



## Calendar

December 1  
Call for Proposals Ends  
for Spring 2017 Conference

December 13  
Monthly Webinar  
Enrollment Management  
Association: Perfect Placement  
Partner

December 26  
Office Closed

January 2  
Office Closed

January 10  
Monthly Webinar  
Helping Expatriate Students  
Make the University Transition  
With Success

January 10–11  
College Campus Tours  
Central Florida

January 11–13  
Professional Members Winter  
Retreat  
Tampa, Florida

Looking Ahead:

May 8–10  
College, School & Program  
Campus Tours  
Colorado & Wyoming

May 10–13  
IECA Spring Conference  
Denver, Colorado

May 13–14  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Denver, CO

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## Generation Z Comes of Age

By Mark Sklarow, CEO, IECA

It seems like just yesterday when admission reps and independent educational consultants rushed out to attend workshops and seminars to better understand millennials—roughly those students born from 1977 to 1995.

Those students are now close to ending their college careers and are firmly established in the workplace. Their quirks, priorities, focus, and work style are something we baby boomers and gen Xers are now seeing up close: they are our coworkers and, increasingly, our bosses.

Today for those working in educational fields, it's all about generation Z, the children born after 1995. They are our school-age clients and our college seekers. And they have grown up in a very different United States. It has been said that millennials were products of the September 11, 2001 attacks and the economic crashes that shaped much of their world. They grew up adapting to changing technologies and have been the early adopters of each innovation.

Generation Z knows about 9/11 only as a historical date. They seem unable to grasp its defining nature for so many of us. Social scientists indicate that the best way to understand this group is through three aspects: parenting, technology, and economics.

Millennials were often superficially described as the most self-absorbed, dependent, and economically flailing generation. They continue to search for the perfect job, highest salary, and acclaimed social life despite often coming into direct conflict with the

realities of the world. Young people in generation Z are seen as hard working, anxious, and focused on the future. You can see the generational changes broadly depicted in Haley, a millennial, and Alex, a generation Z, on the ABC show *Modern Family*.



Given the sharp turn from the life and desires of millennials, schools, colleges, and IECA members should be certain to treat this new generation as distinct. But most experts think that educational institutions are stuck—i.e., assuming that this new cohort will behave similarly to their older brethren. In *Generation Z Goes to College*, authors Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace (Jossey-Bass 2016) warn

*continued on page 6*

# President's Letter

## Learning Across Designations

When I learned that this issue of *insights* would focus on school advising, I was a bit stumped about what the content of my letter would be. My practice as an independent educational consultant (IEC) focuses on colleges, and my work in the boarding and day school area is limited to some assisting with interview prep, alleviating parent angst, and advising students considering a PG year.

After reflecting on my time at the New Orleans conference, though, I realized more than ever how my work in the college arena is integrated with all the designations in IECA, and how fortunate we are to have such a range of expertise in our association. Many of the students with whom I work attend boarding schools, so it is imperative that I understand the missions of those schools, their curricula, grading systems, and campus cultures. Without that knowledge, I would be working in a vacuum with those students. In many

cases, I am in close contact with the college counselors in those boarding schools as well. So in actuality, my work has much to do with schools!

And considering another designation, therapeutic consulting, I must think only of the master classes I've attended to realize the connection to my work. Those valuable sessions give all attendees knowledge and insight into areas of emotional, social, and cognitive development that are integral to our successful counseling of students. I can't imagine not seeking more opportunities to learn about addiction, ASD, or the effects of trauma on development.

As a member of IECA, I value the relationships I have with IECs from every designation because my colleagues are not only professionals to whom I can confidently refer students but they are also invaluable sources of knowledge and support.



Ann Rossbach

Whatever your specialty, please don't think for one moment that this issue is not for you because it focuses on schools and you may not. Frankly, our profession demands that we have a deep and broad understanding of an adolescent's cognitive and emotional development. Our work is not within the strict constraints of one specialty.

So, enjoy this edition of *Insights* and consider how the wealth of knowledge across all our designations can enhance your own practice. This is one of the many benefits of belonging to our association.

Ann Rossbach, MAT, IECA President

## IECA<sup>+</sup> INSIGHTS

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**Independent Educational Consultants Association**

3251 Old Lee Highway, Suite 510  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Phone: 703-591-4850

Fax: 703-591-4860

[www.IECAonline.com](http://www.IECAonline.com)

e-mail: [info@IECAonline.com](mailto:info@IECAonline.com)

**President:** Ann Rossbach, MAT

**Chief Executive Officer:**

Mark H. Sklarow

**Deputy Executive Director:**

Sue S. DePra

**Manager of Communications:**

Sarah S. Brachman

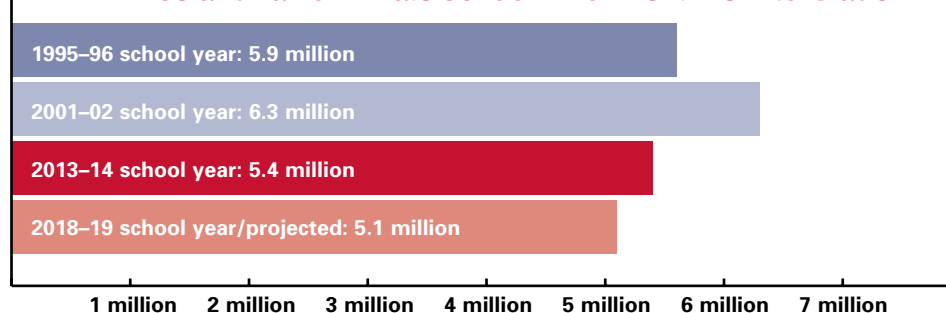
**Editor:** Jan Umphrey

**Design and Layout:** Sarah S. Cox

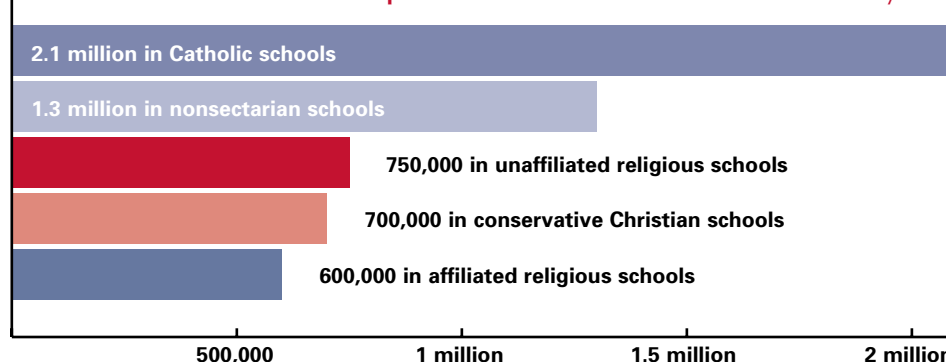
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## In Focus

### Rise and Fall of Private School Enrollment Pre-K to Grade 12



### Where are the 5.4 million private school students enrolled today?



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

# Test Optional—Or Maybe Not

By Elizabeth Stone, PhD, IECA (CA)



The role of standardized testing in college admissions is one that has been contested and questioned throughout its history. Although the SAT and the ACT serve, to an extent, the purpose of “objectively” comparing students across the globe, the equity of the tests is quite limited. They have repeatedly been shown to have problematic gender, ethnic, and cultural biases. In

addition, extensive test prep, often limited to well-resourced students, dramatically increases scores. Aware of this inequity, college admissions officers have increasingly been adopting a “test optional” policy. Through my research on and experience with test optional policies, I have gained a clearer view of the inconsistencies and misinformation generated by those policies.

As an independent educational consultant (IEC) for more than 15 years, I have struggled when advising students with extreme test anxiety whether to take the SAT or ACT or to simply apply to test optional schools. Students’ anxiety may stem from a history of poor performances on standardized tests; general test anxiety; learning differences, such as dyslexia; English as a second language; or slow processing of written information. Initially, I was excited to offer students the option of opting out of tests, and I would direct them to Fair Test, which lists 900 colleges as test optional.

