOOL: Belmont-Redwood Shores School District

Written parental consent shall be obtained before personally identifiable information is disclosed in writing or orally to anyone other than authorized employees specified by the school district. You need to know that:

• You choose which agencies shall exchange information.
• You may refuse to sign this exchange form.
• Information about your child and family is strictly confidential. Your child's school maintains records specifying the source of the information, the date and purpose of any disclosure, and with whom information was shared.
• These records will help in evaluation assessment and IEP development of your child.
• You have the right to review records.
• Your rights are preserved under: Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations; Family Education Rights Privacy Act of 1974, Title 20 of the United States Code, Section1232 (g), Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 99.
• This consent is good for one year unless you withdraw your consent before that time.

I give permission for ____________ to exchange information relevant to my child's educational needs with the following agency/agencies. Please initial the box(es) below to permit the exchange of information about your child with the specific agency/agency.

☐ School District: ____________________________  ☐ Occupational Therapist: ____________________________

☐ Audiologist: ____________________________  ☐ Other Medical Specialist: ____________________________

☐ California Children's Services: ____________________________  ☐ Primary Care Physician/Clinic: ____________________________

☐ County Offices of Education: ____________________________  ☐ Psychologist/Psychiatrist: ____________________________

☐ Dept. of Mental Health: ____________________________  ☐ Public Health Nursing: ____________________________

☐ Dept. of Rehabilitation: ____________________________  ☐ Regional Center: ____________________________

☐ Family Resource Centers: ____________________________  ☐ Speech Therapist: ____________________________

☐ Human/Social Services Dept: ____________________________  ☐ Other: ____________________________

☐ Infant Development Program: ____________________________  ☐ Other: ____________________________

A photocopy of this form shall be as valid as the original. I understand that I am to receive a copy of this authorization.

Parent/Guardian: ____________________________  Date: ____________________________

Parent/Guardian: ____________________________  Date: ____________________________

Please return information to:

District Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

Attention: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________  Fax: ____________________________

Rev. 9/08
Referral for Assessment to Belmont-Redwood Shores School District

Identifying Information:
Student Name ________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________
Phone Number ____________________________
Mother’s Name ______________________________________
Address __________________________________________
Phone Number ____________________________
Email ____________________________________________
Parent Signature: ____________________________ date: __________

Father’s Name ______________________________________
Address __________________________________________
Phone Number ____________________________
Email ____________________________________________
Parent Signature: ____________________________ date: __________

District of Residence:
____________________________________________________
Student previously attended school in this district? Yes No

Contact/Teacher at School of Attendance:
Name: ____________________________________________
Phone Number: __________________________________

Other Information:
✓ Written request for assessment
✓ Documentation of SST meeting dates and pre-referral activities
✓ Previous IEPs (if any)
✓ Previous assessments (if any)
✓ Written Summary from current classroom teacher(s) regarding concerns
✓ Health and Development questionnaire
✓ Consent to exchange information

Submit the above information with this form to Belmont—Redwood Shores School District,
2960 Hallmark Drive, Belmont, CA 94002 Attention: Special Programs
**BELMONTR-REDWOOD SHORES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT**
2960 Hallmark Drive
Belmont, California 94002-2999

Maria Lang-Gavidia  
Director of Special Programs

Telephone: (650)637-4800  
FAX: (650)637-4811

**Intake Form**

Dear Parent(s):

As you know, your child has been referred for an evaluation. In order to better understand your child and your concerns, it would be helpful to have this information ahead of time. Please feel free to omit an item if you so choose.

Please complete this form and return as soon as possible. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

**FAMILY INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child/Student’s Name</th>
<th>Birthdate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Phone</th>
<th>Business/Cell Phone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your child’s ethnicity?</th>
<th>(Mother)</th>
<th>Residence School</th>
<th>(Father)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your family speak any language besides English at home?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If so, what language?</th>
<th>What is the predominant language?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was the language your child first learned to speak?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When did your child first speak English?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother or Guardian:</th>
<th>Father or Guardian:</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Email:</th>
<th>Email:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is student living with both natural parents?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>If not, please explain:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is anyone else residing in the home?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have there been any changes in the family/home environment (divorce, death, frequent resident changes, illnesses)?</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brothers and/or sisters:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>------</td>
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1
MEDICAL INFORMATION

Present health: ________________________________

Student's doctor: ____________________________ (Name) ____________________________ (Address)

Specialist (Eye/Hearing): ______________________ (Name) ____________________________ (Address)

Other: ______________________________________

Does your child wear glasses? ______ Date of most recent vision test ______ Results ______

Date of most recent hearing test ______ Results ______

Please comment if your child has had: multiple ear infections, allergy, asthma, convulsions, any restrictions on activity at school?

