

Questions To Ask Schools

Here are some questions to consider asking to learn more about a school. Asking questions can be a good way to:

- Build relationships with a school's principal, teachers, and other members of the school team.
- Better understand the experiences of students.
- Learn about resources available to support student learning.

These questions help as a guide to conversations with schools.

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Questions About Student Learning



- How is your school performing with students that are like mine?
- How can I keep track of my student's progress between progress reports and report cards?
- How do you measure student success? What does student success look like to the school? How do you use this information for planning and other purposes?
- What is your homework policy? How much time on average do students spend on homework outside of the classroom each day?
- How do you grade homework? What is the consequence if homework is incomplete?
- How does your school support students who are not performing well?
- What percentage of students in my student's grade level are performing on grade level in English? In math? In science?
- How do you support each student's strengths, weaknesses, and unique needs?
- Does your school have programs for students with learning challenges?
- What can I do to support my student's learning at home?
- Is my student on track to graduate high school and apply to college?
- Is my student on track for the next grade level?

Questions About Other Learning Experiences for Students



- What programs can students take part in outside of the classroom? At what grade can they take part? Do you offer sports, music, choir, clubs, field trips, etc.?
- Are there advanced classes?
- Do any classes prepare students for college or career? How can I get more information?
- What opportunities do students have to practice leadership skills? Is there student government, sports, or other extracurriculars?
- How do you support students' socio-economic learning?

Questions About Curriculum and Testing



- What curriculum do you use and why?
- How do you teach subjects that are sensitive?
- How do you incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into your curriculum?
- What is standardized testing like?
- How many tests do students take in the school year? How does the curriculum help students prepare for college and/or a career?

Questions About Teacher and School Engagement



- What is communication like between parents/guardians/caregivers and teachers?
- How often should I expect to hear updates about how my student is doing?
- How will updates about my student and school get communicated to me?
- How can I schedule time to check in with you about my student?

Notes



Questions About School Culture

- What programs can students take part in outside of the classroom? At what grade can they take part? Do you offer sports, music, choir, clubs, field trips, etc.?
- What is your school's mission and values? How do you encourage and incorporate those values in a school day?
- Tell me about the school culture.
- Are there specific learning methods your school uses? (For example, small group learning, project-based learning, activity-based, inquiry-based, etc.)
- What does your school offer that makes it different from other schools?
- How does your school help students develop a sense of purpose?
- How does your school inspire students to explore their individual passions and interests?
- What does a typical school day look like? How long is the school day?
- Are meals and snacks provided?
- Is there a dress code?
- What types of facilities are on your school campus? Cafeteria? Gym? Playground? Library?
- What technology is my student expected to use? Is technology provided by the school? How is the technology balanced with other learning?
- What is the diversity of your student population?
- How does your school commit to Diversity and Inclusion to serve every student?
- What is the average classroom size? What is the teacher to student ratio?
- What do you see as the school's strengths and weaknesses? Why? How would you like to see the school improve?
- What is the process for applying to the school?
- Does your school work with any local organizations? How do they help to support students with learning, projects, and other needs?

Questions About School Staff



- Tell me about your school's leadership team.
- What is the retention rate of staff in your school? The turnover rate?
- How long has my student's teacher been teaching in the classroom?
- What is the diversity of your school's leadership team and staff?
- How often do teachers and instructional leaders engage in professional development?

Notes

Questions About Transportation



- Is bus service available?
- How can I find out about transportation information?

Questions About Getting Involved



- How do parents get involved in the school? Are there volunteer opportunities for parents?
- How can I get involved in my student's class?
- What's the most important thing I can do to help my student be academically successful this year?

Questions About Supporting Multilingual Learners



- How do you teach students who are learning English?
- What programs do you offer to support language learning and studying?
- How do you determine an educational plan unique to each multilingual learner?
- What materials do you offer in Spanish or other languages?
- What percentage of students at your school are multilingual learners?

Questions About Supporting Students with Disabilities and Special Needs



- How does your school support students with special needs?
- How can I connect with other parents whose students have special needs similar to mine?

Notes



Questions About Social & Emotional Well-Being

- What is your approach to discipline, safety, and bullying?
- If my student experiences a disciplinary, safety, or bullying incident, when and how would I be notified and involved in the process?
- How do you honor and reward your students?
- Does the school have on campus security/police? How many?
- Where can I find information about your school's discipline data?
- How do you celebrate/embrace the culture of every student outside of national holidays?
- What traditions does the school have that create a sense of community/belonging for every student.

Questions About Physical & Mental Well-Being



- Does your school have a nurse on campus?
- Does your school have a counselor on campus?
- Does your school offer any type of physical education?
- What is your school's COVID-19 policy?

Questions About Fees for School Programs:



- What paid school programs should I anticipate for the school year? (Ex: School pictures, yearbook, field trips, musical instruments, graduation supplies, uniforms, etc.?)

Notes & Additional Questions