That solution, however, has not proven to be simple. As I conducted more research on test optional schools, I found errors in databases that listed schools as *test optional* or *test required* when they were not, and I became confused trying to decipher the terminology used to describe individual schools’ testing requirements. After speaking with admission officers, I was bewildered to find that many institutions were adding requirements for students who applied test optional. I was exceptionally horrified when a Midwestern liberal arts college’s admission officer told me that his college automatically plugged in a false test score for students who did not submit their own test scores. The fake score was low enough to disqualify the students from receiving merit scholarships.

## What Test Optional Really Means

One of the challenges we face as IECs is providing students with accurate information about testing policies. I have found that the information provided to us through search engines and websites paints incomplete and often inaccurate pictures of test-optional policies.

I spent some time on the Common Application Standardized Test Policy search engine as a mechanism to learn about different test policies. The Common App offers four categories related to testing in addition to “Always Required.” The number of colleges listed appears as follows:

- Sometimes Required 153
- Never Required 72
- Flexible 41
- Ignored 6

There is no information provided regarding what those categories mean, only that they apply to full-time US citizens and permanent

residents and degree-seeking students and that they are “minimum requirements.” Does “test flexible” mean that the college will consider student scores only at the student’s request? Does it mean the college will be flexible about which standardized test it will accept, i.e., an AP or SAT subject test score instead of the general SAT/ACT score? To decipher this ambiguous terminology, I looked at specific university websites to clarify individual policies. Following are a few examples of what I found.



DePaul University is listed as test flexible on the Common Application, but its website doesn’t explain what *test flexible* means, rather it states: “Because we evaluate each applicant holistically and individually, there is no formula we can provide to help you decide,” so it won’t tell you whether you should submit a test or not and without more guidance about what “holistic” means, IECs are at a loss on how to advise students. DePaul does offer students the option of writing four additional essays in lieu of test scores, but the College Board’s Big Future website lists standardized test scores as “very important” to admissions while application essays are listed as “considered.” Such ambiguous and inconsistent messages are unacceptable for students and IECs alike.

New York University’s test flexible program is entirely different than that of DePaul, allowing for students to send in any combination of scores from various tests. Lake Forest is listed as “sometimes required” on the Common App and the website states that they will dismiss a test score requirement if a student interviews with an admission counselor.

Brandeis is “sometimes required,” specifying that test scores are required for international applicants, homeschooled students, and those with a GED; however, the Common Data Set (a standard reporting form used by *US News and World Report*, Peterson’s, and College Board to collect information on colleges) shows that the ACT or SAT is *required*. And Brandeis’s website, indicates that 92% of *enrolled students* submitted test scores, but no data is provided on the number of *admitted students* who did not submit scores. Brandeis also allows several different tests to be submitted, but provides no information about competitive scores on alternatives, such as AP tests, subject tests, or IB exams, leaving students without guidance on how best to craft their application.

*continued on page 6*



## Le Bon Temps Roulé at the New Orleans Conference



Attendees at the Networking Reception mixed business with pleasure as they met new colleagues and caught up with old friends.



Board member Belinda Wilkerson introduced the College Showcase.



One instructional breakout session turned into a discussion group.





Opening speaker Sally Kenney got things off to a poignant start by talking about sexual assault on campus.



What's a NOLA conference without beads?



A Second Line sets the tone for a fun evening on the way to the member dinner.



IECs learned about programs at the Info Swap.



In the NOLA spirit at the networking reception!




Attendees took full advantage of the School and College Fair.

institutions that they must change to meet the needs of this group of young people.

After all, generation Z is the first generation native to a digital and online world. Consider that to them such things as appointment television (watching a show at a fixed time), maps, and house phones are antiquated. They have known only two presidents. They have overly involved parents. They can be more judgmental than millennials, believing in individual responsibility and independence, and their mastery of information technology leads them to believe they CAN solve it all. If millennials were the “me generation,” Zs demonstrate loyalty to others and a genuine concern about the world around them. IECs should find it important that a clear majority of

generation Z students are open-minded about educational options and about the diversity of their classmates.

Serving the needs of and appealing to the high expectations of generation Z students will require every admissions and counseling office to rethink their messaging. **At the spring IECA conference in Denver, CO, Cory Seemiller, one of the authors of *Generation Z Goes to College*, will be one of our major speakers and help members explore the issue further and prepare for the Z invasion.** 

## Generations

Baby Boomer 1946–1964

Generation X 1965–1976

Millennial 1977–1995

Generation Z 1996–2010

### Test Optional, from page 3

Savannah College of Art and Design’s test policy is listed as “ignored” on the Common Application, although SCAD’s online admission requirements provide instructions on where US citizens should submit official ACT or SAT scores. It doesn’t explain how the test scores are used, except a reference to a math score minimum required for a specific master’s degree program.

Bowdoin College is in the Common Application as “never required,” but it actually does require scores for homeschooled students and those who have narrative report cards instead of letter grades. Surprisingly, Bowdoin, which has been test optional since 1969, requires all matriculating students to submit test scores the summer before attending, stating that those scores are needed for research purposes and academic advising. I don’t know how Bowdoin enforces that policy, but to an unsuspecting student looking for a truly test optional college and wishing to avoid taking any standardized test, this requirement violates the spirit of test optional.

### Alternative Option Pitfalls

The alternate options given to students also have inherent difficulties. If a subjective interview to prove that “drive and a passion for learning” (as stated on Lake Forest’s website for example) are more important criteria for admission than standardized scores, then why accept test scores at all? If colleges are going to require an interview in lieu of scores, then students and IECs should be able to obtain more information on the purpose of the interview, how the interview is evaluated, and how students who interview are considered compared to test-submitting students for the purposes of scholarships as well as admission. In addition, at the time of application, how will a prospective student know if an interview is obtainable?

Even additional essays, which are easily coached, likely lend little more information than is already present on the Common Application. In my practice, no student has chosen to write those four DePaul essays—in fact, DePaul reported to me in personal communications that more than 90% of its applicants submit test scores.


NYU’s “test flexible” option and Brandeis’s “sometimes required” option assume that students know how to interpret test scores. I suspect students might be very confused by the choices. For example, students can send in subject tests instead of the ACT or

SAT, but a 700 on SAT subject test Math 2 ranks a student in the 48th percentile while a 590 in Math on the “old” SAT would place a student in the 71st percentile. The “new” SAT percentiles are even more complex: how many students understand the differences in cohorts who take subject tests versus the general population of students who take ACT or SAT tests? It would be so easy for a student to send in subject test scores that were not favorable.

As I was finishing this article, Western Oregon University made headlines for announcing it would be test optional for 2017. The caveat, however, was that only students who submitted test scores could compete for the college’s most prestigious scholarships. Going test optional has the (perhaps intended) result of actually increasing a college’s selectivity by suppressing low test scores, a well-documented phenomenon. For example, Mount Holyoke went test optional in 2001. In 1999, it reported the middle 50% of SAT Verbal as 600–660 and SAT Math as 579–650. In 2015, Mount Holyoke’s Common Data Set reported its middle 50% as SAT Verbal 620–730 and SAT Math 610–735.

Colleges routinely advise students not to submit test scores that fall outside the middle 50% or, as the Brandeis website says, not to allow “applicants to decide for themselves whether their test results accurately reflect their academic ability and potential.” How does a typical high school student unpack those messages? If a student has tested four times, that test score may very well feel like a strong indication of a student’s ability. And how will a student decide what reflects their *potential* for academic success in college?

### Call for Clarity

In closing, I challenge you as IECs to do some research as well. Check out the Common Data Set; spend time on the Common Application and colleges’ websites. As you find discrepancies, confusing data, and inconsistent policies, contact the colleges and the reporting services and make those issues known. And be sure your college athletes know that NCAA Division 1 and 2 and NAIA require student athletes to have minimum ACT or SAT scores without regard to individual college admission policies. Collectively we can work for clarity and equity in the admission process for the benefit of all students. 