_________________________________________________________________________________

Has your child had any illnesses, operations, injuries?: ________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

Does your child take any medications? ______ Explain: ________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness during pregnancy</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Pre-Natal History: Please comment on any of the following; Describe</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Describe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accidents during pregnancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medications Exposure to toxins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestational diabetes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X-ray; CT; MRI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol, drugs, cigarettes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleeding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rh factor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Edema</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Birth History; Mother's age at delivery? ______ Child's Birth weight: ______ Months carried; ______ Hours of labor: ______

Type of delivery: Caesarian: ______ Vaginal ______ Complications? ______

Baby's condition at birth: ______ Oxygen/transfusion needed? ______

Did infant have any difficulties, sucking, swallowing or retaining feedings? ______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Milestones (Approximate Age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sit up alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combine words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please check any area(s) which constitute a problem for your child
Eating Sleeping Bed wetting/toilet problems Nail biting Thumb sucking Nightmares

Getting along with friends Unusual fears
EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Age started preschool_________________________ Age started kindergarten_________________________

List schools attended by this student (include preschool and kindergarten if applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Reason for Leaving</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</table>

Has your child ever repeated a grade?_________________________ If so, which grade?_________________________

What are your major concerns about your child?_________________________

If there is a problem, when and how did it begin?_________________________

Are there any past or present circumstances that you think could be related to your child’s present difficulties?_________________________

Do you feel your child is having difficulties in school?_________________________ At home?_________________________

Child’s feelings about school_________________________

Is there a family history of difficulties in school?_________________________

How do you feel about the school program that has been provided for your child?_________________________

Special Services

Has your child received any type of therapy, evaluation or services (speech/language, counseling/psychotherapy)? Please submit copies of any previous evaluations/progress reports with this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapist</th>
<th>Address/Phone</th>
<th>Frequency/duration of services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Describe the results of these services_________________________
GENERAL INFORMATION

Please list child's major interests, hobbies, favorite toys/activities

________________________________________________________

What are your child's strengths?

________________________________________________________

Describe the general disposition of your child (happy, affectionate, withdrawn, stubborn, friendly)

________________________________________________________

Are there any behaviors you are concerned about that have not been discussed here (frequent crying, overly active, aggressive, temper tantrums, difficulty separating from parent)?

________________________________________________________

How does your child get along with:

Mother:__________________________________________________

Father:__________________________________________________

Brother(s):_____________________________________________

Sister(s):_______________________________________________

Friends:________________________________________________

By whom is your child disciplined?_________________________ In what way?___________________________________________

Please put other comments below that will help us understand your child.

Mother's comments________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Father's comments________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Who completed this form?

________________________________________________________

Once again, thank you for completing this form and allowing us to have a better understanding of your child,
PREPARING FOR A SCHOOL VISIT
AND/OR INTERVIEW

We recommend that your child do a bit of homework before visiting the schools they are interested in.

1. Look at the school’s website for basic information before visiting
2. Be ready to talk about why you are interested in the school
3. Dress appropriately
4. Participate in Armstrong student mock interviews
5. Send thank you note after interview

During the interview or visit, remember the following guidelines:

1. Be courteous, interested, and open with the person conducting your tour
2. Be on good behavior during the entire visit
3. It is important to strike a delicate balance between being prepared and being too coached. We will do mock interviews here at Charles Armstrong School. At home, it is helpful to talk informally with your child about their outside interests and accomplishments so that they can be ready to talk about those things with an interviewer.
What is the SSAT?

The SSAT is a test that is required as part of the admission process by non-parochial independent high schools. The test is given to 8th grade students applying for those schools. You can apply online at www.ssat.org/ssat/test/test-reg-online.html or mail in your application.

