IECA



IECA in China

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Fall Conference Photos

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SPECIAL FOCUS:
School Advising
- Noncognitive assessments
- TABS Initiative
- Neuroscience
- School Touring Guide
- Transitions from RTC to traditional school

pages 7–23

INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

December 2015/January 2016

Calendar

December 8
Webinar: State of the Profession

December 10
Fall 2016 Conference Planning Meeting, New Orleans, LA

January 9–10
IECA Executive Committee Meets in Richmond, VA

January 11–13
IECA College Tours & Hosted School Tour, Central Virginia

January 12
Webinar: Small Changes, Big Results: Improve Your Essay

January 13–15
Professional Members Retreat, Richmond, VA

February 8–9
IECA/NATSAP Link 'n Learn La Jolla, CA

February 9
Webinar: The North American Boarding Initiative

Mid–February
Spring Conference (Boston) Registration opens

March 8
Webinar: Insight Into the Underperforming Student

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IECA at 40: Honoring Our Roots, Celebrating Our Success, Planning for a Meaningful Future

From its beginning in 1976, IECA has been rooted in service to children, high ethical standards, member education, and communication among independent educational consultants (IECs). Those roots have continued to anchor IECA, even as the admissions world has undergone dramatic changes. Over those 40 years, the profession has moved from the shadows to the forefront of admission to schools and colleges, and new specialties—therapeutic, learning disabilities, global, and graduate school, for example—have emerged. **A central focus on a holistic view of a student to ensure a great fit remains central to our work.**

Today, the very phrase *independent educational consultant* is part of the admission lexicon. Independent research shows that our reach is significant: more than 25% of four-year college placements involve an IEC. In some independent schools, programs, and colleges, the percentage of students who employed an IEC is beyond two-thirds, demonstrating how crucial we have become to the process.

Perhaps IECA's greatest contribution has been the concept of *fit*. Thirty years ago only IECA members were routinely talking about school fit apart from financial considerations and majors. Today that concept is accepted by most in the counseling community as central to a high-quality placement: admission officials, school-based counselors, and IECA members all promote an academic, social, and communal match between a student and an educational institution.

IECA is at its largest number of members, even as the national trends have resulted in dramatically smaller associations. Our conferences, regional groups, symposia, webinars, and special events now attract the largest gatherings in our history as our work becomes better known, better understood, and essential to our partners in schools, colleges, and programs.

Members tell us that these programs, including the Summer Training Institute, are among the best training offered anywhere—in any profession. Most remarkable is that IECA began with a demand for very high standards and has kept those same requirements in place. It is that commitment that has helped us earn a reputation for quality, excellence, and ethical practices.

As we enter our fifth decade, we are excited by the changes ahead and do so with a recommitment to our mission and the core values that have stood the test of time and guided us in the right direction.

To promote the highest quality educational consulting to students and families seeking skilled, ethical, academic or therapeutic guidance; to enhance professional development; and to foster career satisfaction among members.
—IECA Mission Statement

President's Letter

Reflections on a Productive Year



Gail Meyer

As we approach the final days of 2015, we once again reflect upon our accomplishments with a deep sense of gratitude for the numerous contributions of IECA members. Whether it is through presentations at conferences, hosting webinars, writing educational articles for *Insights*, or actively participating in association committees, IECA members have worked tirelessly to ensure that IECA serves as the voice of independent educational consulting.

This year the Strategic Planning Committee spent countless hours developing a strategic plan for IECA. Hats off to **Charlotte Klaar** for her leadership and to the committee for their hard work.

Our membership continues to grow more diverse in ethnicity, gender, and race. We are proud to have members who are establishing international regional groups in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Vietnam, Singapore, and Thailand. The Membership Committee has been busy approving qualified candidates for IECA membership. Our current members continue to demonstrate their commitment to honoring the *Principles of Good Practice*, maintaining the highest standards of professional service and personal conduct.

In 2015, many member volunteers, led by **Joan Koven**, created our Ethics webinar, a requirement for all members in order to renew their membership.

The Professional Liaison Committee held its first Symposium on College Admissions and a second one is planned for spring 2016 in Southern California.

The Education and Training Committee has been working on a host of upcoming events.

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IECA+ INSIGHTS

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Connect with us on Facebook, IECA's blog (*www.IECAonline.com/blog*), Linkedin (for IECA members only), and Twitter (@IECA).

In Focus

Statistics on School Advising IECA Members

19 The average number of secondary admission reps hosted in IECA member offices annually. *(range of responses: 0 to 100 last year)*

13 The average number of boarding schools our members visited last year. *(plus 7 independent day, 6 LD, 2 parochial and 3 public/charter schools)*

27 The average number of hours IECA members spend on a secondary school placement. *(range of responses: 7 to 125 hours, on average)*

79 The percentage of IECA members who would welcome invitations for multi-school visits.

91 The percentage of IECA members who urge clients to pursue their passion and participate in extracurricular activities.

Source: IECA member survey, October 2015



On the Road

IECA's First Asia Events Spark Regional Group Development and New Outreach Initiatives

Those who follow IECA on Facebook or Twitter saw exciting developments this fall as IECA participated in the Forum on International Educational Exchange in Shenzhen, China, and hosted member events in both mainland China and Hong Kong that attracted dozens of members and associates.

Several IECA members and IECA's CEO, **Mark Sklarow**, participated in the forum, and with 3WYC, the hosting organization, covering their hotel and airfare expenses, no IECA monies were used to take advantage of this opportunity. IECA's **Marilyn Emerson** (NY) presided over general session interview segments. In addition to a representative from Columbia University and a local school official, IECA members **Lloyd Paradiso** (PA), **Vicky Newman** (CT), and **Ann Rossbach** (NJ) served on the panel of experts. They all also engaged in outreach and educational efforts with local families. Once again, none of these costs were borne by IECA, even though their efforts promoted the Association.



Vicky Newman, Ann Rossbach, Lloyd Paradiso, and Marilyn Emerson served on the panel of experts

In his keynote address, Sklarow spoke about the role of factors beyond test scores as colleges and schools seek an interesting and diverse student body. A central part of the presentation concentrated on the different areas of focus that recruiters, commissioned agents, and independent educational consultants have. In China, most people use commissioned agents, who operate without explaining to clients that their fees are tied to a decision to attend one of a small number of contracted schools. Those topics, and especially IECA, became the source of considerable media coverage by print and online news outlets.

One of the most rewarding events of the trip took advantage of the forum's location to meet with members and their associates in the region. Sklarow and Newman met with 15 IECs (all IECA members or their associates), to discuss consulting in China. Flying in from Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, and other locations, the group explored publicity and outreach, ethical standards, and how to create a vibrant IECA community in China. In addition, Sklarow and Rossbach hosted 25 members in Hong Kong, including a new member from Thailand. A highlight of those meetings was hearing members articulate their pride in membership, their commitment to high standards of excellence, and their desire to become active in the Association. IECA funded those two member meetings, providing lunch just as it does for special meetings of members in communities from California to Massachusetts.



Mark Sklarow at luncheon with IECA members in Shenzhen

IECA has already seen rewards from these efforts through new regional groups that were established with local leaders. Also in the works is a new IECA website that is not only written in Mandarin but also uses content that will resonate in Asia. That will serve as a good test drive for what IECA can do as our membership grows in Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Several IECA members volunteered to staff an IECA booth at the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry conference in San Antonio. Pictured are: **Betsy Donnelly** (GA), **Linda Cain** (CO), **Eileen Antalek** (MA), **Karen Mabie** (IL).



Scottsdale Conference Photo Album

November 4–7, 2015 at the Westin Kierland Hotel



The School & College Fair was bustling from beginning to end.



More than 250 schools and colleges exhibited at the Fair; 245 therapeutic programs participated in the Info Swap the following day.



Jed Applerouth presented two sessions: The New SAT/ACT and Techniques to Tame Anxiety.



Attendees packed the general session with featured speaker Frank Bruni.



The conference hub, Conference Central, provided attendees with a place to network, meet with vendors, and find refreshments.



Frank Bruni, *New York Times* columnist, addressed the prevalent frenzy surrounding college admissions.



Over 1,200 attendees chose from 63 educational sessions on a variety of topics from admission, starting an IEC practice, anxiety, affordability, learning differences, residential treatment, and much more.



Keynote speaker Michael Gurian talked with attendees after his general session presentation on gender differences and brain development.



Consultant roundtables are one of the most popular events at the conference.



The networking dinner provided a relaxed event with southwestern food and entertainment.

President's Letter, from page 2

Be sure to register for the next Professional Member Retreat in Richmond, VA, January 13–15, 2016. Tours of schools and colleges will be offered prior to the Retreat.

I thank our Board of Directors who volunteer their time and energy to provide thoughtful decision making, oversight, and planning of activities that further IECA's mission.

We are fortunate to have **Mark Sklarow** as CEO of our organization. His leadership has been crucial in advancing our profession, and he and his staff are busy preparing for IECA's 40th anniversary celebration in 2016.

This has been a productive year and I thank each of you for making my job so satisfying. May you have a joyous holiday season and a healthy new year!

Gail Meyer

Gail Meyer
IECA President

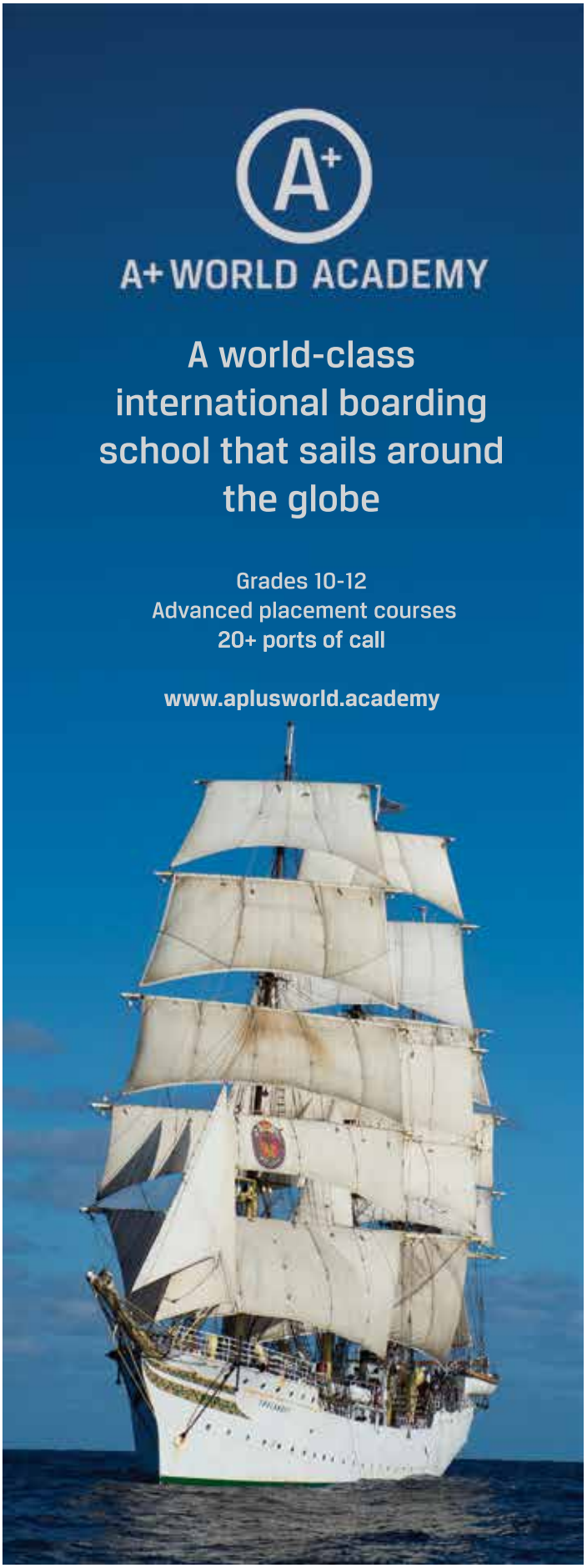
News From the National Office



IECA is pleased to announce that **Amanda Fogler** has been promoted to the position of Manager of Member Outreach & Engagement. She has worked as IECA's Membership Associate for the past year and a half and is enthusiastic about taking on the challenges of her new position. Many of you have already met her at IECA conferences, Summer Training Institutes, or NACAC. Amanda can be reached at *Amanda@IECAonline.com* or 703-591-4850 ext. 6973.

