SCHOOL CHOICE BASICS

Questions to Ask a School

A fuller list of questions for tours, calls, and open houses, adapted from Dr. Bill Redford's School Choice Basics.

School _____ **Date** _____

Who we spoke with _____ **Contact info** _____

Test scores are only part of the picture. Visit, sit in on a class if you can, and ask specific questions. Check off each one as you ask it and write the answer on the line.

Goals and results

- [ ] What are the school's goals beyond test scores? (For example: personalized learning, dual language, arts, technology, music.)

- [ ] Is the school meeting its goals? How do you know whether it is or isn't?

- [ ] What reliable, publicly available information shows how the school is doing?

- [ ] What does the school expect from every student?

Fit for my child

- [ ] How does your academic program fit my child's needs? How does it compare with our other options?

- [ ] How do you support a student who is struggling, or one who is ahead?

- [ ] What does a typical day look like for a student in this grade?

- [ ] How will the school help my child succeed?

- [ ] How do you handle bullying and conflict?

- [ ] For students with IEPs or 504 plans, what services are provided on site, and by whom?

Stability

- [ ] How long has the school been open? What is teacher turnover like?

- [ ] Charter school: when is the charter up for renewal, and is it likely to be renewed?

- [ ] Private school: is the school accredited and in good standing? Is there any risk of closing?
- [ ] Program within a district school: are there any plans to change or close the program?

Families and communication

- [ ] What role do parents play at the school? Are there volunteer or participation expectations?
- [ ] How do you communicate with families, and how often?

Schedule, class size, and cost

- [ ] How long is the school day? The school year?
- [ ] How many students are in each class?
- [ ] What are the total yearly costs beyond tuition, if any (fees, uniforms, supplies, activities, transportation)?
- [ ] Is there before- or after-school care or transportation?

Admissions and enrollment

- [ ] How does admission work: assigned school, lottery, application, audition, or portfolio?
- [ ] What preferences apply, such as sibling or neighborhood preferences? Do any apply to us?
- [ ] If the school has several programs, can we apply to more than one?
- [ ] What are all the steps and deadlines, including the ones after we're accepted?
- [ ] What happens if this isn't a good fit mid-year?

Get information from the right source. For enrollment rules and dates, that's usually the district office or the school's own administrator, not word of mouth.

General information only, not legal, tax, or placement advice. Rules, dates, and requirements vary by state, district, school, and program. Always confirm details with each school, district, or official source.