What is the High School Placement Test (HSPT)?

The HSPT is a test that is required as part of the admission process by parochial high schools. The test dates vary, but all are completed by the end of January. Please check test dates and locations with the parochial school you are interested in applying to.

What is the ISEE?

ISEE is a test that is required as part of the admission process by some non-parochial independent schools. We are excited to announce that we are an ISEE testing site this year. We are a closed site which means we can only assess our students. The test will be held at Charles Armstrong School on November 12th from 8:30 – a.m. to 12:30 p.m. during the school day. When applying to the ISEE please cut and paste the code below to register at our school. You can apply online at https://iseeonline.erelearn.org/TestBrowser/Default.aspx and follow these steps:

- Select "Yes" for Accommodations
- Select the grade their child is APPLYING TO
- Select the State of CALIFORNIA
- Copy and paste this closed invitation code (case sensitive) below in "invitation code" box: “ffGATNFM”

Test Prep Options

- Get a book (Barons, Princeton Review)
- Group classes from places such as Kaplan or Ivy West
- Private tutoring (Armstrong tutor list is a good place to start)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do we have to choose a public school option?
Yes! Always have public schools as an option even if it is not your first option. It is a slow process so start early.

Do we have to update our child’s testing?
Yes! This needs to be done every three years and almost all 7th grade students will need to update testing.

How can Charles Armstrong School help?
♦ We establish relationships at districts and private schools in the Bay Area
♦ Armstrong Teachers know the different programs well
♦ Armstrong Alumni network can help by allowing current parents to talk with alumni currently at schools that might be of interest.

If we visited a school during 7th grade year and did not like it, should we consider it now?
School choice will depend on factors relating to the child’s interest, talents, level of support needs, educational environment, religious upbringing, etc. Let these factors drive school choice rather than the other way around.

Will Charles Armstrong School help families transitioning to public schools?
Yes! We have more than 50% of our students going to public schools because the support offered can often be better than what private schools can offer.
ALL FAMILIES should consider both options—public and private.
Who is eligible for special needs under federal and state law?

You will find the California special education eligibility criteria in regulations adopted by the State Board of Education. See Title 5 California Code of Regulations (C.C.R) Sec. 3030. These regulations went into effect March 2, 1983. This is the first time California has had a uniform statewide policy for determining eligibility for special education. The criteria generally parallel the federal guidelines in defining “children with disabilities” [34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) Sec. 300.7.] Eligibility criteria under state law cannot be narrower than eligibility criteria under federal guidelines. Together, the federal and state regulations establish eligibility criteria for all students seeking special education services. In order to qualify as an individual with exceptional needs under the eligibility criteria, the assessment must demonstrate that the student’s impairment adversely affects his educational performance and requires special education. The qualifying areas of impairment set out in state eligibility regulations are:

1. Hearing impaired;
2. Both hearing and visually impaired;
3. Speech or language impaired;
4. Visually impaired;
5. Severely orthopedically impaired;
6. Impaired in strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems (other health impaired);
7. Exhibiting autistic-like behaviors;
8. Mentally retarded;
9. Seriously emotionally disturbed;
10. Learning disabled;
11. Multiple disabilities; and
12. Traumatic brain injury

[34 C.F.R Sec. 300.7; 5 C.C.R Sec. 3030.]

The IEP team (made up of qualified professionals and the parent) makes the actual determination of eligibility for special education and related services, based upon the assessment reports. [20 U.S.C Sec. 1414(bx4)(A).] A copy of the report must be given to the parent [20 U.S.C Sec. 1414(bx4)(B).] In term of minimum age, a child may be eligible for special education services, in the form of early intervention services, from birth. See Chapter 12, Information on Early Intervention Services. After age three and until school age, a child may be eligible for preschool special education. See Chapter 11, Information on Preschool Education Services. In terms of minimum age (and assuming the student has not yet graduated, fix high school with a regular diploma), a student continues to be eligible for special education through his 18th year [Cal. Ed. Code Sec 56026(c)(3)]. A student between the ages of 19 and 21 may continue in special education as long as the following conditions exist:

1. He must have been in special education at the time he turned 19;
2. He has not met his “proficiency standards”
3. He has not completed his “prescribed course of study”, or
4. He has not graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma

[Cal. Ed. Code Sec 56026(cx4) and 56026.1.]
“Prescribed course of study” means the school district’s required subjects and credits in English, math, reading, etc., as set by the local board of education for granting a diploma or certificate. [Cal. Ed. Code Sec. 51000 and following.] “Proficiency standards” are standards of student competence in basic writing skills, such as reading, writing, and mathematics. Proficiency standards will be demonstrated by passing the high school exit exam, if and when it goes into effect. Until the initiation of the high school exit exam, it is unclear what test or other means will be used to demonstrate minimum proficiency standards or awarding a regular high school diploma.