Diana Kane left the association in early December and has found a new position closer to her home.

Advertisement



The X Factor: Noncognitive Assessments in Admissions

by Peter Gilbert, Director of Admissions, Salisbury School (CT) and Allison W. Matlack, MAT, IECA (MA)


Peter Gilbert

We all know who we're talking about. It's that student who has a certain je ne sais quoi that makes him an appealing applicant. Maybe it's his bright smile or the ease with which he laughs at himself. Maybe it's the way she talks about her friends or explains why she's running for student body president. Maybe it's even the way he describes his summer camp experience. But it's something you can sense without being able to articulate the reasons why—that this kid is a great applicant. And even though grades and standardized test scores might fall a bit shy of the typical standards, this is a student you want at your school because you know he or she is going to thrive.


Allison W. Matlack

Although Simon Cowell refers to those qualities that make contestants stand out as the elusive "X Factor," independent schools' admissions offices have been working to define those intangible personal qualities that are strong predictors of a student's success at their schools. Through the use of noncognitive assessments, some schools are moving to a more holistic evaluation of their applicants, using creative interview formats, and finding the change worth the risk.

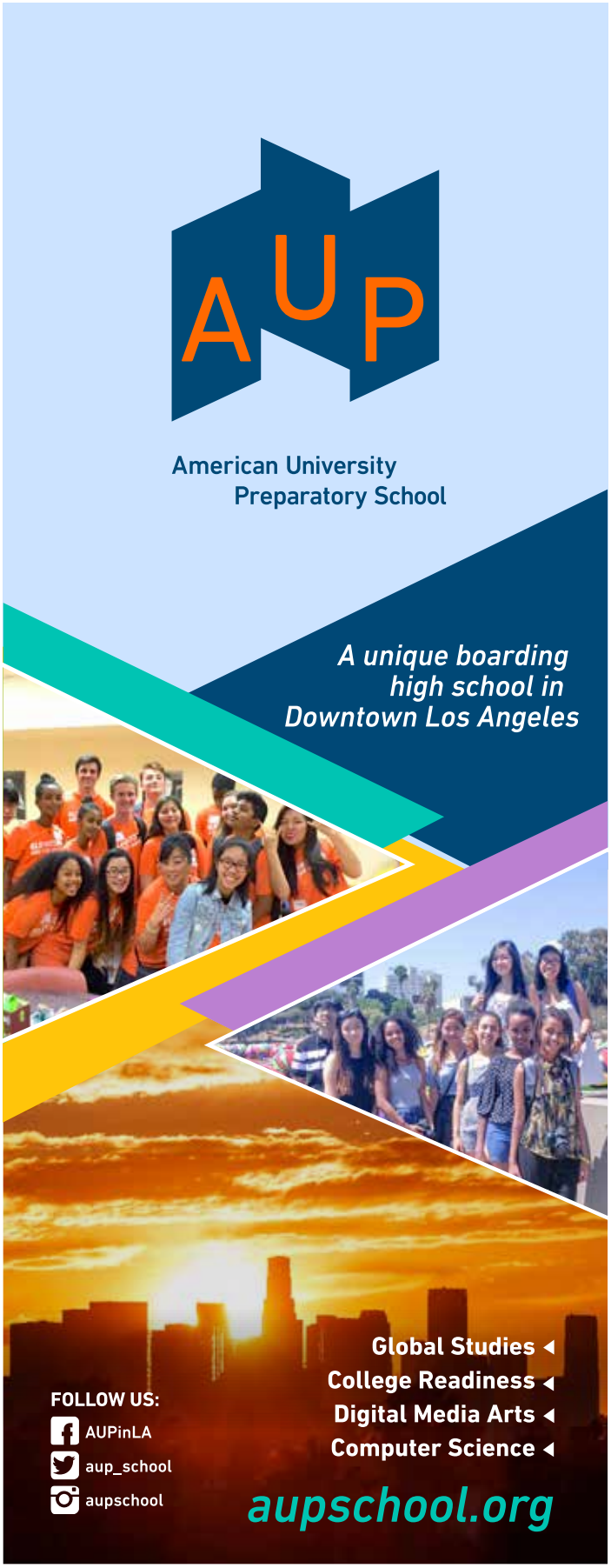
Holistic Admission Formula

Year after year, Salisbury School administrators observed that some boys who had entered with comparable grades and SSAT scores were graduating with very different academic profiles. They started to think seriously about which qualities were nurtured at Salisbury that enabled some students to achieve better than their peers and developed metrics to evaluate the specific noncognitive skills that they believed correlated with that success.

According to the Secondary School Admission Test Board's *Think Tank on the Future of Assessment* (2013), although the qualities most schools agree that they are looking for in their applicants include "creativity, problem solving, curiosity, self-control, and motivation," some schools also look for specific traits that align with their mission statements. After completing two SSAT validity studies, a college/outcome result analysis for three graduating classes, and an attrition study, Salisbury School developed a holistic admissions formula that complimented the school's mission statement. Priding themselves on graduating "men of character," they began to look more aggressively for applicants who demonstrated creativity, integrity, leadership, respect, humility, and empathy, with the conviction that their single-gender environment was optimal for boys to confidently grow their noncognitive skills, such as curiosity, adaptability, benevolence, and optimism. Likewise at Putney School, which has a strong social justice premise, John Barrengos, the director of

continued on page 9

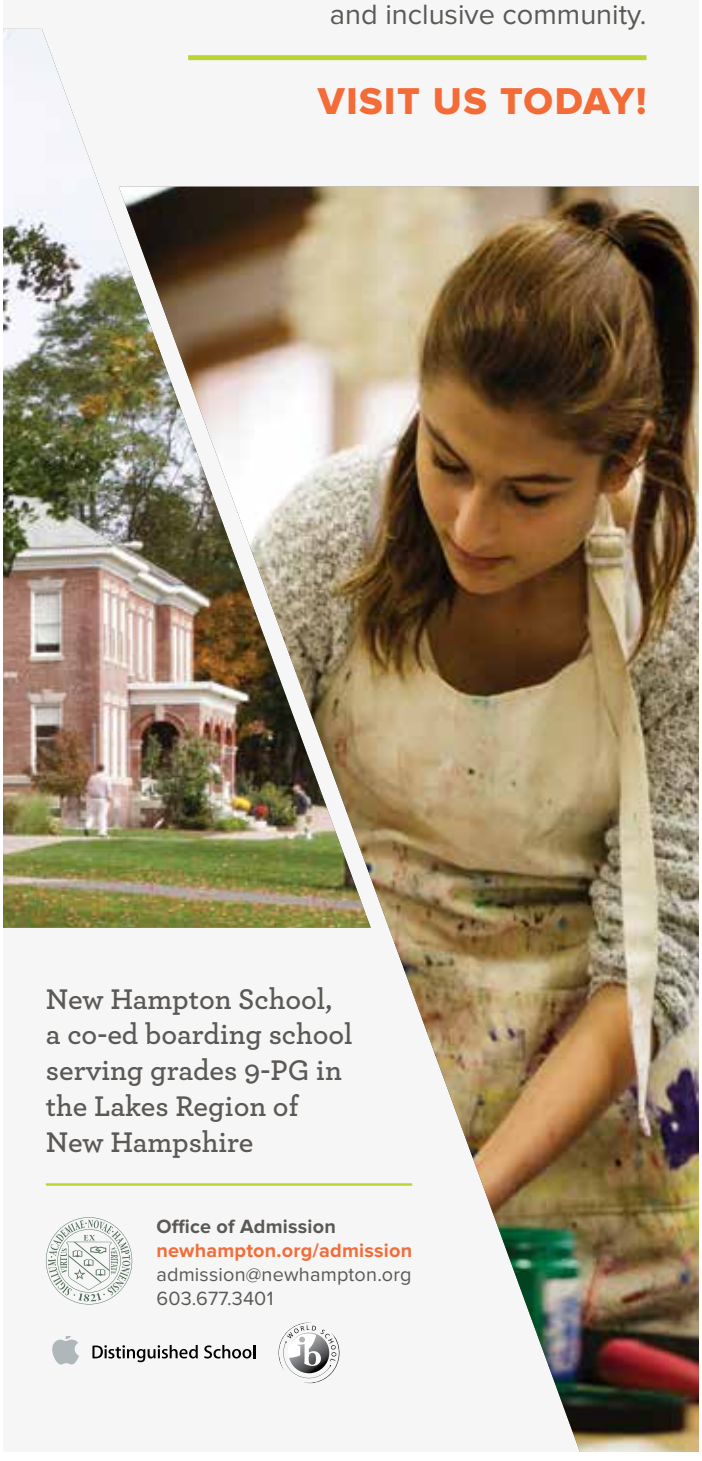
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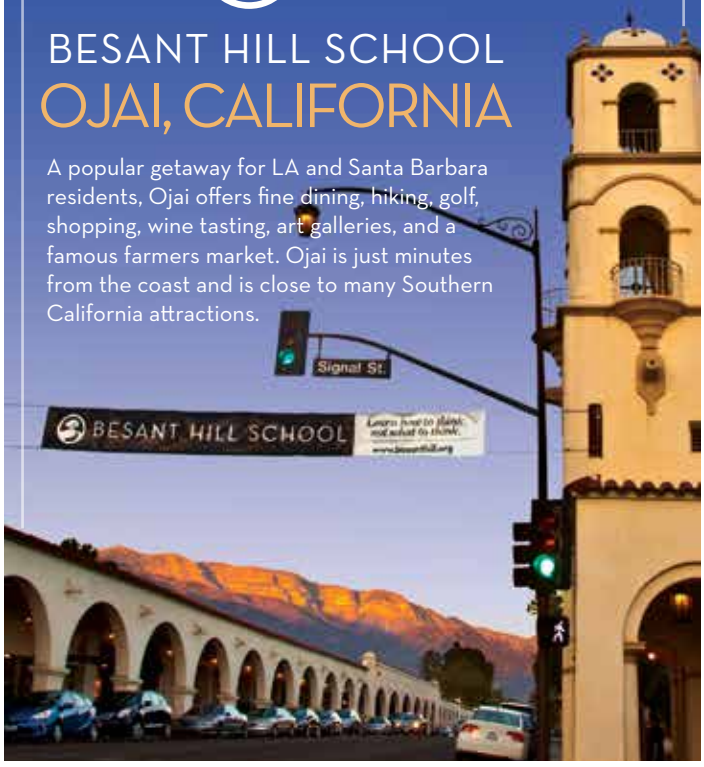
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Noncognitive Assessments, from page 7

admission, looks for students who believe that community service and "saving the world" are important to leading a meaningful and fulfilled life.