*Elizabeth Stone, Campanile College Counseling Inc., can be reached at [estone@campanile.us](mailto:estone@campanile.us).*



## What Does “Right Fit” Mean?

*The Schools Committee*

*As IECA independent educational consultants (IECs), we’re always talking about “finding the right fit” for our clients. It’s what we believe in; it’s at the core ethos of our work with our families. But what is it, exactly, that we mean when we talk about fit and how do we evaluate it? To find out, members of the Schools Committee developed a Q&A to explain how they understand fit.*

### How do you help families assess “fit”?

**Ray Cross**, Director of Admissions, Marianapolis Preparatory School: From a director of admission’s perspective, a student who is considered to be the right fit is mission appropriate for our institution. Students who are best suited for a school are not only able to benefit from what the school has to offer, positively contribute to a program, and meet academic expectations but also can make a contribution that is both tangible and significant to the community—simultaneously reinforcing and strengthening the school’s culture.



**Lucy Pritzker**, IECA (NJ): The “right fit school” values those things that make a student unique and can nurture students’ interests while supporting their needs. I read through the student’s transcript thoroughly, paying special attention to teacher comments to assess how capable they are of learning independently. I also take a careful look at the student’s mental health history and any learning issues identified in testing to make sure the school can offer the appropriate support. The student’s mental health comes first, and they shouldn’t be at a school that will compromise it.

**Debbie Ashe**, IECA, (NC): When considering K–12 schools, parents need to look well down the road because it could be a 13-year relationship. The school should share the family’s values and priorities and there should be a strong partnership.

**Krissy Naspo**, IECA (CT): When families have a list of schools already in mind, I discuss each one as it relates to what they are seeking for their child. I point out why some of the features they are looking for might not be the criteria that should lead the search, and I help them identify other criteria that are more appropriate.

**Allison Matlack**, IECA (MA): I consider carefully what the junior year will look like for the student, even when placing freshman. This can be the year when students who are “overmatched” can start to crumble because any cracks in their educational foundation start to show under the weight of increased demands. I look through the course catalog to see how rich and varied the offerings are. Will a very capable student continue to find classes that are challenging? Will a weaker student find classes suited to their abilities? Will every student have the opportunity to take classes in areas of emerging interest, such as marine biology, entrepreneurial studies, creative writing, or Mandarin?

### How do you evaluate a school’s academic support program?

**Pritzker**: The location of the academic support center on campus can reveal a great deal about the school’s investment in its LD students. Is it centrally located and easy to get to? Is it a brightly lit and attractive space? Do students go there just to hang out? All those things reveal a lot about the academic culture of the school.

**Allison Kimmerle**, IECA Associate (VT): I ask the admissions office to allow me to talk directly with the academic support team so I can fully understand support services and the specific training of the staff.

**Matlack**: Support for a student’s learning needs can mean things other than extended time and working with a tutor. If appropriate, I ask about structured evening study halls and learn about the lights out and Internet policies for students who don’t manage their time well. I look for opportunities for independent study or for modified course loads. The academic schedule can also make a difference. For some students, a mod schedule works while others need the predictability of a schedule that is the same every day, all year long.

### What do you look for when reviewing a client’s file to determine the right social and extracurricular fit?

**Kimmerle**: I look at how a new school can nurture a student’s interests. I ask the student to articulate the specific things they would like to try at each school so that they can start to imagine themselves there.

*continued on page 9*



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*Right Fit, from page 7*

**Pritzker:** I look carefully at the dorms and the dining halls to learn more about life on campus and to see how the students are grouped. Are the international students living with the domestic boarders? Are the dorms separated by age? I find out if meals are mandatory and whether there is assigned seating. For some students, that can be a godsend; for others, a nightmare.

**Matlack:** Students can pick up on a social frequency that I can't always hear as an adult, like the mosquito tone. If a student tells me that the school didn't "feel right" to them, I value that feedback.

**What questions do you ask the admissions office to distinguish one school's culture and ethos from another?**

**Kimmerle:** I ask them to describe the type of student who thrives there academically, socially, and personally. But, more than anything, I like to see students interacting with each other, with no adult involvement or interference.

**Naspo:** I ask that question the opposite way: Who doesn't do well here? Who struggles to succeed? I also like to attend an all-school meeting or chapel service to see the community in action and interacting with each other.

**Pritzker:** I like to know what type of student falls in their "sweet spot." Who do they serve well? Who was most recently asked to leave and why?

**No school is a perfect fit. How do you decide how to prioritize a client's needs to determine which school is the best fit?**

**Matlack:** Sometimes parents look too far down the road and overlook their child's most immediate and pressing needs. If a child doesn't have friends, hasn't found their voice, or can't write a coherent paragraph, I don't believe that looking at the school's college matriculation list provides the most valuable information to consider when making the decision.

**Kimmerle:** It's most important that the school is an appropriate match for the student's academic interests and capabilities. Beyond that, I believe that the social piece is critical. The child needs to be at a school where he will find his peer group.

**What do you think is the most common mistake parents make when selecting a school for their child?**

**Kimmerle:** There are two: First, even if the parents see a clear choice, they often allow their child to fully control the decision process with the expectation that their child will "buy in" if they are allowed to make the decision. Second, parents allow themselves to be swayed by other families' experiences without considering how different their own child might be.

**Cross:** On the other hand, there is value in a child having some voice and investment in the school selection process. Often it is the student whose parents have completely driven the process who does not fully take advantage of the opportunities afforded to him

or her. A student must identify in some way with the community they join to truly blossom and embrace the experience. When parents want something for their children more than the child wants it for him- or herself, someone is generally left underwhelmed and discouraged as a result.

**Pritzker:** Too often families are caught up by a school's name and reputation. They go in to the process with too many preconceptions and don't allow themselves to be open to new possibilities.

**Debbie Ashe, IECA (NC):** Families focus in on their final school list too early in the process. They have nothing to lose but much to gain by casting the net wide in the early stages of the search. It's harder to double back later in the process.

**Matlack:** The coach, the academic support specialist, or the head of the theatre program may become the adult in the community who plays the most important role in making the student's experience a success. Families need to find time to connect with those people.

**What do you think is the most common mistake students make when deciding where to go to school?**

**Pritzker:** Students can focus too narrowly on one specific aspect of the school—a particular sport, a certain language offering, or the quality of the dorms—at the cost of deciding whether the school, in its entirety, is the right place.

**Ashe:** I find it helpful to (gently) remind the parents of young students that they are looking for the right school for their children, not the school they would have liked to have attended.

**Cross:** I would caution students to avoid selecting a school simply because of a friend's interest in attending. Students should aim to find a school that offers a community whose members share similar values, whose culture will encourage a growth mind-set, and whose environment will be conducive to maximizing their potential.

**Final thoughts?**

**Matlack:** I think that talking about "right fit" is actually misleading. It implies that the school should fit like a perfectly tailored suit. But parents of growing adolescents know to buy clothes that are a bit too big for their children because what fits now will be snug in a few months. I think we should encourage parents to think about school choice for their children the same way. It should feel a bit too big, the academics should feel a bit too challenging, the athletics should seem a bit too competitive. We should encourage parents not to look for the cozy fit, but to find something that will give their child the room they'll need to grow. 🌱

**IECA Schools Committee Members**

Allison Matlack, Chair, (MA)

Krissy Naspo, Vice Chair, (CT)

Clare Anderson (MD)

Debby Ashe (NC)

Beth Cashel, Associate (NY)

Brian Hetzel, Associate (CT)

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## Boys' Schools and Girls' Schools: It's Time for an Update

By Allison Dillon Kimmerle, IECA Associate (NH)



The research is mixed: for every article and study that enumerates the value of coeducation or single-sex education, there is another that refutes it. Times change, schools change, best practices change, but what seems to remain the same are dated perceptions of single-sex education. Tales of the cloistered, single-sex boarding school experience cloud rational thinking. This

worries me because that unique opportunity may be the best option for some students, yet it is not always given its due consideration.

The websites of single-sex schools show that they represent a day and boarding option that is loaded with innovation and very positive energy. The sites highlight the daily and long-term value and relevance of their programs not only as a preparation for college but also for life. It is time for us as independent educational consultants (IECs) to become reacquainted with the single-sex schools of today and to bring our client families along with us.

