

Show, Don't Tell:

Teachers Make Excellence Visible in the Admissions Process



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When parents choose to pursue an independent school education for their children, there are typically several factors driving their decision. By considering these factors, we can enhance the admissions process for parents, students, and the school, yielding improved admissions results.

Consider these drivers: Perhaps one or both parents attended an independent school, setting a clear expectation for family members to follow tradition. Perhaps the family seeks a more personalized, differentiated, student-directed, project-based, or values-driven learning experience for their children than is offered in their local public school. Or, perhaps they have a child with special needs, unique talents or unusual interests that will require accommodations at school. Whatever the reason, parents seeking to pay for something already available to them for free will bring a high level of precision and discernment to their admission application and decision process. This explains why often, even before they visit your school, parents who have determined that

an independent school education is best for their children, will already have a set of priorities guiding their search. Armed with an understanding that parents are seeking a varied and wide range of independent school features and outcomes, how does your school ensure throughout the admissions cycle that you stay true to your mission, showcase your strengths, and provide both your applicant families and your admissions team opportunities to make right-fit matches?

A quick look at the data shown here highlights that as a group of professionals, we believe we are well-served in the admission process when we prioritize ways to feature our excellent teachers. At the same time, the data also identifies the kinds of learning experiences we believe parents are seeking for their children, along with what we imagine are their preferred set of outcomes. Aligning these data points, it would seem we have determined that by showcasing excellence in teaching during the admission process, we acknowledge and leverage what we know about the ways our teachers personify who we are, how we teach, and what students learn at our school. Therefore, if we can communicate through our admissions materials, and demonstrate through our admissions experiences, that teachers ARE the embodiment of our pedagogy and our program, we will have made concrete for many families the ways in which our schools match their conceptual ideals.

So, whether redesigning your website, rewriting your viewbook, or reimagining your admissions events, consider how spotlighting your excellent teachers can highlight



in concrete ways the variety of school features and educational outcomes that matter most to parents:

- **Relationships** are at the core of an independent school education. How are teachers at your school prepared to incorporate social and emotional learning into their daily practice, so that students have a strong sense of well-being and are gaining in confidence?
- **Innovation** is at the heart of preparing students for the future. How are teachers at your school modeling innovative teaching practices and inspiring students to become creative, collaborative problem-solvers in the classroom?
- **Critical-thinking** is the new academic rigor. How are teachers at your school engaging students in complicated intellectual and ethical questions that require interdisciplinary exploration?

Whether we believe our applicant families care most about Social and Emotional Learning, Academic Rigor, or 21st Century Skills, it is by recognizing their desire for Excellent Teachers in classes small enough to build personal connections that we will succeed. Spotlight your teachers' caring demeanors, inspirational teaching, and deep knowledge across disciplines, and you will position yourself well to tell your story to people who are listening.