Creative Interview Formats

Not all noncognitive assessments are equally useful. Some schools have realized that the traditional interview format does not always provide rich information about applicants, particularly in the younger grades. Once Noble and Greenough School started assessing middle school applicants by observing students' participation in a group activity, they discovered that they were able to discern much more about the students' characters, interpersonal styles, and problem-solving skills than they had been able to gather in a formal interview setting. At North Country School, the interview takes the form of a "walk and talk" around campus, and in this more casual setting, students more freely share information about themselves. According to Libby Doan, the learning support coordinator, that conversation is used to evaluate how the students identify their areas of strength, where they seek to improve, and whether they can articulate their needs.

Schools are also encouraging students to spend more time on campus as part of the evaluative process. At Cambridge Friends School, prospective applicants spend the morning in classes, and teachers evaluate how well they listen, contribute, demonstrate flexible thinking, and share their knowledge. Kelly Baker, the director of admission and financial aid, believes that they are able to glean such valuable information about a student during the optional group assessment that they waive the standardized testing requirement for students who choose to participate. Students at North Country School spend a full day on campus visiting classes and having lunch with faculty and students. Through "intentional observation," the faculty members look for evidence of the student's self-knowledge and relational abilities with adults and peers as well as their ability to engage in "spontaneous, exuberant conversation." That information provides meaningful insight into how that student might take advantage of the opportunities offered at the school and how he or she might thrive there.

Risk Worth Taking

So with all this additional noncognitive evaluation, are schools finding that they are admitting a pool of applicants who are a better fit than they might otherwise? Generally, the answer is yes. Although Putney, like many schools, has no firm cut-offs for SSAT scores, its leaders are willing to take a risk on a student if they believe that the culture at their school will help that student flourish socially and intellectually. According to Barrengos, "as our progressive educational philosophy takes broader grasp of the totality of the student experience, I have permission to unapologetically pursue the students for whom this pedagogy—across their experience, from classroom to barn to dorm to sports to arts—is an answer to their journey; either a salve for the boy who 'got' school in third grade and is now bored to tears or a salvation for the girl who never found her traditional model viable and has been chafing against its limits throughout."

There are also incidental advantages to incorporating noncognitive assessments in the admissions process. Schools are finding that doing so can level the playing field for some applicants because, unlike being tutored for the SSAT, there is no way to prepare. The process can also feel less daunting and intimidating. Salisbury School found the holistic review of applicants to be especially important for candidates from nontraditional backgrounds; those with learning differences; and, in general, maturing boys. Noble and Greenough School has found an increase in their enrollment of students of color in the middle school since implementing the noncognitive assessment, and Jennifer Hines, dean for enrollment management, happily observed that "students leave our office smiling, rather than feeling traumatized." Doan, at North Country School, has had similar experiences. In fact, it is not uncommon for students at the end of a school visit day to ask if they can stay longer. To her, that is one of the best indicators that the student will be a good fit.



Yet noncognitive assessment isn't a great dustpan that gathers up those candidates who are on the fringes of admission. In fact, the careful use of these metrics can rule out some students who otherwise would be attractive candidates. For example, students who aren't able to self-advocate and who are used to being taken care of by adults as well as students who have stopped being engaged in their learning, their communities, and their relationships might not be offered acceptance because they don't have the appropriate noncognitive skills to succeed.

In the end, however, the schools we contacted were pleased with the caliber of the students who were matriculating. Each year at Salisbury's graduation prize night, it is poignant to reflect on the place where each boy started. Last spring, the two students who were awarded the general improvement prize by vote of the faculty were boys who earned admission because of their noncognitive skills. It was powerfully affirming to see that the qualities Salisbury sought in their applicants had translated into social and academic success. It has been said that cognitive ability predicts educational attainment and that noncognitive skills predict a life outcome. The success of those two graduates and others like them speaks to the value of including noncognitive assessments in a holistic admission process.

Peter Gilbert can be reached at pgilbert@salisburyschool.org.

Allison Matlack can be reached at amatlackedcon@gmail.com.











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$20 Million TABS Initiative Launched to Increase Domestic Boarding Pool

by Don McMillan, MA, MFA, IECA (MA)



A crucial new marketing initiative by The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) to boost domestic applications dovetails with our work as IECA school consultants: both associations pursue a common goal of providing the transformative experience of boarding school to even more adolescents. Working off the theory that "a rising tide lifts all boats," the TABS campaign promotes the boarding school industry's unique ability to develop both personal and academic growth thanks to the added dimension of a 24/7 residential program.

For more than a dozen years, the number of boarding applicants from the US and Canada has plummeted, a decline partially hidden by the rise in international applicants: currently 35% of TABS member schools' boarders come from outside of the US and Canada. The recently launched TABS North American Boarding Initiative (NABI) has already signed up more than 110 boarding schools in the $20 million, five-year campaign to not only quell but also reverse the trend of declining enrollment among US and Canadian students.



The campaign culminates two years of work by an executive committee of educators and consists of a four-pronged program to increase by 10% the total number of domestic applicants and increase by 2,020 the number of high-pay (60% tuition or more) domestic students enrolled in the 300 TABS schools by the year 2020. The campaign includes:

- **Market intelligence:** nine projects related to data, research, tools, and analytics
- **Grassroots activation:** online and word-of-mouth networking among alums, parents, and other school constituencies
- **Branding, communication, and events:** data-driven marketing targeting families and key influencers
- **School innovation and improvement:** professional development for boards and school leaders.

Peter Upham, executive director, and Andy Hirt, director of member relations, both of whom have spoken about NABI at recent IECA conferences, recruited an executive committee of 18 educators—6 heads of school; 6 admissions directors; and 6 other experts in data, marketing, and education, including an IECA consultant. After

continued on page 13

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TABS Initiative, from page 11

composing the first draft of the plan, the executive committee then reached out to expand the core of educators to the NABI 100. Said Upham: "This is the arguably the most important endeavor TABS has ever pursued."

Who's paying for this boost in domestic applicants? The schools will provide $16 million, with the remaining $4 million to be raised by TABS from private organizations. Schools pay a sliding scale fee based on enrollment and endowment. Next steps include the additional recruitment of member schools, the hiring of a NABI director by TABS, and ultimately the onset of the marketing campaign in 2016.

Don McMillan serves on the Executive Committee of the TABS North American Boarding Initiative. He can be reached at don@mcmillaneducation.com.

Editor's Note: The subject of IECA's February 9 webinar will be the North American Boarding Initiative, presented by Pete Upham and Andy Hirt of TABS. See Upcoming Webinars box on this page.

Upcoming IECA Webinars

January 12:
Small Changes, Big Results: Improve Your Essay

February 9:
The North American Boarding Initiative

March 8:
Insight into the Underperforming Student

April 12:
Test Prep for Students with Learning Differences

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Neuroscience in the Classroom

by Helen H. Waldron and Annette Jenner-Matthews



Helen H. Waldron

An explosion in neuroscience research has produced a glut of brain-training apps, games, and products that claim to offer cognitive training that boosts memory, processing speed, and retention. Studies indicate that although some of those tools may produce short-term, highly specific improvements, most offer no generalized improvement in overall intelligence, memory, attention, or other cognitive abilities (Owen et al. 2010).

In a study of 11,400 participants in a six-week cognitive training regimen researcher Adrian Owen and colleagues at Cambridge University, Owen et al. (2010) attributed task improvements to familiarity, not a change in cognitive ability. Familiarity is known as "practice effect" and refers to gains in scores on cognitive tests that occur when a person is retested on the same instrument or tested more than once on very similar ones. The gains are due to the repeated test experience.

These studies raise important questions for educators: When it comes to claims about the brain and learning, how do we separate what really works? How do we decide if a new brain training technique is worth valuable class time? In the absence of a neuroscientist to help you sort out the research, there are two strategies that are effective.



Annette Jenner-Matthews

First, couple your own experiences with a formal Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) review—a review of research recommendations within a classroom setting. Second, connect with those who already have some experience with shifts in their school programs based on recent findings in neuroscience.

Evidence-Based Practice Review

There's often a disconnect between the research lab and the classroom, making it difficult for researchers and teachers to benefit from one another's knowledge. In the best-case scenario, there is a two-way line of communication that allows each group to benefit from the work of the other. In the absence of such collaboration—

continued on page 16

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Neuroscience from page 15

when you can't go directly to the source—how do you evaluate the claims of the latest and greatest educational tools or curricula? Best practice suggests that educators should complete an EBP review of the tool being considered.

The principles of an EBP review enable educators to systematically evaluate scientific research claims along with their own classroom experience to make unbiased, integrated decisions about whether to adopt a new tool. Because not all research-based products are created equal, an EBP review puts the power to evaluate those products in the teachers' hands. The essential goal is to ensure that the research design of the product in question is sound, that the results are based on high-quality data analysis, and that other researchers in the field have reviewed the results for accuracy.

Research Design Ranking

The field of education, as well as other fields in which research is used to establish practice (e.g., psychology, speech-language pathology, and medicine), has criteria to rank scientific research. On the basis of the scientific method used, some research designs are stronger than others. Randomized control trials, for example, use a stronger design than do pre/post studies or comparison group studies. Because of their stronger design, educators should give more weight to those studies when making curriculum decisions.

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The US Department of Education offers excellent guidelines about how best to evaluate research. See its *Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide* at *www2.ed.gov* for a detailed explanation of these experimental designs and why one is better than the other.

A word of caution: It's important to read all the studies on a given topic before making major changes in curriculum, not just the studies that support your view. One piece of evidence is not enough; educators need to read the majority of studies and then evaluate their individual strengths. For example, when faced with two studies that differ in their results, the strongly ranked design is more trustworthy than the weaker ranked design. But a strongly designed research study, such as a randomized control trial (RCT), may not have been completed with the quality that you would expect. Look deeply at the study and its focus. Educators can often determine whether a study was carried out well and whether scientific methods were followed if they can follow the researchers' logic. Also, does the study seem reasonable or does it leave you with nagging questions? Dig deeply to decide if the study supports your own research needs as you rate its merit.