In my admissions career, I was fortunate to work at three different types of schools: all boys, all girls, and coed. In my first job in admissions at an all-girls school, I remember watching the scene carefully to be sure that the school delivered what it promised.



And it did. Shy girls did find their voice. Bright girls were admired. Athletic girls were applauded for their efforts on the field. Appearance was not a friendship factor. Girls felt free to try something new simply because it interested them. The faculty, male and female, were sharply attuned to the unique learning styles of girls. And the social life involved more than awkward dances with neighboring boys schools. Every day I saw girls who were thriving,

*continued on page 13*

### Advertisement



Jonah is writing, recording, and producing his first musical album in SSM's weCreate Studio as part of an independent study project.



Maddie and Brette are developing a prosthetic hand for an area 9th-grade student born without the majority of her left hand and fingers.



Amanda is pictured here with Minnesota jewelry designer Teresa Goodall. Amanda is studying the theory of how colors are perceived by the brain, how they affect one another, and how they harmonize in space.



Peter is examining the events that preceded the Big Bang, the state of the universe following it, and how our galaxy as we know it was slowly formed.

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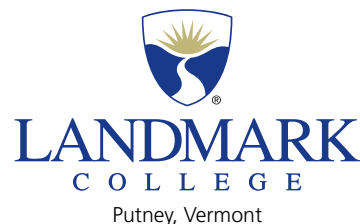
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## Single-sex Schools, from page 11


productive, and comfortable in their own skin. And my biggest admissions concern turned out to be without merit: the girls were not lured away by coeducation. They enrolled and they stayed. Everything I promised to families was true.

Years later, I moved into admissions at an all-boys school, and I began that job just as I had at the girls' school: I watched to be sure that what I said to visiting families was true. And it was. Shy boys became leaders. Trying something new was not judged, no matter what it was. And yes, athletes discovered theatre and their singing voice. Boys came together as brothers and became young men. I observed and then experienced first-hand when I taught that the education of boys has its unique features and considerations. I watched with great pleasure as a new arts complex was connected to a new athletic facility. Talk about a statement. The head of school reinforced the school's commitment to single-sex education with the declaration, "We know boys."

Each single-sex school knew its student population very well—how they learned; how they thought; and how they developed physically, emotionally, and socially. They anticipated, planned, awarded, scheduled, reprimanded, and taught with that uniqueness in mind. It was indeed a privilege to watch the growth of each child, even those who attended for only a senior or a postgraduate year. This was not the cloistered experience of old: it was relevant, real, fun, and vibrant.

In conversations with other IECs and many parents about the value of single-sex education, I have been dismayed by the responses I have received. The perception that single-sex schools are anachronistic is still far too prevalent, and references to the unhappy experiences of friends or relatives who attended a single-sex boarding school in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s abound and are perpetuated to this day. Awareness and understanding of what single-sex education offers in the 21st century deserves an update and another chance. It should be seen first-hand too.

Asking whether coed or single-sex education is better is simply about asking what is best for the child. As we explore schools for our secondary school clients, it's worthwhile to offer variety that demonstrates our understanding that one size does not fit all. Parents who protest a single-sex school at first may welcome the opportunity to explore in person once they have examined a website or two and recognize that a single-sex school is not a rejection of the opposite sex. Not today.

As the new admission year begins, I hope more IECs will visit single-sex schools with an open mind, ready to examine the ways in which those schools create environments where students learn, grow, and thrive. 

Allison Dillon Kimmerle, Boarding School Advisor, can be reached at [allison.kimmerle@gmail.com](mailto:allison.kimmerle@gmail.com).

For additional reading:

National Coalition of Girls' Schools: <https://ncgsblog.org>

International Boys School Coalition: <https://www.theibsc.org>



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## MicroSchools: A Growing Trend in Education

By Lucy Pritzker, MS, IECA (NJ)



The one-room schoolhouse of centuries past may be having a revival. Microschools—small, sometimes progressive and usually innovative private schools—are opening in various parts of the country. Often started as a response to dissatisfaction with public schools, microschoools typically have fewer than 100

students in the entire student body. Such a small population allows for an individual approach to learning that larger schools just can't provide.

"I knew middle school was going to be a disaster for my daughter," Jane said. "Larger classrooms, inflexible teachers, and a chaotic social environment was just not going to work. She needed something very individualized." Jane considered homeschooling but was concerned that her daughter would be socially isolated. She also felt that professional educators would provide a better learning environment than she could. A microschool was the answer.

Microschools are bringing a new model of the classroom to a system that has largely remained the same since the Industrial Revolution. Rather than making a student fit the school, microschoools are adapting the educational experience to the student.



"Innovation in American education is rapidly and increasingly aimed toward personalization for the student," said Heidi Molbak, cofounder and head of school at FlexSchool in New Haven, CT. Flexschool focuses on twice exceptional students—i.e., gifted students with learning disabilities. Molbak continued, "Microschools are flexible and nimble, positioning them to quickly respond to meet the needs

of their small student bodies without being weighed down by costly and cumbersome physical plants and programs. While these small schools vary in size, mission, and tuition, they all focus on being able to agilely respond to their target students and parents."

Many microschoools have multi-age classes, so an advanced freshman may be doing math problems with a graduating senior and a fourth grader may be part of a student team working on a coding problem with students who are high school age. Microschools also encourage learning outside the classroom. A day at a museum, a farm, a factory, or a nursing home provides rich material for teachers to expand their students' knowledge. When a method succeeds with a specific population, it can rapidly roll out and be reproduced in other schools and other programs.

A school at the forefront of the microeducation movement is Acton Academy. Started in 2009 in Austin, TX, it has grown to 15 locations worldwide with 18 more locations to come. Following the positive disruptive model of businesses and corporations—e.g., Uber disrupting the taxi industry and Amazon disrupting the bookstore business—Acton is disrupting the prevailing model of education. The Altschool and the Khan Lab School are other such examples. These schools all share the goal of inspiring students to reach their potential in an atmosphere of high academic standards achieved through astute consideration of each student's learning style.

A visitor to a microschool will find students and teachers engaged in projects and in discussions and often incorporating technology in their lessons. Rarely is there a traditional lecture. Instead, enthusiastic students are asking questions, helping one another master new material, and learning by doing. The teacher is guiding and encouraging. Although microschoools are relatively new, they are making an impact on education in the 21st century.

Lucy Pritzker, Elm Street Placements, can be reached at [lucypritzker@gmail.com](mailto:lucypritzker@gmail.com).

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## Cognitive + Character: Measuring What Matters in Admission

By Heather Hoerle, Executive Director, The Enrollment Management Association



When my daughter was applying to independent schools just a few years ago, I was keenly aware that there was more to her than her academic record. Would a file, for example, share the story of her deep empathy for others? As the executive director of the Enrollment Management Association (formerly SSATB), a nonprofit membership organization for independent schools and the

information). After each round of conversations and research reviews, we became more convinced that it was time for independent schools to “measure what matters.” We theorized that measuring such traits as openness to learning, curiosity, critical thinking, and moral judgment during the admission process might increase our power to predict student success in our schools.

Although there is no doubt that the continued measurement of *cognitive* skills for academic preparedness with the SSAT and other tools is still an important part of a student’s application to

independent schools, our trustees agreed with the think tank experts’ thesis and funded a pilot project to develop the Character Skills Assessment (CSA), an innovative tool meant to

*continued on page 18*



governing body for the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT), that personal experience was especially meaningful because it brought to light the need to help admission professionals go beyond the transcripts, teacher recommendations, and cognitive test scores. Traits that are hard to measure, such as teamwork, empathy, and integrity, are signs of values and character in action and part of what independent schools are looking for in children who apply for admission.