How long a student may continue in special education after his 22nd birthday depends, for the most part, on the month in which he turns 22. If the student was born:

♦ Between January 1 and June 30: he may only remain in the program for the rest of the fiscal year ending June 30, plus any extended school year program.

♦ In July, August, or September and is on a traditional school-year calendar, he is treated similarly and may continue in the program through the end of the fiscal year that ended June 30.

♦ In July, August, or September and is on a year-round school calendar, he can finish the current term, even if the term extends into the next fiscal year.

♦ In October, November, or December may continue in special education only until December 31 of the year he turns 22, unless he would otherwise complete his IEP at the end of that current fiscal year.

[Cal. Ed. Code Sec. 56026(cx4)(A)-(C).]

What is the criteria or eligibility for special education on the basis of health conditions and problems?

Under state law, a child may be eligible for special education if he has limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems, including but not limited to, a heart condition, cancer, leukemia, rheumatic fever, chronic kidney disease, cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, epilepsy, lead poisoning, diabetes, tuberculosis and other communicable infectious diseases, and hematological disorders such as sickle cell anemia and hemophilia which adversely affect a pupil’s educational performance. The health impairment will not qualify the pupil for special education if it is temporary in nature. [5 C.C.R Sec: 3030(f).] Under state law, “temporary” means a disability which will terminate at some point and which, when it terminates, will not prevent the student from returning to a general education class without the need for any special interventions: [5 C.C.R Sec. 3001(aj).]

Federal law identifies this eligibility category as “other health impairment” and defines it as: “having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, and that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder….nephritis, rheumatic fever – which adversely affects a child’s educational performance.” [34 C.F.R Sec. 300.7(c)(9).] Federal law, therefore, adds several more examples of conditions that may qualify a child and does not add the word “severe” before asthma. Federal law establishes the floor for eligibility criteria below which state law cannot go. In other words, if a child would be eligible for special education applying the federal definition, a more restrictive state definition cannot prevent eligibility from being established [Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 22IDEALR 454 (1994).] Similarly, if a state law provides a more expansive definition of eligibility than federal law, the more expansive state definition will apply in that state.

[20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(8)(B); Cal. School for the Blind v. Hoing, 736 F.3d 538 (9th Cir. 1984).]
Can a child with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) be eligible for special education services?

Yes. Federal law has specifically recognized ADD and ADHD as examples of conditions that may qualify under the category for “other health impairment” (OHI) if the other criteria for that condition are met. The definition for OHI has expanded the phase “limited strength, vitality or alertness” to include a “heightened alertness to environmental stimuli,” and then lists ADD/ADHD as an example for a chronic illness which could qualify. However, a medical diagnosis of attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) alone is not sufficient to make a student eligible for special education services. An IEP team, after the required comprehensive evaluation, must determine that the student meets a federal and/or state eligibility category. Students with ADD/ADHD may also be eligible under the “specific learning disability” category, or the “seriously emotionally disturbed category. [Cal. Ed. Code Sec. 56339(a).] Children with ADD, when the ADD is a chronic or acute health problem resulting in a limited alertness, may be considered disabled under Part B solely on the basis of this disorder within the “other health impaired” category in situations where special education and related services are needed because of ADD.

How do the eligibility criteria apply to students with a suspected learning disability?