Educational Significance

After connecting with the research source or doing an EBP review, educators still must evaluate whether the new product or program will produce significant outcomes in the context of their class or school. This evaluation step requires a careful look at the statistical significance. This is an analysis of the time commitment and the number of students who will benefit. There may be an intervention that looks quite promising but will require a time commitment that conflicts with other high-impact learning experiences already in place.

Decades ago, the analysis of brain research confirmed why it was so important for educators to continue to create and include experiential programs for students with learning differences. Using all four areas of the neocortex—sensory, back integrative, front integrative, and motor—boosts learning and retention (Zull

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Neuroscience from page 16

2006). Many schools took that research and implemented experiential experiences in and out of the classroom. We know that experiential learning continues to be a powerful milieu for deep learning.

Schools have an obligation to connect with the research that will move the needle on learning in the classroom. They also have a responsibility to do so carefully. As in the example of the supposed Mozart effect—the idea that if babies or children listen to Mozart they will become more intelligent—many popular claims arising from brain studies take on a life of their own. We educators need to be careful not to simply accept ideas that are often false beliefs. The subjects in the Mozart music study that took place at the University of California at Irvine were college students, not infants or children. So while it won't hurt children to listen to Mozart, there is no evidence that it will make them smarter. Following too many popular claims can lead educators and schools in the wrong direction and take time away from areas that have the potential for greater benefits to students.

Schools need to have a method and a process for evaluating brain science findings. Using the strategies described in this article will help identify which tools are validated. In addition, schools can learn from the extended community. To that end, it makes sense to engage in brain-science conferences, bring in expert speakers on a regular basis, and pay attention to what is working at other schools. Given that time is a teacher's most valuable resource, such engagement will help schools use their time wisely and give students the opportunity to make significant gains in their learning. When science and education work together, benefits are greatest for everyone.

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A Guide to School Touring: What Schools and Consultants Want

by Kristen Naspo, MA, IECA (CT)



Having worked as an admissions director and in admissions offices for more than 12 years, I had the pleasure of planning school tours and providing what I thought independent educational consultants (IECs) wanted to see. Now that I am on the receiving end of school tours as an IEC myself, I understand what is valuable and what leaves me the most informed for the families with whom I work. In addition to my own experience, I also gathered information from many colleagues and associates through discussions with IECA consultants at the recent roundtable discussion in Scottsdale, AZ; from the Schools Committee; and from speaking with many admissions colleagues about their wants and desires.

When I think back to what I wanted to provide as an admissions director, it was for IECs to see what our school was at *that moment*, not what we used to be. I was trying to help IECs not only know the basic facts about our school but also to experience the feel and culture of it. I wanted them to see our classes and our students and to meet the people who would be working with their clients. Admission officers are the sales force at their schools and—as I liked to think of it—the cheerleaders. We know what our schools do well and what we see as their unique qualities.

As an IEC, my role is to stay current with school information and try to help my families find the best fit. IECs need to know what the schools *want* us to see and what our families *need* us to see. Following are lists of what IECs want from their tours and what schools would like from us.

IECs would get the most out of a tour with:

- A student panel of mostly boarders and a range of class cohorts with no adults in the room—we don't want to put the kids on the spot but we do want authentic responses.
- The opportunity to sit in on two classes for 10–15 minutes each, preferably a humanities and a science/math. If there are unique signature foreign language and arts programs, those are also important to experience.

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Advertisement



School Touring from page 19



- A panel with the dean of residential life, the dean of academics, the director of learning support or learning specialist, a counselor, the dean of students, and the international student program director.
- Tour guides who are boarding students, preferably from the IEC's region. We know that isn't always possible, but if we are from 1,000 miles away, we benefit from touring with a student who is also; that way, we can better understand what the experience for our students will be.
- A tour of the athletic facilities.
- A look at the dorms; show us the best and worst dorms for boys and girls—we know you want to show us your best and newest, but if our students end up in the most tired dorms, we don't want a surprise. We want to know what they are like too.
- Exposure to arts programs on campus.
- A chance to see the special programs—things that are signature programs and set you apart—to help us know your unique qualities.
- Lunch with boarding students in dining hall. If this isn't possible we understand, but it is nice to see a community in action.
- A rotating-table event—speed dating—for each area of school life, i.e., residential life, athletics, academics, academic support, student life, international student directors, counselors, and college placement. This format helps us ask questions in a small-

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group setting and gives us 5–8 minutes with the administrators in those areas.

- A meeting with the head of school alone—we like to ask questions and hear about the head's vision and what's next. Our families will likely ask us if we know the head of school and having a few minutes with him or her is helpful.
- A chance to hear how you want us to work with you—is there one point of contact or should we speak with the person who interviewed our student?
- Attendance at an all-school meeting so that we can understand the culture and feel; being able to sit in on what happens is important and usually a highlight of the visit.

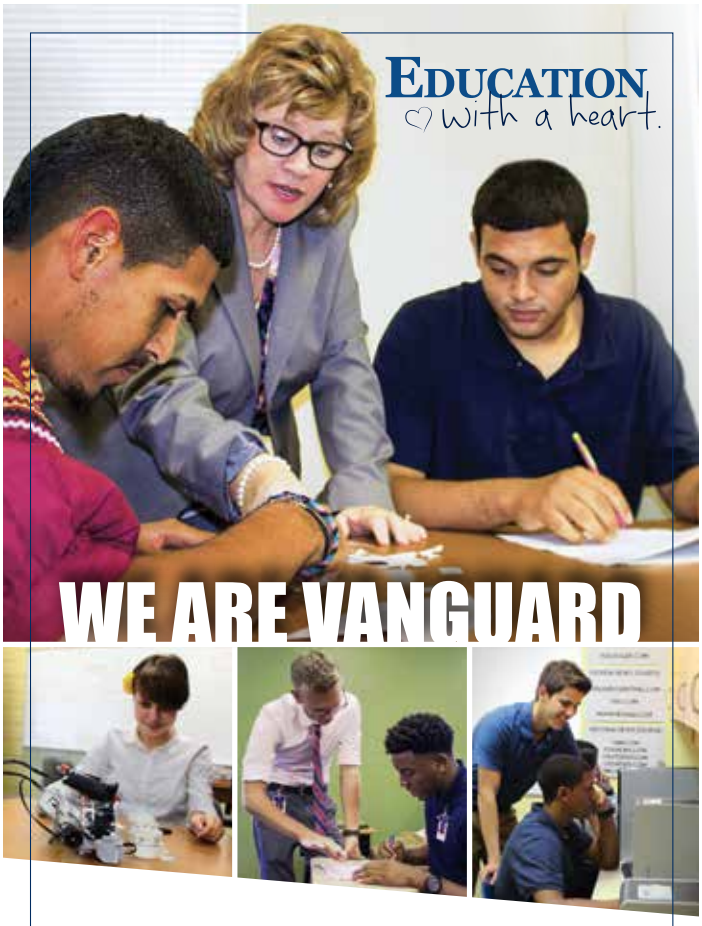
IECs understand that the timing of our visits and the timeline are always important and some of these things are not always possible.

Schools would like IECs to:

- Come to their schools with open minds, receptive to what they see and hear.
- Refrain from comparing one school to another; take each on its own merits.
- Visit schools regularly—schools can and do change; it is important for IECs to know what is changing and what is new.
- See that the admissions office is just an extension of the community and meeting the people and students is important—"We just want IECs to see our kids."
- Be informed before the tours—look up the basic facts and information; schools want IECs to do their research.
- Ask panel members questions specific to their disciplines, not statistics questions, and really try to get a feel for the school. Ask statistics questions of the admissions officers—they love that.
- Be present for the visits and come prepared with questions.

As you can see, what schools ask of us as IECs is easy. Come ready to ask questions, be present, and be involved in your tours. Having done quite a few of these over the last three years, as I'm sure many of you have, I can tell you that touring is exhausting but so rewarding. Schools work hard to make our visits fun and informative. We need to be courteous, gracious guests and participants. Before you tour, I suggest taking time to review the *Code of Conduct for IECA Members on College, School, and Program Tours*. You can find the link at *www.iecaonline.com/members.html#tours*.

Kristen Naspo can be reached at krissy@KJNedcon.com.



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Successful Transitions: From an RTC or Therapeutic Boarding School to a Traditional School

by Pamela Tedeschi, MSEd, IECA (MD)



Many students need therapeutic care during the middle school or early high school years, but they are not old enough for college when they graduate from the residential therapeutic school or program. Those students must be ready to complete high school in a more traditional school.

It can be difficult going back home from a therapeutic school. It is almost never a good idea for a student to go back to the same school that he or she attended before the therapeutic setting. The temptations from the old peer group can be difficult, and there may not be enough social life on the weekends. Often the best option after a therapeutic school is a traditional boarding school. Everything the student needs is on campus—e.g., classes, sports, and supervised study halls. It gives the student a fresh start in a new, welcoming community and helps him or her prepare for college living. The student is also less likely to slip into the old patterns that led to the therapeutic placement. A small independent day school may work as well as long as the student has meaningful activities after school. Unfortunately, the financial costs of attending a therapeutic school may make attending a subsequent independent day or boarding school impossible. If the student will be attending a public school, the parents should try to have the student transferred to a nearby public or charter school to give him or her a fresh start.

THE TRANSITION TEAM

Students have the best chance for success when the therapeutic program, the parents, the independent educational consultant (IEC), and the traditional school all work as a team. Each member of this team has responsibilities that contribute to an overall successful outcome.

Therapeutic School

The therapist and educational director at the therapeutic program should keep the IEC and the parents well-informed about the student's progress in classes, the milieu, and therapy. The team of parents, the IEC, and the therapeutic program's therapist and educational coordinator must agree that the student is ready to graduate and can be successful in a less restrictive environment. The educational director should carefully put together a transcript that accurately shows the student's completed, graded courses. New testing may be needed for accommodations and for admission to an independent school.

A few additional considerations will help the student be prepared. Even if the therapeutic program's policy is not to assign homework, when the student is getting ready to transition increasing amounts of homework should gradually be assigned. The student can complete it in a study hall or during free time so that it won't be overwhelming to be placed in a new setting with required homework.

Students in therapeutic programs also participate in a lot of group therapy and share things that would not be appropriate in other settings. The therapist may need to help the student understand when and what to share about themselves in a less restrictive environment.



Graduation should be at a time when the student can start a semester or school year or during the summer. Graduating from a therapeutic program in March or mid-November, for example, creates problems with schedules. A student might have to wait until the next trimester or semester to start at the new school and then will have too much time at home. Even if the student is starting at a public school, coming in halfway through a semester or a quarter means that he or she will start off missing the beginning concepts. That could be overwhelming.

Parents

Parents should work closely with the professionals to determine the appropriate time for the student to graduate. They should participate in parent workshops; set a home contract with input from the therapist and student; meet with their student's consultant to discuss appropriate next schools; and set up a time for the

student to meet with the IEC, either at the program or during a home pass.