Because of this awareness and a desire to explore the opportunities inherent in assessment, the Enrollment Management Association commissioned a group of four leading admission and independent school thought leaders to work with me to consider how assessment is changing for the future and what that might mean for assessments that are used to select students for independent schools. We formed the Think Tank on the Future of Assessment and interviewed and considered leading research from many experts, including Angela Duckworth, the University of Pennsylvania’s “guru of grit;” Robert Sternberg, an expert on assessment known for his triarchic theory of intelligence; and William Sedlacek, an outspoken advocate for incorporating noncognitive assessment in standardized testing, particularly to provide access for underserved populations. We met with higher education admission directors, such as Harvard’s Bill Fitzsimmons, to better understand how colleges are changing the way they assess students. We also interviewed schools about what they were currently doing to measure those elusive traits that speak to their missions and their school communities. Our efforts resulted in two reports that document our findings for the community (go to <http://bit.ly/TTOARports> for more

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# School Advising


*Cognitive + Character, from page 17*

complement test scores by examining the character traits children demonstrate every day in school and in the community.

In 2014, the research and development plan for CSA was launched. Built by admission test experts at the Enrollment Management Association and the Educational Testing Service in conjunction with independent schools, the CSA helps independent school admission teams understand the unique qualities that children will contribute to their distinctive communities.

To facilitate initial testing, a volunteer group of admission directors, administrators, and other educators from 32 independent schools (the G32) came together for two CSA summits. The G32 schools were those that participated in the think tank and pilot testing, were recognized for innovative practices, or expressed an interest in the work. Additional schools that participated in pilot testing (Plus schools), were intentionally chosen to represent a wide diversity of school types: boarding and day; multiple grade configurations; coed and single sex; varied academic programs; domestic, including regional areas of the US; and international. As Doug Price from Middlesex School (MA) said, "Although the participants came from a diverse group of schools, it was apparent that we shared the belief that current assessment tools are limited in predictive value, and the work we had gathered to do could only improve our ability to assess students."

The pilot schools tested currently enrolled students as well as applicants through an online system developed by our team. Together they tested thousands of children and provided invaluable benchmark data for our alpha testing year. We then held a second G32 summit to discuss the results of the research, including item pretesting and one-on-one research conducted directly with students (dubbed cognitive labs). In addition, the G32 schools discussed key operational considerations. Following data analysis by our team of experienced testing experts and industry advisory board, we found the initial results of the pilot program very promising. The next round of CSA testing rolled out in fall 2016 and focused on refining and expanding the CSA's range, with a goal of full release of the CSA as an SSAT complement in the 2017–2018 testing season.

Pairing the SSAT with a suite of character assessment tools will provide schools and IECs with a more comprehensive student profile and get to the heart of who applicants are as students and citizens. Adding an awareness of each student's social-emotional qualities and habits of mind to the already well-documented predictive power of the SSAT will increase enrollment professionals' ability to work with independent educational consultants to select students who will succeed in their schools. This innovative tool will undoubtedly enhance the portfolios of the students you counsel to ensure that they are finding the best match independent school. 



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## NABI Update: A Conversation With New Managing Director Megan Cartier

Interview by Courtney Williams, freelance writer

**Courtney Williams:** How are things going for you in your new position as managing director of NABI and market growth at TABS?

**Megan Cartier:** Great! I love everything about this opportunity because it has returned me to my roots as a pure marketer—working with a team, to build a new initiative, for a great brand, from the ground up. We have a very complex strategic challenge ahead of us and that is very motivating for me.



The team at TABS has done a tremendous job helping me get on board. I've begun traveling to conferences and schools in Canada and the US. I've had the chance to meet lots of people from the boarding school community, as well as within the many associations we partner with, such as IECA. What a diverse and impressive group of people.

**Williams:** What's the transition like from corporate to nonprofit?

**Cartier:** If I weren't also an entrepreneur, I think the transition from working at an organization like Wells Fargo with more than 270,000 employees to one with 11 would have been a big shock! I've owned two yoga studios in Virginia for more than 12 years. We have small staffs and there's a different kind of collaboration than you find in a large organization. As much as I've enjoyed my time in corporate America, arriving at TABS is liberating in many ways. I am rolling up my sleeves and putting on many different hats. It's unleashed my creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

The similarity to my corporate work is that the consumer—in this case, students and families—is front and center. To be an effective marketer you have to take the perspective that marketing is all about the consumer. I love what the great storyteller Robert McKee said, "You do not solve your customer's world. They solve their world using you."

**Williams:** What have you learned so far?

**Cartier:** As both a parent and a marketer, I've found it exciting to be exposed to the different types of educational experiences our member schools offer. I love the ideas of cultivating lifelong learners and helping each student realize his or her true potential. It's really interesting to begin to understand what makes each school unique—and what bonds them together. The words that come up most often when I ask people to describe their schools are transformative and transformational. That's powerful.

I've just begun learning about the different journeys that parents and students take as they make decisions about education. There are so many paths. Part of the initial work of NABI will be to cluster these journeys into five or so groups as we begin to uncover commonalities. Within one or more of these "clusters" is where independent educational consultants (IECs) will play a very important role.

**Williams:** What's happened in the first month?

**Cartier:** My colleague Andy Hirt and I have attended a few events to share the latest NABI headlines. We spoke at the Enrollment Management Association (formerly SSATB) conference, an AISAP event hosted in partnership with the Aspen Country Day School, and the Canadian Heads & Chairs Conference in Ottawa.

I started visiting schools, as I said, beginning right here in our own backyard at Asheville School. It was so beautiful and inspiring, I asked my student tour guides if I could attend.

*continued on page 20*

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# School Advising

*NABI, from page 19*

They diplomatically replied that I may have missed my window for applying!

I've focused on the team I'd like to build to help NABI hit its goal of increasing high- and full-pay student enrollment by 2020 students by the year 2020. Building that team includes leveraging the incredible marketing talent we already have at TABS, plus adding a "data scientist" of sorts and someone well-respected and knowledgeable from within the boarding school community. In partnership with my colleagues at TABS, I've mapped out the first draft of a six-month working plan.

**Williams:** *What are the most important things happening at NABI right now?*

**Cartier:** We have tremendous energy and creativity around NABI—it's infectious. I truly believe that by working together and pooling our funds, we will be able to change the general perception of boarding school and increase awareness of the unique and precious experience it offers.

Right now, at the time of this interview, we are excitedly awaiting pitches from our three advertising agency finalists. Those pitches are happening in a board room borrowed from the Biltmore hotel at the top of our office building. Think *Mad Men* meets the Blue Ridge Mountains! Once the selected agency comes on board, we'll be able to add a lot more detail to our start-up plan and begin executing the marketing plan.

We are also engaging key members of the extended NABI team, which includes the 40-plus members of the NABI advisory committees and people working at our member schools and the associations that support them, including CEO Mark Sklarow at IECA, and IEC Allison Matlack (MA). We are working with the NABI subcommittee within the TABS board and tapping into their expertise and unique perspectives.

**Williams:** *The TABS conference is coming up in December. What do you expect to have to show the membership?*

**Cartier:** I anticipate being able to share highlights from the new ad agency and the thinking that won us over as well as share some work we've started that makes the most of this time of year when parents and students are thinking about and researching schools. We may also be able to take an early glimpse at consumer insights that will help us craft our overarching strategy.

**Williams:** *What role do you think IECs might play in reaching high- and full-pay domestic boarding families?*

**Cartier:** I think of IECs as boarding school brand ambassadors who can authentically share the key messages of the NABI campaign one-on-one with families. That positioning is


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*I think of IECs as boarding school brand ambassadors who can authentically share the key messages of the NABI campaign one-on-one with families.*

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unique and highly influential. Close collaboration with these talented professionals is essential.

**Williams:** *By the time this article goes to print, you will have attended the IECA Conference in New Orleans. What are your thoughts heading into that conference? What do you hope to learn?*

**Cartier:** Since I am new to this entire industry, I will be heading to the IECA conference with very few expectations. I am excited to build new relationships and bond over beignets! I am eager to ask about the clients whom independent educational consultants serve and about the current perceptions that both IECs and families have about boarding schools. What big trends are IECs seeing that are influencing decisions around education? What do they see on the horizon that TABS and our member schools may or may not be seeing? I'll attend some of the educational sessions being offered. I'm looking forward to lots of listening and learning! 