To be considered learning disabled under the eligibility criteria, a student must meet three major requirements. First, he must have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. The basic psychological processes include attention, visual processing, auditory processing, sensory-motor skills, and cognitive abilities (including association, conceptualization, and expression). Second, this disorder may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Third, the student must have a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement in one or more of the academic areas referred to in the law. [34 C.F.R Sec. 300.7(c)(10).] As to the third requirement, California law also requires that the discrepancy not be capable of correction through other regular services offered in the regular instructional program. This additional state law requirement is probably not inconsistent with the federal law special education eligibility requirement that a child must need special education and related services [34 C.F.R Sec 300.7(ax1)] and has been upheld by the federal courts in California.

[Norton v Orina Union School District, 29 IDELR 1068 (1999).]

These regulations define intellectual ability as including both acquired learning and learning potential as determined by a systematic assessment of intellectual functioning. The student’s level of achievement includes his level of competence in materials and subject matter explicitly taught in school as measured by standard achievement tests. The academic areas identified in the law are: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation and mathematics reasoning. [Cal. Ed. Code Sec: 56337-8; 5 C.C.R Sec 30309(j).] In determining whether or not a severe discrepancy exists, the IEP team must take into account all relevant material available on the student. No single score (or product of scores) test or procedure shall be used as the sole criterion for the IEP team’s decisions as to the student’s eligibility for special education.

[5 C.C.R. Sec c3030(j)(4) (emphasis added).]
WHAT TO DISCUSS AT YOUR CHILD’S IEP

When you get the IEP be prepared to discuss your child’s strengths, challenges, and what modifications and accommodations you feel will be necessary for your child. The following is a list of accommodations that you may want to consider requesting.

♦ Extended time on tests
♦ A quite room for tests
♦ Use of laptops for all work
♦ A note taker
♦ Kurzweil reader; Franklin Speller
♦ Books on tape
♦ Use of calculator
♦ Omitting assignments that require copying
♦ Shortened spelling tests
♦ Alternative for written assignment (i.e. oral reports/posters/power points)
♦ Reduce length of written assignment
♦ Oral and printed directions
♦ Preferential seating
♦ Providing ample scratch paper for testing when necessary
♦ Oral presentations of tests
♦ Permit students to rework missed problems for better grade
♦ Any other modifications or accommodations you and teachers feel are necessary

Each student is entitled to an individually designed plan based on their own unique strengths and challenges.
The following people have volunteered to answer any questions you may have about your school of interest. Please remember to volunteer for this program after your child has transitioned so you can help future Armstrong parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>PARENT CONTACT</th>
<th>CONTACT INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbor Bay School</td>
<td>Cheryl Martinelli</td>
<td><a href="mailto:CAMwriter@aol.com">CAMwriter@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archbishop Mitty</td>
<td>Alisa Wetzel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wetzeldesign@yahoo.com">wetzeldesign@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archbishop Riordan High School</td>
<td>Elizabeth Corsale</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ecorsale@comcast.net">ecorsale@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley High School</td>
<td>Fern Royce</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Fern.royce@gmail.com">Fern.royce@gmail.com</a>, 510.540.1028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowdich Public Middle School</td>
<td>Karen Kovaes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:karenkovaes@yahoo.com">karenkovaes@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brightworks</td>
<td>Monica Bunker</td>
<td><a href="mailto:monica@thebunkers.com">monica@thebunkers.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlingame High School</td>
<td>Kathleen Carney</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kathleen.carney@wedbush.com">Kathleen.carney@wedbush.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cappuccino High School</td>
<td>Evangelin Medina</td>
<td><a href="mailto:evangelin@mac.com">evangelin@mac.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlmont High School</td>
<td>Laura Cox</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leovconrad@gmail.com">leovconrad@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathedral School for Boys</td>
<td>Kelly Gorman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kellygorman@earthlink.net">kellygorman@earthlink.net</a>, 415.931.0358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convent of the Sacred Heart</td>
<td>Martha Gregg</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marthgregg@msn.com">marthgregg@msn.com</a>, 415-752-4280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drew School</td>
<td>Bonnie Shenk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bonni@actualfilms.net">bonni@actualfilms.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunn</td>
<td>Lisa Bell</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lisakarenbell@gmail.com">lisakarenbell@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eagle Hill School</td>
<td>Elizabeth Sippl</td>
<td><a href="mailto:esippl@sippl.com">esippl@sippl.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Everest High School</td>
<td>Karen Thrift</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hikkt@yahoo.com">hikkt@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway High School</td>
<td>Lorna Koep</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mamilorna@comcast.net">mamilorna@comcast.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grier School</td>
<td>Mary Melo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maryjmelo@yahoo.com">maryjmelo@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gunn High School</td>
<td>Laura Birss</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lbirss@comcast.net">lbirss@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Moon Bay High School</td>
<td>Leslie Greenberg</td>
<td><a href="mailto:klhgreenberg@sbcglobal.net">klhgreenberg@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsdale High School</td>
<td>Michele Epstein</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mkepstein@comcast.net">mkepstein@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junipero Serra High School</td>
<td>Joan Cardinale</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jocargia@aol.com">jocargia@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keys School</td>
<td>Phyllis Davidson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Phyllis.davidson@oracle.com">Phyllis.davidson@oracle.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kehillah</td>
<td>Lainee Engel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bird0906@mac.com">bird0906@mac.com</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### PAST ARMSTRONG PARENT CONTACTS