IEC

The IEC should carefully review all available information and be in touch with the therapeutic program about the student's progress. The IEC should determine whether the student will need a school with learning support and how often the student will need to meet with a therapist in the beginning. The student and the IEC should discuss classes and types of activities and clubs that are of interest to the student—the student will find others with similar interests and become part of the community faster if he or she gets involved. After the very structured setting of a therapeutic school, the student will have more free time and getting involved in school activities will help keep him or her busy.

The IEC must listen to the parents' expectations while also helping them learn about various school options. If the student will be attending an independent school, the IEC must be sure that the school is willing to take a student who is graduating from a therapeutic program. Some schools will accept students on an individual basis, depending on why the student was in a therapeutic setting and whether the student can be successful. Some schools have a blanket policy of never accepting such students. It is important that the school is open to considering the student and has supports in place, such as a counselor and learning support services. The IEC must make sure the school knows the student's academic strengths and other talents and how the student would be involved in the school life. It is regrettable when a director of admissions only focuses on the therapeutic issues in the interview rather than getting to know the student.

The IEC should help the student and parents prepare for what is expected in the admission process and what to look for and ask during the visit and interview. If it is a boarding school, the IEC should determine whether the school has an appropriate counselor. If not, do students meet with therapists from the community? Is transportation provided or does the therapist come to campus? Transcripts and testing should be shared. If the admission committee has all of the information and accepts the student, the IEC should feel satisfied that the school will work with the student.

Traditional School

The last part of the team is the traditional school. Students from a therapeutic placement usually do best in a smaller school where they can get more-individual attention. The admission department, learning support director (if needed), and counselor should communicate with the IEC and the therapeutic school. They must ensure that the school can meet the needs of the student academically and socially and can get the student involved in the community. The student's advisor must be carefully chosen. Questions that must be answered include, What classes does the student need to graduate? Will the student need to take classes over the summer? What nonacademic interests does the student have? What worked best at the therapeutic school? What causes stress?

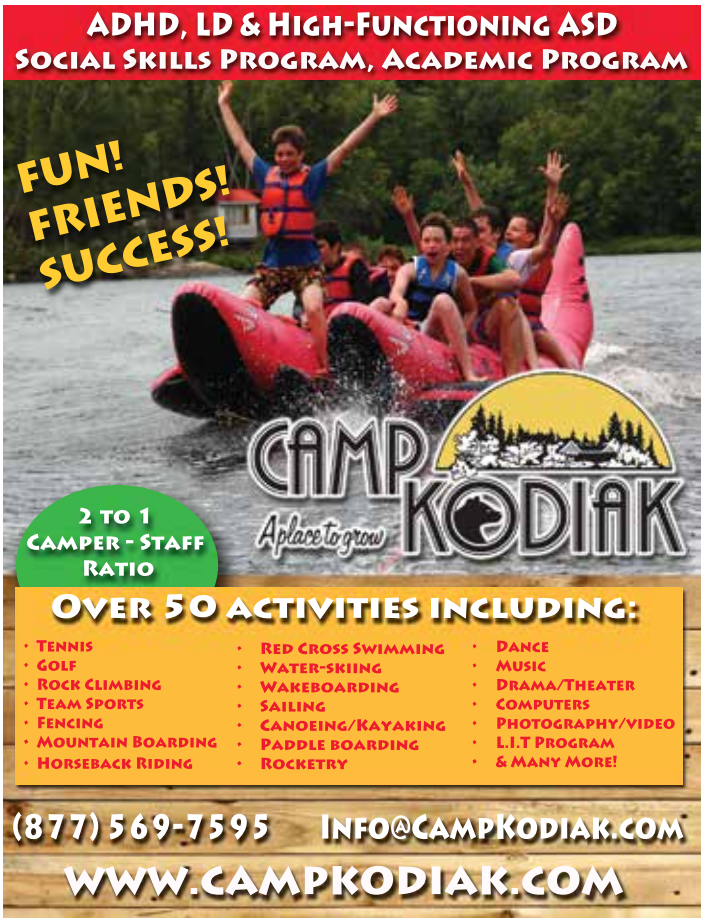
Each student coming from a therapeutic school must be viewed as an individual. Therapeutic issues should not be the focus of the interview with the director of admission. The student coming from a therapeutic school has made mistakes, grown, and is ready to be involved in the new school or the IEC would not be considering a less restrictive environment. Just because one student from a particular therapeutic program flourished or failed at this school, does not mean the next student will follow the same path.

BEST RESULTS

There are no guarantees that any student will be 100% successful—he or she is still a teenager, after all. But a student who graduates successfully from a therapeutic program with supportive parents, an invested IEC, and both the therapeutic school and traditional school as part of the transition team has the best chance to assimilate into the new school.

Pamela Tedeschi can be reached at pamela@pmtedcon.com.

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USA Gap Year Fairs: The Ins and Out of Gap Years

by Kathy Cheng, Director of Admission & Marketing, Dynamy; Director, USA Gap Year Fairs



Are you wondering if a gap year is just an excuse for students to sit at home, play video games, and watch YouTube? Are your families worried that a gap year will deter college forever? These are all questions I hear at USA Gap Year Fairs.

First, let's define a gap year as an intentional period of time between completing high school and beginning college when a student steps outside the traditional classroom experience. This is a time to explore the world, reflect on their personal values and goals, and prepare to take the next purposeful step in life.

Gap year programs give students a developmental advantage over their peers by providing them with an opportunity to expand their perspectives and gain direction that will give the college years more meaning and focus. For many students, gap year programs provide time to develop independence and confidence while pursuing various fields of interest.

The numbers show that 90% of participating students continue on to higher education within six months of completing a gap year, according to a study included in *The Gap-Year Advantage: Helping Your Child Benefit from Time Off Before or During College* by Haigler and Nelson (2005, St. Martin's Griffin). Data from Middlebury College indicate that gap year students have higher GPAs in comparison with their counterparts who have chosen to attend college straight out of high school. In addition, in my conversations with Harvard's dean of admission, William Fitzsimmons, he reinforced the benefits of a gap year to remedy "burn out" and help students develop more-focused studies. Gap year deferments are increasing, not only in Harvard's admission department but also in colleges across the country. Savvy colleges are even creating their own gap year programs as a way to build resiliency and retention. Currently, college retention is barely at 50% and the national student loan debt is climbing to $1 trillion—isn't it time to redefine education and consider alternatives to traditional learning?



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LEARN MORE ABOUT GAP YEARS

USA Gap Year Fairs is a not-for-profit started in 2006 by Dynamy, an internship-based gap year program in Worcester, MA. The fairs bring together more than 100 organizations (averaging 40 at each fair) with interested students, parents, college counselors, IECs, and gap year experts. This season, 35 fairs will take place in 20 states from January to February. These fairs are an integral part of defining the gap year process because they showcase the range of options a student can explore. Over the past nine years, the fair circuit has grown from 7 to 35 events nationally with more than 5,000 attendees.

The events are hosted in high schools and feature gap year programs from all over the world, including Australia, Europe, Africa, and South America. Gap year options encompass diverse activities, such as sailing in a tall ship, trekking in the Rockies, dog sledding in Canada, service work in Cambodia, interning in a district attorney's office, and martial arts and language immersion in China.

Because a gap year is a personalized experience, it's best to meet with representatives from the programs to speak more about individual needs and goals. Each exhibitor at the fairs will be a program director, alumni, or even the CEO ready to answer questions about their gap year program. The options are broken down into seven categories: academic, adventure/trips, community service, environmental conservation, gap year advisors, internships and work experience, and travel and culture. Programs may have multiple categories, but will be categorized by their primary offering.

HOW TO CHOOSE

Once you have a sense of the broad array of options available to you, it's time to narrow the field. Consider the following questions in planning a gap year.

How long? Gap years can last from the moment you graduate high school until your first day of college (and for some, the first day of college is in the spring semester). Students may divide their time between working and traveling as part of a structured program or customize their own gap year. Programs offer options that last from a few weeks to eight months. While some students seek out a diversity of experiences, others choose a longer, more in-depth experience.

International or domestic? There are excellent opportunities for new experiences both international and domestic. International opportunities range from traditional university learning abroad to service programs in rural communities in the developing world. Domestically, there are options offering students a chance to live, work, and volunteer in different communities in the US, some that often feel like a foreign country or culture.

Group or individualized? Gap years foster personal exploration and freedom. Although the notion of heading out on one's own has romantic appeal, group programs can offer an instant social circle. Groups also offer the support of adult program leaders, all while offering many of the freedoms of an individualized gap year. Think carefully about what each day will be like and what your support system will be if you are away from home.

Service or learning or both? Be intentional about what the goals for your gap year will be. If service is an integral part, carefully consider the work offered by programs to be sure it aligns with your aspirations. If learning about a particular subject or culture interests you, look for programs that will offer chances to really engage in that subject in a meaningful way. Some programs create a mix of both traditional and experiential learning. Pay close attention to the details of the day-to-day experience of students within the program.

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For more information about the program or to learn about our scholarship options, call 260-569-4757 or visit CompassRoseAcademy.org.

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Why I Belong



The Independent Educational Consulting Association is a wonderful addition to my professional life! I became part of IECA as I completed the Summer Training Institute, which offered an ideal experience and made me realize how much valuable information was available. Each year I have become a more active member of IECA by taking advantage of all that is offered.

Through attending numerous conferences, IECA became much more than a professional development strategy. IECA is a haven where I can share ideas, gain knowledge, and meet other professionals who abide by the same rules and regulations.

IECA has given me the tools and contacts necessary to grow as a professional while building strong relationships with consultants around the world as we work hard to serve the needs of each of our students and guide them into this very important path towards their future.

—**Chantal Paiewonsky** (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

Gap Years from page 24

Price range? *Everyone* can afford a gap year. Although some programs cost as much as a year of private college, others will pay you to participate, including educational awards to help pay for college. Plan your budget—keeping in mind the college years after your gap year—and then consider the options in your price range. Not all programs are the same, so look carefully at what you'll get for the money and time you invest. Also, some programs offer scholarships, college credit, and access to federal financial aid. If your dream program looks out of your price range, get in touch with the organization to explore options for funding.

IECS TAKING ON GAP YEARS

Just as they do with schools and colleges, IECs who are making gap year placements need more insight into and connections with those programs. Gap year fairs are an opportunity for IECs and families to make those evaluations. It's often said that IECs need to "put eyes" on a college before they will refer a student; USA Gap Year Fairs stands by the same standards and also believes that personal interactions are key.

The fairs provide a broad exposure to gap year programs and the opportunity for face-to-face conversations with professionals in the field. Each gap year fair begins with a speaker to introduce gap year opportunities and help attendees become informed consumers on the various possibilities. This year's speakers include Holly Bull, Jane Sarouhan, and Jason Sarouhan from the Center for Interim Programs; Julia Rogers from EnRoute Consulting; Marion Taylor from Taylor the Gap; and authors Rae Nelson and Karl Haigler.