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# Key Considerations for Placing Transgender, Transsexual, or Gender Nonconforming Clients

By John L. Singleton, CEO Whetstone Academy



Over the past decade, the number of individuals who identify as transgender, transsexual, or gender nonconforming has increased dramatically. Independent educational consultants (IECs), both traditional and therapeutic, are now finding themselves in a dilemma when recommending an appropriate placement for these clients. In response to that increase, however, we are

also seeing more discussions and support that are based on the best available research and professional consensus to assist in appropriate placement of those clients.

Recognizing that no two people are identical, being well-informed and ready to ask the right questions before placement provide insight and help IECs make appropriate recommendations for placement, maximizing the chance for improved general health, psychological well-being, and self-fulfillment for the client. The following considerations emphasize six areas: standards of care and best practices, treatment of cooccurring issues, boarding environment, social transition, supportive interventions and practices, and family support.

**Standards of care.** Verify that any school or program under consideration understands and embraces the World Professional

Association for Transgender Health's (WPATH) *Standards of Care* and staff training based on those standards. "WPATH recognizes that health is dependent upon not only good clinical care but also social and political climates that provide and ensure social tolerance, equality, and the full rights of citizenship" (WPATH 2011). It is essential to verify that a school or program ensures the promotion of tolerance for gender and sexual diversity, which can eliminate prejudice, discrimination, and stigmatization of students.

**Cooccurring conditions.** Ensure that the organization does not attempt to treat the idea of being transgender but rather addresses the coexisting issues, such as anxiety and depression, by making informed choices and recognizes the value of harm reduction approaches. Harm reduction refers to policies, programs, and practices that aim to reduce the harms associated with identifying as transgender, transsexual, or gender nonconforming.

**Boarding environment.** Look for a school or program that does not isolate the student in the boarding portion of the program according to the gender assigned at birth. Placing a child with roommates that are the same gender as the identified student's gender is essential to the positive mental health of the child. In general, it's recommended that "housing and shower/bathroom facilities for transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming people living

*continued on page 22*



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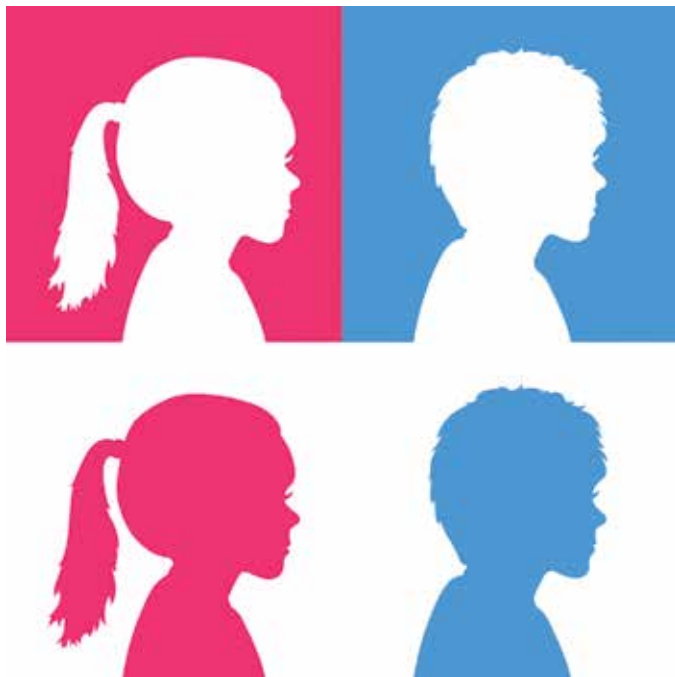
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in institutions should consider their gender identity and role, physical status, dignity, and personal safety. Placement in a single-sex housing unit, ward, or pod on the sole basis of the appearance of the external genitalia may not be appropriate and may place the individual at risk for victimization” (Brown 2009). Schools and programs that accept transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming clients should train and monitor for a tolerant and positive climate that ensures that individuals are not under attack by staff or other residents.



**Social transitioning.** Determine how well the school welcomes discussions about and supports a child’s social transition. Program and school professionals can help families make decisions regarding the timing and process of any gender role changes for their children. They should provide information and help parents weigh the potential benefits and challenges of particular choices. School or program professionals should be willing to counsel and support the student and family as they work through the options and consequences of social transitioning. Families may also need assistance in using correct pronouns, maintaining a safe and supportive environment, and collaborating with other individuals in their child’s life; consequently, the organization must have comprehensive knowledge of social transitioning.

**Supportive interventions and practices.** Ask about the school’s support for both fully and partially reversible interventions, such as puberty suppressant hormones and hormone therapy. According to WPATH, “Refusing timely medical interventions for adolescents might prolong gender dysphoria and contribute to an appearance that could provoke abuse and stigmatization. As the level of gender-related abuse is strongly associated with the degree of psychiatric distress during adolescence (Nuttbrock et al. 2010), refusing puberty suppression and the ensuing hormone therapy is not a neutral option for adolescents, it can be damaging.”

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**Family support.** Look for a program that has services to support the family of the transgender student. In addition to prejudice and discrimination in society at large, stigmatization can contribute to abuse and neglect in a student's relationships with peers and family members, which in turn can lead to psychological distress. WPATH states: "Families should be supported in managing uncertainty and anxiety about their child's or adolescent's psychosexual outcomes and in helping youth to develop a positive self-concept" and "Clients [students] and their families should be supported in making difficult decisions regarding the extent to which clients [students] are allowed to express a gender role that is consistent with their gender identity, as well as the timing of changes in gender role and possible social transition."

Seeking knowledge about these important considerations and asking informed questions before making placement recommendations will provide IECs with valuable insight and help ensure an educated and appropriate placement of the transsexual, transgender, or gender nonconforming student. 

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John L. Singleton can be reached at [jsingleton@whetstoneacademy.com](mailto:jsingleton@whetstoneacademy.com).

## New Webinar Platform for 2017

IECA's 2017 webinar series will be hosted on a new platform to meet our ever-increasing demand. This means that everyone registering for a webinar will need to create a new username and password. We will send more-detailed information by email in mid-December, when registration opens for all 2017 webinars. All IECA webinars are still free to IECA members and cost just \$24 for nonmembers, schools, colleges, and programs, and are scheduled live at noon (ET), on the second Tuesday of each month.

Here is the lineup for the first quarter of 2017:

January 10

**Helping Expatriate Students Make the University Transition With Success**

February 14

**A Beginner's Guide to Self-Publishing**

March 14

**The Changing Role of Disability Documentation in Transition to College**

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# Regional Groups

## Virtual Regional Group Forms in Ohio and Michigan

The new **Ohio/Michigan** (OH/MI) regional group will be virtual! Meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. (ET) via videoconference (Zoom) beginning November 14th. Meetings will feature guests, such as admission reps, authors, and even college presidents! All IECA members from Ohio and Michigan are welcome to join the group; questions may be directed to Kristina Dooley ([kristina@estrelaconsulting.com](mailto:kristina@estrelaconsulting.com)).

## Philadelphia

**Philadelphia** group members Sandra Clifton, Kang Chu, Joanne LaSpina, and Sandy Aprahamian met with Dr. Lori Varlotta, president of Hiram College, on September 19. Photograph courtesy of Jen Schuller, VP of development and alumni relations at Hiram College. The group also met with Julie Chapman, senior assistant director of admissions at Vanderbilt University, on September 30 and with Krista Evans, interim director of admissions at Lehigh University, on October 11. Additional visits to Lynn University, Gettysburg College, and Allegheny College were also held. For more information, contact Joanne LaSpina ([joanne@mycollegehelper.com](mailto:joanne@mycollegehelper.com)) or Laura Blanche ([blanchecollegeconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:blanchecollegeconsulting@gmail.com)).

in conjunction with the Schools Committee to focus on what's new in independent school admission. Allison Matlack (MA) is organizing ([amatlackedcon@gmail.com](mailto:amatlackedcon@gmail.com)). Pictured: Sarah McGinty (MA) and Drew Heilpern, director of educational partnerships, Summit Educational Group.



