Independent schools are independently governed by their own boards of trustees. They are mainly financed by tuition payments, charitable contributions, and endowment revenue and receive little, if any, government funding. Independent school accreditation standards are rigorous and are validated by a national commission.

Independent schools offer pre-K through 12 education and include coeducational and single-sex, day and boarding schools. Each has a distinct educational mission. Yet, they all share a commitment to achieving excellence and inspiring innovation. This commitment attracts high quality teachers and promotes a supportive learning environment.

U.S. Department of Education Findings

– Independent schools tend to be smaller than other schools, which often results in higher achievement for students.
– Independent schools offer exceptionally low student-teacher ratios and thus more individual attention, responsible in part for greater success in college and future endeavors.
– Teachers at independent schools are able to communicate consistent goals to their students and collaborate more effectively on raising student achievement.

Independent schools focus on educating the whole child, offering learning experiences that reach beyond core academic areas such as math, science, history, and English. They have the freedom to promote creative thinking in hands-on ways and to introduce students to exciting and challenging subjects including art, music, foreign languages, global and environmental education, and technology.

Students come from diverse backgrounds to develop their interests—and a love of learning—at independent schools.

Independent schools maintain small class sizes, so that teachers can learn about every student and attend to each child’s individual skills and needs. Teachers form close relationships with students and their parents, and go above and beyond to ensure each student’s success.

What to do when exploring an independent school for your child:

- Browse individual school websites.
- Read school literature.
- Attend a school open house and visit a class.
- Talk with admission officers and faculty and ask questions about the school.
- Attend a school sporting event, school play, or science fair to experience extracurricular options.
- Talk with the school’s financial aid representative to learn about options for financing your child’s education.

There are approximately 2,000 independent schools across the United States providing high quality, individualized education to more than 700,000 students from pre-kindergarten through high school.
What do independent schools value?

**Education for the whole child.** Independent schools nurture students' intellectual ability and curiosity, personal and social growth, and civic conscience.

**Individualized education.** Independent school teachers and administrators take the time to know each student to encourage achievement in and out of the classroom, and to generate excitement about learning.

**High quality teachers.** Faculty at independent schools combine top teaching skills with a passion for their subject areas. Many teachers bring to the classroom knowledge from advanced degrees and successful careers. Their energy and enthusiasm create significant learning experiences for their students.

**Accessible educators.** Independent schools understand that parents are important partners in a child’s education. Parents are invited to contact administrators and teachers with questions or concerns about their child’s school experiences.

**Safe schools.** Independent schools maintain up-to-date facilities and provide a safe and nurturing environment for children to learn. Parents can rest assured that faculty know their students well and can help them when they are confronted with problems.

**Inclusiveness.** Independent schools are diverse and vibrant communities that welcome and respect each family.

**Real-world experience.** Independent school leaders know that students benefit from interaction with people who hold different perspectives and come from different backgrounds. They strive to provide students real-world experiences to prepare them to achieve not only in school, but also in work, in further academic pursuits, and in life. In addition to being exposed to a broad array of courses, independent school students participate in community service work and keep up with political affairs.
What to ask when you visit an independent school:

1. Is instruction innovative and engaging?
2. How do students get long-term value from their education?
3. Does the school welcome and encourage parents’ involvement?
4. Are there high quality and committed teachers?
5. How does the school deliver on its mission?