**Continued...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lick Wilmerding High School</td>
<td>Ellen Finch</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elfjam@aol.com">elfjam@aol.com</a>, 650.570.5405 (home)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Oak</td>
<td>David Obershaw</td>
<td><a href="mailto:david@obershaw.com">david@obershaw.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Altos High School</td>
<td>Lisa Lachy</td>
<td>650-740-3030</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marin School</td>
<td>Crystal Cooper</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Crystal_cox_cooper@yahoo.com">Crystal_cox_cooper@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy High School, Burlingame</td>
<td>Margie Curran</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lackofslp@aol.com">lackofslp@aol.com</a>, 415.731.7146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Peninsula High School</td>
<td>Joan Cleary</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joan.dcleary@aol.com">joan.dcleary@aol.com</a>, 650.685.4850</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Tom</td>
<td>Nina Ward</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Nina_wardl@hotmail.com">Nina_wardl@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mountain View High School</td>
<td>Kim Atkinson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:atkinsonfamily95@gmail.com">atkinsonfamily95@gmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notre Dame HS, Belmont</td>
<td>Claudia Burr</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cburr@mcn.org">cburr@mcn.org</a>, 408.947.7645</td>
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<tr>
<td>Odyssey School</td>
<td>Lisa Lunday</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Lisalunday@gmail.com">Lisalunday@gmail.com</a>, 650.347.4941</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palo Alto Prep High School</td>
<td>Gary Bozzini</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gbozzini@sbcglobal.net">gbozzini@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pinewood</td>
<td>Michele Bernard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidio Hill</td>
<td>Sarah Kahn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sarahkahn64@gmail.com">sarahkahn64@gmail.com</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart Prep</td>
<td>Loren Gordon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lilikg@mindspring.com">lilikg@mindspring.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco School of the Arts</td>
<td>Cindi Rosse</td>
<td><a href="mailto:CindiRosse@gmail.com">CindiRosse@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>San Mateo High School</td>
<td>Ross or Luisa Hughes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:LKREHUG@sbcglobal.net">LKREHUG@sbcglobal.net</a>, 650.349.5528</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Rafael High School</td>
<td>Zelda Mellor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bestnurse24@yahoo.com">bestnurse24@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Francis High School</td>
<td>Jean McDonagh Schott</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeanmarieschott@msn.com">jeanmarieschott@msn.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Joseph School</td>
<td>Elizabeth Henriquez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alpert315@aol.com">alpert315@aol.com</a>, 650.342.1010</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence Academy</td>
<td>Charlene Mercadante</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Char318@comcast.net">Char318@comcast.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanbridge Academy</td>
<td>Steen or Cheryl Van</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stevenvan2002@yahoo.com">stevenvan2002@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>Sterne School</td>
<td>Glenna Kelly</td>
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<td>Summit Prep High School</td>
<td>Cecelia Daye</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fourdays@ihot.com">fourdays@ihot.com</a></td>
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<td>Helen Adams</td>
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<td>Valley Christian High School</td>
<td>Richard Streeter</td>
<td>408.846.5248</td>
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<td>Waldorf High School</td>
<td>Gail Gurewitz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gosenwitz@yahoo.com">gosenwitz@yahoo.com</a></td>
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## SEPTEMBER 2013

### Monthly Parent Checklist For a Successful Transition

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</table>

### REMINDERS:
- Be positive
- Review list of Shadow dates for you public schools. If your school is not on the list, call as soon as possible.
- Visit school websites and make appointments to visit schools
- Review dates of open houses and mark calendar for schools of interest.
- Update Psych Ed report if older than three years.

### ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:
Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264 Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org

### NOTES:

_________________________________

_________________________________

_________________________________

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_________________________________
### October 2013

**Monthly Parent Checklist For a Successful Transition**

<table>
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<td>NO SCHOOL – Columbus Day</td>
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<td>Transition Meeting 8:30-10:00am</td>
<td>Overview of Transition Process</td>
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**Reminders:**

- Be positive
- Attend transition meeting October 18th from 8:30-10:00am at Armstrong.
- Visit school websites. Schedule school visits for you and your child.
- Review dates of open houses and mark calendar for schools of interest.
- Fill out private school initial application and call for shadow visit—Tuesdays or days Armstrong is not in session are preferred.
- Review list of Shadow dates for you public schools. If your school is not on the list, call as soon as possible.
- Update Psych Ed report if older than three years.
- Support your child and insure that they continue to focus on their Armstrong school work.

**Notes:**

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**Any Questions**

**Please Contact:** Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions  
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264  
Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org
## Monthly Parent Checklist For a Successful Transition

### NOVEMBER 2013

#### REMINDERS:
- Attend transition meeting November 15th from 8:30-10:00am at Armstrong.
- Work on application essays
- Check all applications and review checklists.
- Check dates and deadlines on applications
- Register and apply for accommodations for SSAT/ISEE/HSPT.
- Begin preparing for test
- Mail the “parent” portion and application feeds as soon as possible (be aware of deadlines!)
- Send recommendation forms to Pat Piper as soon as possible.

#### NOTES:
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#### ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:
Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264 Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org
### REMINDERS:
- Continue school visits.
- Complete and submit applications.
- Follow up with outside personal recommendations.
- Continue preparing for entrance test.
- Attend school events such as games, performances, etc. at the schools you are considering.
- If you will be applying for financial aid, get the application form and begin assembling required documents. Pay attention to deadlines!

### NOTES:

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### ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:
Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions  
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264  Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org
## REMINDERS:
- Take the entrance test (SSAT/HSPT/ISEE)
- Attend school events such as games, performances, etc. at the schools you are considering.
- Prepare for private school interviews.
- Apply for financial aid. Pay attention to documentation requirements and deadlines!

## NOTES:

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT: Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264 Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org
### REMINDERS:
- Attend the Transition Meeting Alumni Panel on February 28th from 8:30-10am at Armstrong.
- Focus on schoolwork. Given the number of children who could be on waiting lists, this term can be very important! Some admission decisions are conditional on Q3 and Q4 grades.

### NOTES:

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### ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:
Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264 Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org
### REMINDERS:

- You should be hearing from schools you applied to mid-month (most private high schools send out their letters on the same day.) It is important that you do not transfer the anxiety to your children.
- Continue to focus on schoolwork. Some acceptances are conditional on Q3 and Q4 grades.
- Register your child for summer school classes if required or recommended by accepting school.

### NOTES:

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### ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:
Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264 Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org
### REMINDERS:
- Attend Transition School Faire on April 10th from 8:30-10am
- 7th Grade Parents must attend Mandatory Transition meeting on April 10th from 10-11am
- Continue to focus on schoolwork. Some acceptances are conditional on Q3 and Q4 grades.
- Contact Debbie Vielbaum to set up 504 meeting.

### NOTES:

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT: Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264 Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org
### REMINDERS:

- **Almost done!** Continue to focus on schoolwork and finish up the year strong. Some acceptances are conditional on Q3 and Q4 grades.
- **Contact Debbie Vielbaum to set up 504 meeting if not done in April.**

### NOTES:

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### ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:

Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions  
Phone: (650)592-7570 x264  
Email: DViemail@charlesarmstrong.org
### REMINDERS:
- **CONGRATULATIONS!** Armstrong Commencement celebration this month.

### NOTES:

ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT: Debbie Vielbaum—Director of Admissions and Transitions Phone: (650)592-7570 x264 Email: DVielbaum@charlesarmstrong.org