## New Jersey

The **New Jersey** regional group had a great turnout for a luncheon with a rep from James Madison University. Pictured, first row, l to r: Carole Kraemer, Carolyn Mulligan, Jill Siegel, Jodi Nadler. Second row: Anne Weisholtz; Wendy Amsterdam; Chris Carlsberg, admissions counselor, James Madison University; Traecy Hobson; Marcia Kramer. Third row: Alice Fuscaldo, Laurie Weingarten, Diana Towle, Beth Cassie, Janet Loren, and Lynne Rosenfeld. Not pictured: Linda Kay. Contact Carolyn Mulligan ([insidersnetwork@comcast.net](mailto:insidersnetwork@comcast.net)) for more information.



## New England

The **New England** group held its fall meeting at the Newton headquarters of Summit Educational Group where 23 IECs were treated to lunch and updated on the latest trends and data on SAT and ACT testing. In addition, the group discussed the Coalition application, using social media in the application process, changes to the FAFSA, and the effect of Harvard's *Turning the Tide* report. The next meeting will be at the Ethel Walker School in Connecticut

## San Diego

The **San Diego** group met with Lynn O'Shaughnessy of The College Solution on September 1 for an update on prior-year filing and financial aid for this year. On September 16th, we met with Morgan Volkart, associate director of admissions for Southern California, at Lehigh University. Contact: Jackie Woolley ([summitcollegecounseling@gmail.com](mailto:summitcollegecounseling@gmail.com)) or Gina Gerrato ([collegeprepygina@gmail.com](mailto:collegeprepygina@gmail.com)) for more about this group.



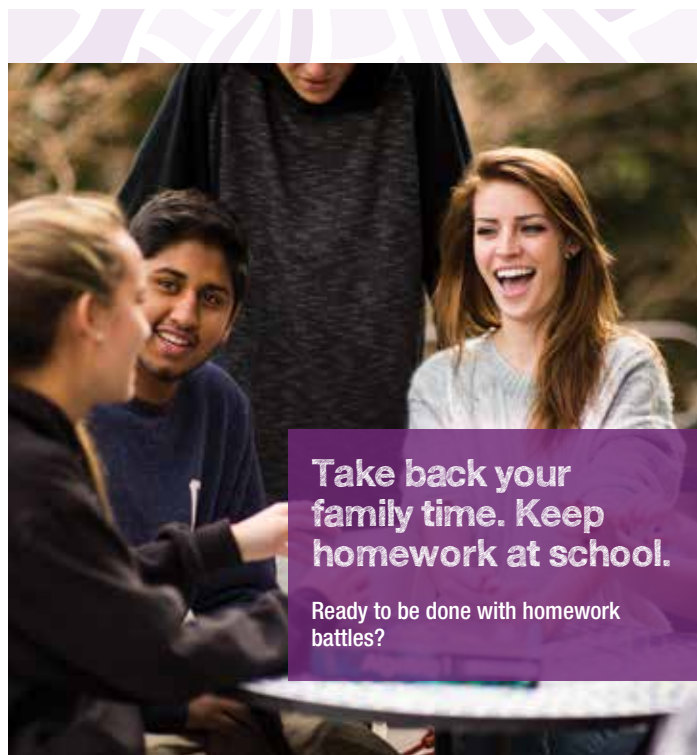
## Twin Cities

On their first college tour, the **Twin Cities** group visited five colleges in North Dakota and northwest Minnesota, which are popular choices for many of their clients. Pictured l to r: Vita Cohen, Jenny Buyens, Susan Hoff, Lisa Knudson, Clarinda Low, and Ryan Luse. Contact Jenny Buyens ([colledge4u@gmail.com](mailto:colledge4u@gmail.com)) or Vita Cohen ([vita@cohencollegeconsulting.com](mailto:vita@cohencollegeconsulting.com)) for more information.



Send your group news to *Insights* at [insights@iecaonline.com](mailto:insights@iecaonline.com) as you hold events; host speakers; and visit colleges, schools, and programs. Don't forget to take photos!

**Errata:** In the October/November issue of *Insights*, the article "Early FAFSA: Does It Benefit Students?" incorrectly states that FAFSA does not need to be filed each year. FAFSA still needs to be filed each and every year. The advantage is that students can file it early, starting on October 1 of senior year.



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# Campus Visits

## Glenholme LD Tour

IECA members participated in the LD Tour at Glenholme in October. Members and staff pictured are Judy Cooper, Glenholme assistant executive director; Rebecca Nieb, admissions & transition program social worker; Elizabeth Hall (MA); Pam Tedeschi (MD); Chelsea Bourn, Glenholme transition program coordinator; Sharon Murphy, Glenholme education director; Julie Smallwood, Glenholme director of external affairs; Marc Bonaguide, Glenholme social worker supervisor; David Dunleavy, Glenholme admissions director; David Altshuler (FL); and Erika Mackey (NC).



## Oxford Academy LD Tour

IECA members attended the Oxford Academy LD Tour in Westbrook, CT, on September 26. Pictured are David Tuttle, Oxford Academy director of admissions; Elizabeth Hall (MA); Libby Parker, director of admissions, Landmark School; Pamela Tedeschi (MD); Erika Mackey (NC); Phil Cocchiola, Oxford Academy head of school; and David Altshuler (FL).



## Skyland Trail

On September 16–17, several IECA members attended the 2016 Professionals' Weekend at Skyland Trail along with more than 30 mental health professionals. They were among the first to visit the new Rollins Campus for young adults ages 18–25.



## NOLA Campus Tours

Attendees at the conference in NOLA had beautiful weather and some Halloween fun on their tours of local universities:



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## On the Road



IECA volunteers **Pam Jobin** (CO), **Karen Mabie** (IL), and **Ellen Heard** (MD) staffed the IECA booth at the American Academy for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, spreading the word about IECA to the psychiatric community

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## Why I Belong

With the enormous amount of information about the college admissions process and the growing sense of anxiety and stress among students and parents, the role of independent educational consultants (IECs) has become increasingly important. Our job is to know, and if we don't know, to know where and how to find out. Those of us who offer college advising services have a responsibility to visit colleges and remain up-to-date on all the information associated with our industry so that we can knowledgeably guide our students and their parents, reducing their stress.



IECA provides continuing opportunities for professional development that set me and my team apart from the many other people who hold themselves out as college advisors. Professional development helps us work successfully with a wide variety of students, helping them find their best fit college. Through my active involvement with IECA, I have learned so much about the many different facets of our field, improving my skills and helping me personalize the college search process for each client.

When I need input, the TalkList and IECA member directory give me the ability to reach out to colleagues across the country to augment my own experience. I also appreciate the trust I feel when I refer prospective clients to IECA members who have specialized areas of expertise.

When I first joined IECA as a student member, I met IECs with decades of experience. I have learned so much from them on topics ranging from college tours to the business side of educational consulting. And I'm honored that now, because our field is one in which we are always learning, we continue to educate one another as peers.

I am frequently asked by prospective clients what makes me different from other IECs. I reply that my dedication to professional development is one of the most important ways that prospective clients can trust that my skills and knowledge are both current and sharp. I rely on IECA to give me that professional edge.

— **Evelyn Alexander**, MA, IECA (CA), Magellan College Consulting, can be reached at [evelyn@magellancounseling.com](mailto:evelyn@magellancounseling.com).

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## In the News

"Here's Your Mantra to Tackle the College Admissions Process" by **Victoria Tillson Evans**, Associate member (DC), was published by the *Huffington Post* on September 18.

**Jennifer Aquino's** (Singapore) article "The Challenges of Higher Education Choices for Expat Students" was published in *Expat Arrivals*. She was also cited in the October 25 *US News & World Report* article "3 Ways to Evaluate a Global University Without Visiting."

**Janet Rosier's** (CT) article "Declaring a Major on Your College Application" was published on *The Hour* website on September 26.

**Jane Watkins** (OH) and **Brenda Gerhardt**, Associate (OH) were interviewed for the article "More enlist private coach for college search" in the *Columbus Dispatch* on October 11. Information about IECA and data from an IECA study were also included in the article.