USA Gap Year Fairs is excited to work with IECA in furthering gap years. For detailed information and dates for upcoming fairs, visit *www.usagapyearfairs.org*.

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Campus Visits



Several IECA members attended the **Fall Tour in the Berkshires** at **Buxton School** from October 4–6 (Buxton, Berkshire, Miss Hall's, Bard Academy, and Bard College at Simon's Rock). Pictured: IECA members Jinna Lee (CA), Lucy Pritzker (NJ), Chip Law (SC), Lynn Hamilton (CA), Samantha Bernstein (NH).



On September 30, IECA members visited **Glenholme School** in Washington, CT. Pictured from left to right: Sharon Murphy, director of education; Maryann Campbell, executive director; Brady Weinstock (VT); Steve Migden (NY); Page Kolligian (MA); Michelle Grappo (CO); Michelle Shackelford (CT); David Dunleavy, director of admissions (in back); Imy Wax (IL); Amanda Mallory (CA); Pamela Ellis (OH); Marylou Marcus (NH); Julie Smallwood, director of external affairs; Diane Arnold (CO); Jeff Dvorak (NY); Judy Cooper, assistant executive director.



Several IECA members participated in the **Council of Independent Colleges of Virginia Tour**. They visited Bridgewater College, Sweet Briar College, Liberty University, Lynchburg College, Randolph College, Mary Baldwin College, Averett University, and Hampden-Sydney College. Pictured here, front row: Cynthia Chomiak (NJ), Penny Klein (VT), Evelyn Alexander (CA), Katie Garrett (NC), Anjali Barnick (OH), Manjiri Sethna (NC). Back row: Randi Heathman (MI), Cindy Turner (NC), Belinda Wilkerson (NC), Andrea Rieves (NC), Kathy Sharma (NC), Sandy Clingman (VA).

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In the News

Perry Youngblood (NC) and **Shirley Bloomquist** (VA) were featured in the *Washington Post* article "Is SAT angst easing off?" on September 6.

Susan Dabbar (TX) was the subject of Parke Muth's article "Journeys: Education and Life, Captains and Crew" for his *Only Connect* blog on September 5.

Steven Goodman (DC) was quoted in the October 26 *New York Times* article "E.D. II: The Not-So-Early Decision." Steve and **Michael Goran** (CA) were quoted in the *Daily Pennsylvanian* article "Penn Unlikely to Follow Cornell's New Spring Admissions Program" on November 2.

Laurie Weingarten (NJ) was quoted in *Money* magazine's "5 Smart Ways to Save Money on College Applications" on November 5.

Carol Kinlan (MA) and **Don McMillan** (MA) were quoted in *Boston* magazine in "The Obsessive Parents' Guide to Preschool."

Heather Ricker-Gilbert (PA) was featured on the local *We Are Central PA* news program discussing how IECs help students and parents with the college process, on November 5.

Kiersten Murphy (WA) was quoted in the article "Uncommon Core" in the August issue of *Alaska Airlines* magazine.

Katherine Cohen (NY) was featured in several media outlets recently: a *New York Times* article about online courses, an article about how to cut costs on campus visits in *The Fiscal Times* and *Money* magazine, a *Forbes* article about summer programs and how they impact students' college applications, an NBC News article about saving money while living on campus, and a *USA Today* article about keywords in college application essays. She also contributed an article to the *Huffington Post* titled "The Truth About Applying to 'Likely' Colleges."

Allison Matlack (MA) and IECA's CEO **Mark Sklarow** were quoted in the fall issue of SSATB's magazine, *The Yield*, in the article *Teacher Recommendations: The Good The Bad and the Ugly*.

IECA was featured in the October 11 *Forbes* article "When and How to Hire an Independent Educational Consultant."

Eleanor Duley (ME) was included in the *Daily Bulldog* (ME) announcing her acceptance as a Professional member of IECA.



Initiatives

Jamie Dickenson (WV) published a book in November, *Too Smart for the Ivy League: How to Give Your Kids the Best College Education for the Least Amount of Money*, available in the IECA bookstore.

Barbara Pasalis (OH) is the recipient of the 2015 Irvin W. Katz Award from the IECA Foundation.



Barbara Pasalis (center)

Laura Blanche (PA) was named to serve on the newly created Drexel University Admissions Advisory Board, which is made up of selected college counselors from public and private schools as well as some IECs.

Sandra Moore (NY) has been appointed as Woodstock Day School's college counseling consultant. She will assist the upper school faculty and staff in enhancing the college counseling and placement program.

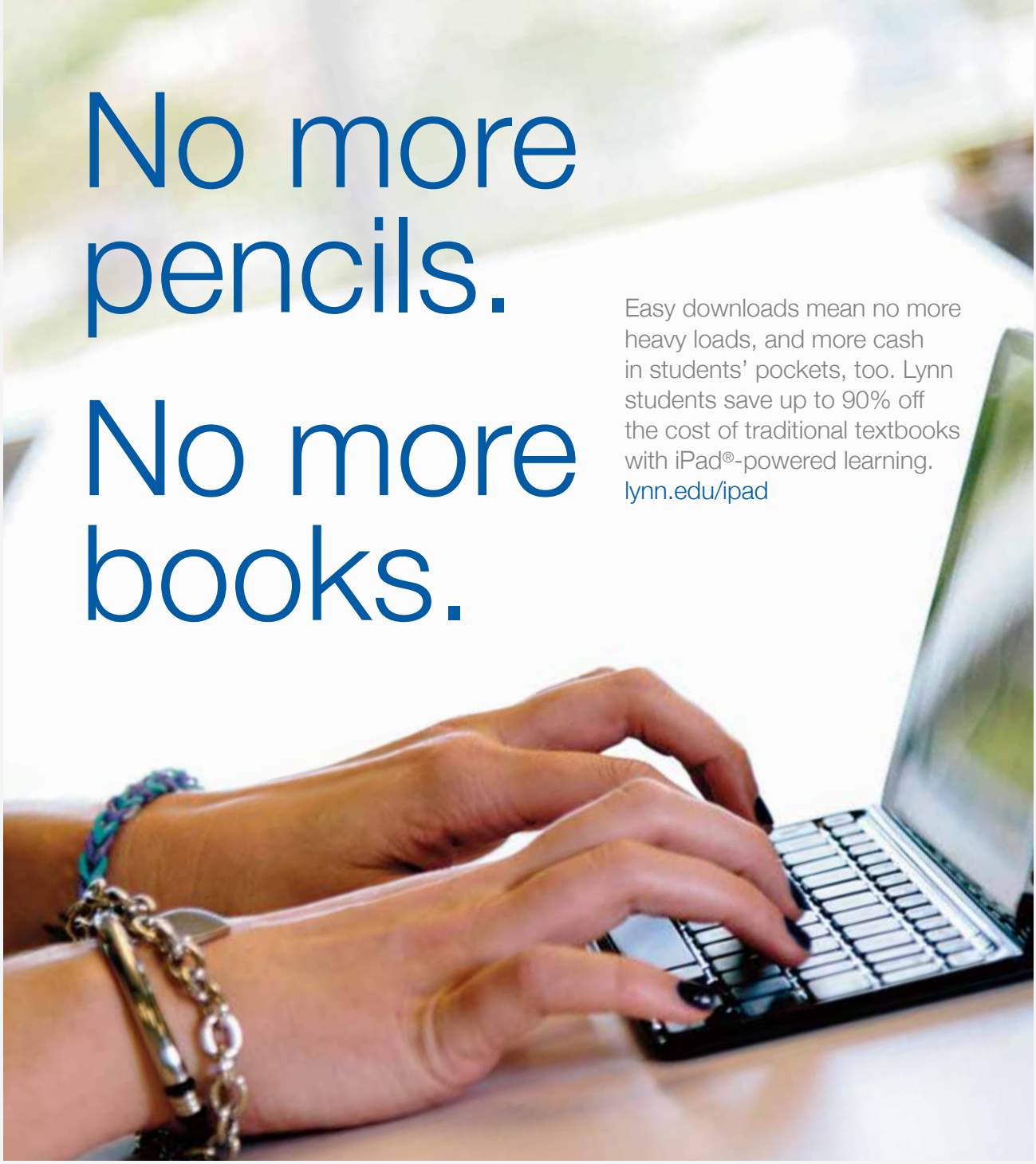
Julie Gross (NY) was a guest on the *Late Show with Stephen Colbert* on September 28, in a playful segment analyzing Colbert's personality using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.



Julie Gross

Kiersten Murphy (WA) gave a college-related presentation to students and parents at the India Association of Western Washington (IAWW) during their Career and College Day in August. In September, she presented at the Western Washington Female Hockey Association about the college admission process. She serves on their Pro Staff, volunteering to mentor girls in the college process.

Betsy F. Woolf (NY) moderated Inside the Admissions Office, a panel discussion for students and parents to learn how decisions are made from the deans and directors of Case Western University, College of Charleston, Emory University, Franklin & Marshall College, University of Chicago, and the University of Virginia. It was sponsored by the JCC of Mid-Westchester and Woolf College Consulting.



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Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

Evelyn Alexander (CA) has been an



independent educational consultant for five years. Her previous positions include partner at two public affairs/consulting firms and vice president of MWW Group, a national public relations firm.

She holds a BA from Johns Hopkins University (MD), an MA from George Washington University (DC), and a certificate in college counseling from UCLA Extension. Among her professional memberships are NACAC and WACAC.

Alexander served as president of the Johns Hopkins Alumni Association's Los Angeles chapter for seven years and spent six years on the National Alumni Council. During her tenure as cochair of the JHU Second Decade Society's admissions committee, she launched a national program to involve alumni in recruiting underrepresented minority students.

Alexander has published eight op-eds in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*, and other local print media.

As a volunteer college counselor, she has assisted students at High Tech Los Angeles, a public charter school, and at Legacy High School.

She lives with her husband and two rescue pit bulls in Topanga Canyon, the "woods" of Los Angeles; is a licensed pilot; and loves to cook.

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Specialty: C

Jennifer Aquino (New Zealand) has been



an independent educational consultant for three years. After beginning a teaching career at The Gunnery School in Connecticut, she moved into educational publishing and worked as an educational consultant and an editor at Heinle and Heinle. Upon completing her MA in Spanish at Middlebury College, she held several positions at Bentley University, including director of Education Abroad, director of International Advancement, and recruiter for Asia and Southeast Asia. She also worked as the managing director of the International MBA at IE Business School in Spain.

In addition to her MA, she has a BS in biology and a BA in Spanish from Boston College and attended Harvard University Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. She is a member of OACAC.

Aquino has a passion for reading, both fiction and nonfiction; travels extensively; writes a blog on culture and travel; enjoys doing yoga and exploring new cultures; and cannot live without chocolate. She and her partner, who speak Spanish at home, live in Auckland but also have bases in Singapore and Geneva.

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Specialties: S,C (+I)

Before becoming an independent college



counselor nine years ago, **Jaime Caryl-Klika** (NH) began her career at Gettysburg College (PA) but later returned to her alma mater, Colgate University (NY)—from which she earned a BA with a double major in political science and history—to spend seven years as the senior assistant dean of admission. While at Colgate, she reviewed more than 10,000 applications for admission and interviewed or addressed several thousand students each year. She also helped coordinate Colgate's application review process; served on the Admission & Aid committee; supervised admission officer domestic and international travel; directed all campus visit programs for prospective and admitted students; and coordinated the Alumni Memorial Scholars program, which recognizes the university's top 200 applicants.

In addition, she conducted several on- and off-campus college counseling workshops each year and has had the privilege of working as one of two college counselors at the Advanced Studies Program at St. Paul's School.

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continued on page 34

The Brooke Whitted Center

The Brooke Whitted Center provides 18-25 year-old college capable emerging adults the opportunity to achieve increased independence. A highly skilled clinical and transitional team provides individualized services in a 24/7 supportive milieu. As its own separate program, the Brooke Whitted Center will be a new enterprise growing from the experiences and successes of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School.

Brooke Whitted Center

Emerging adulthood is a complicated time in life, the question is how it is managed. The emerging adults at the Brooke Whitted Center receive 24/7 clinical and transitional support to enable them to maximize the foundational skills they need to develop and grow while they are actively pursuing post high school education and training. Clinical and transitional experts at the Brooke Whitted Center collaborate with each participant to develop a transitional plan that will enable success - academically, socially, and emotionally.

Brooke Whitted House

The Brooke Whitted House is multi-unit condo building. The special features of this newly renovated condo building include: large community space, front patio area, private backyard, and a beautiful deck.

Each condo unit features 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, open concept kitchen and living room, a beautiful fireplace, and a laundry facility that includes a washer and dryer.

Meal planning and nutrition are a part of the program and include: breakfast served seven days a week, lunch served Saturday and Sunday, and dinner served three nights a week.

Brooke Whitted Downtown Location

Participants are able to maximize the support they receive by having clinical and transitional staff co-located at both the Brooke Whitted house and the Brooke Whitted downtown location. Participants are able to experience a wide range of educational, vocational, recreational, social and cultural opportunities located within walking distance from both locations and on-site expertise by trained staff at both locations.

Admissions

Enrollment is based on a rolling admissions process with typical starting points of January 1 and July 1. Late start dates may occur. For additional information regarding the application and interview process, or to schedule a tour, please contact Kathy Daniher, LCPC, Director of the Brooke Whitted Center at 773-420-2877; or Norm Ostrum, MA, Business Development Associate at 269-830-8576. The Brooke Whitted Center opens in January 2016.

bwc
the brooke whitted center

Brooke Whitted dedicated his life to ensuring all young people had the best opportunities in life to succeed.
He valued a comprehensive education and loving community as essential components of a full, happy, and productive life.
His memory is honored by the dedication of the Brooke Whitted Center to those emerging adults in need.

Introductions, from page 32

Gail Curran (AZ) an independent educational consultant for three years, has spent her career working with struggling and at-risk teens in therapeutic boarding schools, a residential treatment center, and juvenile detention facilities. Starting from the ground up, she worked in direct care; supervised day and summer programs; and held director and administrator roles in residential, marketing, admissions, and fundraising.



Curran has an MA in human development and family studies from the University of Rhode Island and an MBA in organizational leadership from Johnson & Wales University (RI). She attended IECA's 2008 Summer Training Institute as well as many pre-conference workshops and webinars. Her memberships include NATSAP, AZPA, CSN, and NAMI, and she has served on the board of directors for the West Valley Child Crisis Center in Peoria, AZ as secretary and governance committee chair.

Originally from Rhode Island, where her son, Teal, still resides, Curran now lives in Arizona with her husband Matthew, a cat, a fish, and a new German Shepherd puppy. She enjoys working out and spending time with the people and animals she loves.

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Specialties: T (+LD)

Lawrence DeJohn (CT) has been an independent educational consultant for 3 years, following 18 years as the director of guidance and counseling at Northwestern High School in Winsted, CT, and 8 years as a college counselor at East Catholic High School in Manchester, CT.



DeJohn holds an EdD from the University of Bridgeport (CT), an MA from Clark University (MA), a BA from Providence (RI) College, and is a certified LPC. He attended IECA's 2012 Summer Institute and is a member of NACAC.

Several of DeJohn's articles on college planning have been published in local newspapers, including *CT Life*, the *Catholic Transcript*; the *Jewish Ledger*; *West Hartford News*, and *Middletown Press*. Among his volunteer activities, he is an usher for the Bushnell Memorial for the Performing Arts and performs pro bono college consulting with referrals from local charitable organizations, such as The United Way, Hartford Children's Medical Center, Food Share, Leukemia Foundation, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

He and his wife Margaret have two children, Heather and Darrell, and a grandson, Braeden. In addition to enjoying landscaping, gardening, playing piano, and walking, he nurtures three rescue dachshunds.

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Specialty: C

After years of volunteering in the education field, **Geri Craft Frazier** (CA) became a pro bono educational college consultant six years ago. In addition to a BA in psychology from UCLA and a JD from the University of Southern California, she earned a certificate in college counseling from UCLA, graduating with highest honors. She is also certified to administer the Myers Briggs Type Indicator and Strong Interest Inventory. Frazier has attended IECA conferences, and is a member of NACAC and WACAC.



A long-time volunteer, Frazier contributed her time to The Pegasus School and Newport Harbor High School, where she served on the school's site council, as well as on the boards of numerous nonprofits, including the Newport Harbor Educational Foundation, Junior League of Orange County, National League of Young Men, Newport Harbor and Newport Harbor Baseball Association. She currently sits on Pomona College's Parents Council and Town and Gown of USC and is a member of Newport Beach's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Frazier and her husband, Mark, have three sons: Nick (UCLA 2011, Western School of Health Sciences 2016), Ben (USC 2012), and Grant (Pomona College 2016), and a new daughter-in-law Kristin Frazier (Cal Poly SLO 2011).

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Specialty: C

Amy Jasper (VA) has been an independent educational consultant for three years, and her experience spans more than a decade on both sides of the admissions process. After working in undergraduate admissions at Duke University (NC), the College of William & Mary (VA), Dickinson College (PA), and the University of Richmond (VA), she served as codirector of college counseling at St. Catherine's School in Richmond, VA.



Jasper holds a BA in economics from the College of William & Mary and an MA in public administration from Old Dominion University.

In addition to IECA's 2013 Summer Training Institute, she has attended two recent national conferences. Her professional memberships include PCACAC and SACAC.

In 2012, Jasper created a college access and counseling program, My College My Plan, and facilitated a series of workshops and activities at local Boys & Girls Clubs, helping first generation students navigate the admissions process.

She is a board member of the Fund for William & Mary, an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Inc., and served on the PCACAC conference committee.

She and her husband Keith are the proud parents of Taylor, a college junior, and Justin, a high school sophomore. As a family they enjoy cheering on Justin's sporting endeavors, traveling to new places, and having a good laugh.

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Specialty: C

Dianne Keilholtz (FL) an independent educational consultant for 2 years, has 28 years of experience working as a public high school counselor and special education teacher in Frederick County, MD. She has a BS in special education K–12 from Hood College (MD), an MS in school counseling from McDaniel College (MD), and is a National Certified Counselor. She attended IECA's Transitioning to Private Practice workshop and is a member of NACAC and NBCC.



Among her achievements, Keilholtz designed and facilitated the AASPIRE Project, a multiyear program designed to increase the number of African American students taking rigorous academics in high school, including AP classes; increased the number of minority students taking SAT and ACT exams; and increased the number of minority students applying for and being accepted to postsecondary programs. She also designed and implemented six workshops on topics related to college admissions for the residents of Martinsburg, WV, and Bradenton, FL.

She has been married to Fred for 30 years, and they have four children and five granddaughters. When she isn't helping families through the college admission process, her favorite place to be is on a beach with a good book and a glass of iced tea.

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Specialty: C

Qian (Nancy) Liu (China) has been an independent educational consultant for six years, working in Beijing to help Chinese students enroll in private US high schools.



She holds an MA in criminal justice from the University of Maryland and has a BA in Chinese language and literature from Inner Mongolia Normal University. In addition, she has studied international etiquette and protocol.

Liu lives with her husband in Beijing, likes to travel, and enjoys home decorating.

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Specialty: S

continued on page 36

Introductions, from page 35

Eleanor Munson (TX) has worked as an independent educational consultant for six years. Previously, she performed psychological assessments of children and teens at Easter Seals and for a psychologist in private practice. She holds a BA in psychology, an MA in clinical/counseling psychology, and a PhD in psychology from Southern Methodist University (TX). She is a member of the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association for Children, and the National Society for Gifted and Talented.



Munson has been married for 25 years and has two children, a son in college and a daughter in high school.

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Specialties: S (+LD)

Zahra Rasul (BC) has spent 14 years as an independent educational consultant and was a sessional professor at the University of Toronto from 2006 to 2009. With a BA from Smith College (MA) and an MA from the University of British Columbia, she is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto in the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Her memberships include Business Family Foundation, Researchers and Academics of Colour for Equality, and National Retreat of Women Canada.



Serving on the Aga Khan National Education Board for Canada in the postsecondary segment, she writes and delivers free workshops on Application to Graduate and Professional School programs and Preparing for Postsecondary Studies. As an alumna and parent of York House School, she volunteers on the board of directors for the alumni association and with the parents association. She also devotes time to the Minerva Foundation, is a class parent at St. John's School, and volunteers with the Tupper Young Parent Program at the YWCA Vancouver.

Rasul has three children, ages two, four, and six; a new puppy; and a full and chaotic life! She enjoys watching hockey and frequenting Vancouver's parks and beaches with her husband and kids.

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Specialty: C

An experienced college counselor, school counselor, and college recruiter, **Patricia Saddle** (OH) became an independent educational consultant five years ago. She holds a BA in social work, an MA in counseling, and a post-master's license in school counseling from John Carroll University (OH); is a licensed social worker (LSW); and is qualified to administer career interest assessments. In addition to attending IECA's 2011 Summer Training Institute, Saddle has attended courses through the college counseling program at UCLA Extension.



She is a member of NACAC, NCAG, and OSCA, among other organizations. Her volunteer efforts include presenting programs at local libraries on such topics as the college admission process, essay writing, financial aid, and choosing a major. She also mentors college students through a local program.

Saddle is married with one stepchild. She enjoys reading, cooking, and water sports and loves dogs, especially miniature schnauzers.

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Specialties: C (+LD)

Kimbrell Teegarden (GA) has worked as an independent educational consultant for four years. Her experience encompasses being a college counselor and a chaplain at the Westminster Schools (GA) and the school advisory counselor in charge of outplacement at Trinity School (GA).



An ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church (USA), she holds an MDiv from Candler School of Theology at Emory University as well as a BA in political science from the University of Georgia. She is a member of SSATB and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy.

She is also a community educator and a certified pastoral counselor through the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Among her volunteer activities, Teegarden is chair of the Annual Fund for the Westminster Schools (2013–2015), an active volunteer and supporter of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, and a foster care and adoption advocate.

Teegarden has three children, ages six, five, and three, and is an avid reader who enjoys traveling whenever she can.

Kimbrell Teegarden, MDiv
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Specialty: S

Theodra Washington (DC) has been an independent educational consultant for 10 years. Her recent work experiences include program manager at City Gate, a nonprofit organization that offers free after-school programs for underprivileged children in DC; associate director of admission for lower and middle school at Sidwell Friends School (DC); and parent advocate at Sidwell Friends Middle School.



Currently enrolled at UC Irvine working toward a certificate in independent educational consulting, she also holds a BS in health and physical education from Florida A&M University.

Washington volunteers with Safe Shores, a DC child advocacy center, as a prevention facilitator and with family advocacy services and also donates her time to the National Baptist Memorial Church in the church nursery, clothing closet, food pantry, and summer camp.

Married for 30 years, she has two children, ages 22 and 25, and enjoys exercising, biking, watching movies, and spending time with her family.

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Specialty: S

Anson Zhang (NY), an independent educational consultant for more than three years, holds an MBA from Fordham University (NY), a BS in economics from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia, and a BS in logistics from Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade in China. To assist his students, he developed a life coach program that includes personality development, interest planning, presentation training, culture adjustment, and school application. *Study Abroad*, a film he coproduced in 2014, is designed to reflect real life in the US for Chinese students.



His interest in promoting Chinese culture has led to organizing and being the assistant producer of the Chinese New York Film Festival since 2010, working part-time as the communication director of the Chinese American Arts Council, and promoting Chinese artists in the US. He was also the host and producer of China Central TV and worked in strategy and marketing at Warner Bros.

Zhang is an active outdoor explorer, having visited 23 countries across seven continents; conquered Mount Kilimanjaro, and explored the Antarctic.

He loves hiking, rock climbing, kite surfing, skiing, photography, and cooking, and lives in Manhattan and Shanghai.

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Maryland

For more information and to RSVP contact:
Nancy Nolan at West Nottingham
410-658-9279 | nnolan@wna.org

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Regional Groups

Regional Groups Are Growing!

Join an IECA regional group and connect with your colleagues! You can find a list of groups on the member home page at *www.iecaonline.com/members.html*. IECA supports the growth of regional groups as a way for members to interact, communicate, and support one another. Regional group gatherings can mark a transition from viewing other IECs as competitors to viewing them as colleagues.

Don't have an IECA regional group near you? Then start one! Simply decide what region your group will cover, find 5–10 members willing to help get the group up and running, identify a leader and coleader, plan when and where the group will meet, and then get the word out. Be sure to let Amanda Fogler, IECA's manager of member outreach & engagement (A*manda@IECAonline.com*) know about your group. She can help you get the group organized and posted on the IECA website.

IECA Regional Groups are extending internationally as well. International groups now forming include:

Turkey
Contact Nazan Kabatepe *nazankabatepe@erkagroup.com*

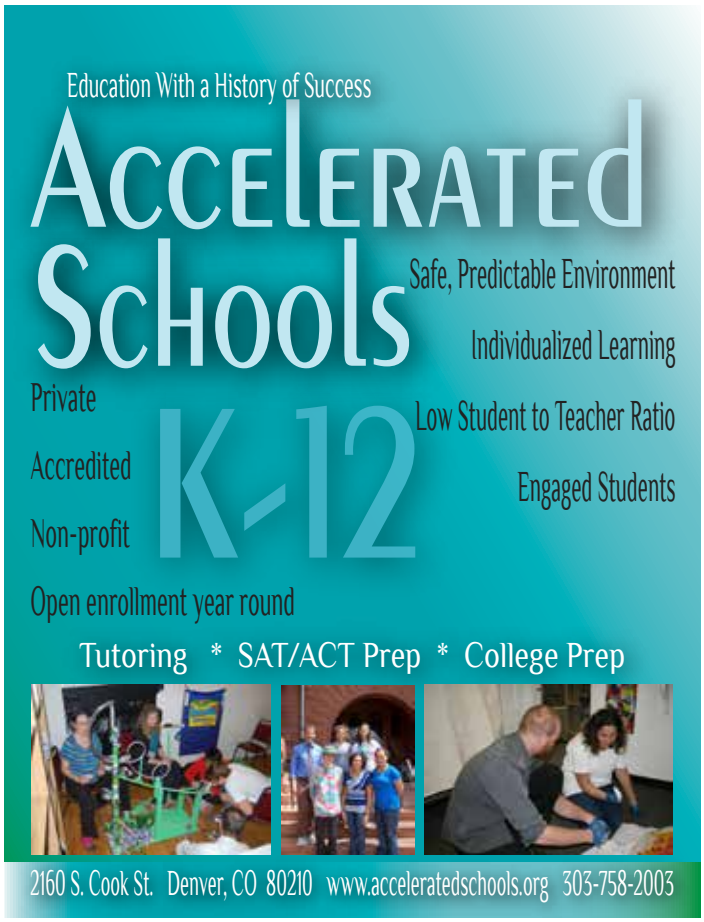
South Asia
Contact Jan Merchant *janmerchant@gmail.com*

ASEAN Nations (Alliance of South East Asian Nations: Thailand, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar)
Contact Sam Laornual *samrithl@isb.ac.th*
Jennifer Bush *jbe@virginiabush.com*

Shanghai, China
Contact Sean Jiang

Send IECA your group news (*Sarah@IECAonline.com*) as you have events; meet with speakers; and visit colleges, schools, and programs. We will share your successes with all members!

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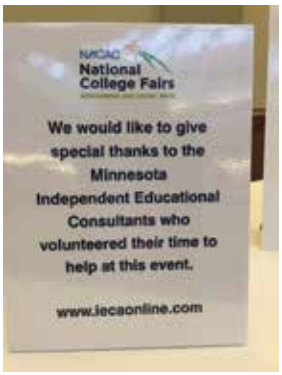


Regional Group News

The **San Diego Regional Group** met in November and IECA's Chris McDuffie (associate, CA) presented on teen addiction and wellness, prompting interesting discussions.

The **Seattle Regional Group** had recent luncheons with Centre College, University of the Pacific, Arizona State University, Hawaii Pacific University, Salve Regina University, Muhlenberg College, Lawrence University, and University of California–Santa Barbara.

The **Twin Cities Regional Group** partnered with NACAC to offer volunteer support at NACAC's Performing and Visual Arts College Fair on October 13. Pictured: Vita Cohen, Jenny Buyens, Sue Luse.





In September, the **New Jersey Regional Group** met with representatives from Drew University. Pictured from left to right: Bob Massa, senior vice president of enrollment management, Drew University; Linda Kay; Jill Siegel; Diana Towle; Jim Skiff, executive director of undergraduate admissions, Drew University. Second row: Laurie Weingarten, Carolyn Mulligan, Anne Weisholtz, Abbie Rabin. Third row: Traecy Hobson, Eileen Nolan, Ann Marie Powers, Lynne Rosenfeld. Fourth Row: Amy Hallock, Larry Blumenstyk, David Twersky.



Carolyn Mulligan, Anne Weisholtz, Traecy Hobson, Ann Powers, and Janet Loren, members of the **New Jersey group**, met with Danielle Larsen from University of the South in Tennessee to learn more about "The Domain"—all 13,000 acres of it.



The **New Jersey group** also met with Tessa Birley of the University of Edinburgh.

School Advising

from a survey of IECA members (October 2015)



1 Last year IECA members advised 9,100 traditional secondary school placements: 5,000 boarding, and 4,100 day.

2 77% of placements are for domestic students.

3 The 23% of students who are international came from 79 countries over the past 5 years!

4 On average, 22% of domestic boarding clients walked into the IEC's office NOT YET CONSIDERING BOARDING SCHOOL.

5 Only 17% of clients come from families with a boarding school tradition.

6 Among school-focused members, 96% say they do pro bono work.

On average, members visit 13 schools annually.

7 Of IECA members: 98% emphasize 'fit' over prestige, 96% consider single gender schools, 68% say they help families to understand financial implications.

IECA Foundation

The IECA Foundation is the force that leverages the knowledge, professional skills, and funds of IECA members, sponsors, and donors to help underserved students map pathways to success.

Barbara Pasalis Receives 2015 Katz Award

From Angela Han, IECA Foundation

The IECA Foundation is pleased to announce that Barbara Pasalis is the recipient of the 2015 Irvin W. Katz Award. "I am nominating Barbara Pasalis for the time, energy and wisdom she devotes to charitable activities....I believe Barb is a great example of the ideals of the Katz Award," wrote Luisa Rabe in her nomination statement.

Barb's philanthropic commitments are numerous and diverse; many include direct work in schools with high-needs students. For the past five years she has been a regular tutor at an inner-city school in Cleveland, the Louis Agassiz School, working to help students prepare for year-end state examinations. At the Bridge Avenue School she provides nutritious meals every month for middle school students who struggle with mental health, learning disability, and behavioral issues. She has also raised funds for Bridge Avenue School to purchase books and educational materials.

It's no surprise that many of Barb's volunteer efforts focus on her faith community, in particular the St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Rocky River, Ohio. She has served as President, Treasurer, Advisor, and Chair of Committees for her church's women's group; raises funds for hospitals and cooks meals for the homeless at a local shelter; and hosts "pajama parties" where parents and volunteers read to children in the community. In 2008, when she chaired the National Philoptochos Society's Biennial Convention Banquet, her efforts included a book drive, resulting in hundreds of books donated to MacFarland Middle School in Washington, DC. She is currently on the Project Review Committee for the National Philoptochos Society, evaluating grant applications and recommending projects to receive the $1.5 million awarded annually by the society.

Barb's contributions to IECA are extensive, too. Currently a member of the Education and Training Committee, she also served on the Board as VP for Ethics and then VP for Committees. She was part of the faculty for IECA's 2008 and 2009 Pre-Conference NACAC workshops. Barb also contributed to two IECA Task Forces - The TalkList and the College Committee's Professional Competency initiative. She frequently presents and moderates IECA conference learning sessions.



The Katz Award was presented to Barbara at the IECA Fall Conference in Scottsdale. The $2,000 grant, which accompanies the award, will go to support the Literacy Initiative of the St. Demetrios Philoptochos Society.

Support the Katz Fund

The Irvin W. Katz Award was created to honor IECA consultants for their volunteer work with organizations and programs providing educational opportunities to children. Irv Katz was a beloved IECA consultant who worked tirelessly and passionately for the good of children wherever he found them. He supported countless organizations and people who were dedicated to the education of children. He shunned recognition and honors and preferred the deep satisfaction of helping students.

Donations to the Katz Fund go to support the Katz Award, including a $2,000 grant that is directed to a charitable organization of the awardee's choice. Prominent supporters of the fund include Irv's son, Jason, whose gift this year honors the memory of his stepmother, Jackie Katz.

Please consider a gift to the Katz Fund this year. You can go to *iecafoundation.org/donate.html* and make a donation today.

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