*The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students With Learning Differences* by **Imy Wax** (IL) and **Marybeth Kravets** (IL) was referenced in "The Road to Higher Education With an 'Invisible Disability'" in *The Atlantic* on September 22. The 13th edition of that guide was recently released by Random House/Princeton Review.

Several media outlets featured quotes from **Katherine Cohen** (NY), including *Teen Vogue*, "How to Survive College Midterms;" *Time for Kids: Your \$*, "Plan Now, Save Later;" and the *Yale Daily News*, "Up Close: A Coalition for the Future."

Associate member **Dana Stahl** (NY) wrote "Helping Learning-Disabled Students Apply to College" for *Tap into Yorktown*.

**Laurie Weingarten** (NJ) was quoted in the November 7 article "Penn developed an efficient way to read applications—and it's encouraging other schools to get on board" in the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

**Virginia McKniff**, Associate member (England) was quoted in the article "If you've decided to drop out of university, you're not alone" published in the *Telegraph* on October 29.

**Mark Sklarow**, CEO, was featured in the article "More College Applicants Are Hiring Consultants. Do You Really Need One?" in *Poets and Quants for Undergrads* on October 25.

## Initiatives

Illinois IECA members **Karen Mabie**, **Imy Wax**, **Gwynne Hales**, and **Matt Baker** hosted a coffee for more than 50 boarding school reps who were in town for the Lake Forest Country Day School Boarding School Fair on October 5.



**Jeff Levy** (CA) presented information about college affordability and the financial aid process for about two hundred families at the annual Buena Park Goes to College event on October 1 to educate parents and students about their college options.

**Kate Neiss** (MN) and **Clarinda Low** (MN) cohosted the recent Minnesota NACAC Performing and Visual Arts College Fair. This is the second year that they have partnered with NACAC to present this fair in the Twin Cities.



**David Twersky** (NJ) was a copresenter for How to Pay Less for College: Need-Based Financial Aid—FAFSA and Beyond the FAFSA—Merit Scholarships, hosted by the Westfield (NJ) Memorial Library.

On November 9, **Marilyn G. S. Emerson** (NY) presented "Discover Your Voice," a virtual college application essay writing workshop, on the National Honor Society's website.

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# Introductions

## Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

**Peter Francini** (CT), an IEC for one year, was a school counselor at Malden Catholic High School for six years and spent four years as a school counselor at Lowell Catholic High School.



With a BA in psychology from Saint Anselm College, Francini went on to earn an MA in school counseling from Lesley University. He is a member of NACAC and NEACAC. Among his activities, he is a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity in the Greater Boston area.

*Peter Francini, MA  
School and College Counseling Services  
One Trap Falls Road, Unit 201  
Shelton, CT 06484  
pfrancini81@gmail.com  
203-209-4976  
Specialty: C*

**Debbie Kanter** (IL), an associate member for four years, has been an IEC for five years. Before she began her career in college consulting, she spent 17 years in the veterinary industry managing the largest animal hospital in Chicago.



Kanter holds an MA in labor and industrial relations and a BS in psychology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She completed the 2013 IECA Summer Training Institute and earned a certificate in college counseling from UCLA Extension. She is a member of NACAC.

Since 2012, Kanter has volunteered with College Bound Opportunities to mentor first-generation college students through the college search and application process and maintain the relationships throughout the college years.

Born and raised on the North Shore of Chicago, Kanter lives in Highland Park with her husband; son, who is currently going through the college application process; daughter; and two rescue dogs. When she is not pursuing everything college related, she enjoys traveling with her family, running, and reading.

*Debbie Kanter, MA  
North Shore College Consulting  
493 Laurel Avenue  
Highland Park, IL 60035  
debbie@nscollegeconsulting.net  
847-609-6112  
www.nscollegeconsulting.net  
Specialty: C*

**Nini Suet** (China) has been an IEC for three years. Before she devoted herself to international education, she worked in a variety of industries, including investment banking at Morgan Stanley, digital marketing at Ogilvy,



international news at Phoenix InfoChannel of China, and news and features production at CNN International.

Suet earned a bachelor's degree from Princeton University with certificates in finance, East Asian studies, and Korean language. After switching careers from banking to media, she went on to earn an MA from the Journalism and Media Studies Center at the University of Hong Kong. She is a member of IACAC.

Suet is a Tabor Seawolf, a Princeton Tiger, a restless serial entrepreneur, and a pragmatic optimist. She loves kimchee and has two cats, Xiongiong (bear in Chinese) and Peanut. Her family is in Beijing, and she has lived in New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul. She believes that education is a lifestyle and her goal is to become the market standard for high-end education advising in China, one step at a time.

*Nini Suet  
Shang Learning  
Floor 4, Section 1, UIBE Huade House  
No.12 Huixin East Street  
Beijing, China 100029  
nini@shanglearning.com  
http://shanglearning.com  
Specialty: S*

**Jennifer Williams Taylor** (CA) has been an IEC for five years.



Over the course of her career, she has been an undergraduate reader at Stanford University, the vice president of enrollment and COO at Presidio Graduate School, and the senior director of admissions and financial aid at Santa Clara University. She holds a BS from the University of California–Davis and an MBA from the

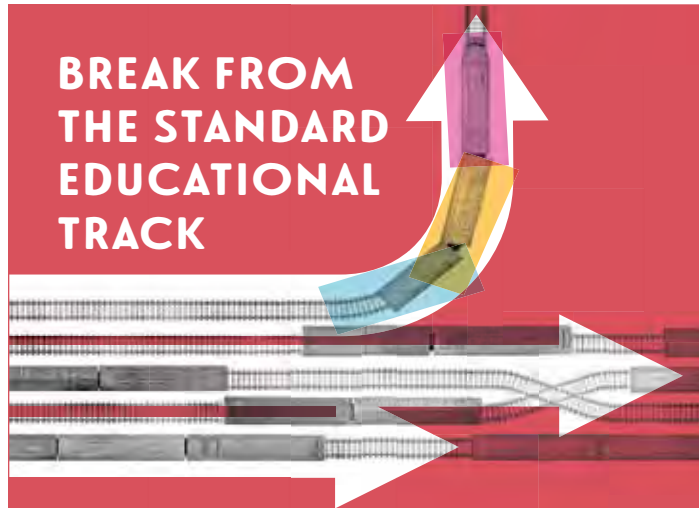
Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She recently attended the pre-conference workshops at the IECA Conference in Boston.

Taylor is a member of WACAC. Her additional activities include serving as a board trustee for Hidden Villa, a nonprofit K–12 education organization that is focused on social justice and sustainability education, and volunteering as a mentor for the Palo Alto School District. She enjoys hiking, traveling, and whatever tomorrow brings.

*Jennifer Williams Taylor, MBA*  
*Avalon College Advising LLC*  
*1959 Fernside Street*  
*Redwood City, CA 94061*  
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# The Back Page

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**24%** went to  
a two-year  
college

**44.4%** went to  
a four-year  
college

### This represents:

**65%**  
of Hispanic students

**67%**  
of Black students

**71%**  
of White students

**86%**  
of Asian students

### Of those college students:

**62%** are full-time  
**38%** are part-time

**57%** are female  
**43%** are male

**59%**  
are traditional age  
(24 & younger)

**41%**  
are nontraditional  
(age 25+)

**SOURCE:** National Center for Education Statistics

# Looking Back on 20 Years of the IECA Foundation

By Carl J. Lovejoy, IECA Board Member

Associate Executive Director, Communications and Development  
Mountain Valley Treatment Center

IECA Foundation certainly knows how to host a party, and New Orleans set the perfect backdrop for our 20th Anniversary VIP Reception celebration! With a talented youth jazz trio from the Center for Creative Arts filling the air with festive music, more than 150 enthusiastic Foundation supporters enjoyed a taste of NOLA - its food, youth, and culture. Impressive was the “intersection” of benefactors in the room, from those who have been a part of the Foundation since its creation in 1996, to those who are just now learning about the great work the Foundation is doing as IECA’s philanthropic entity. Special thanks go to all of our VIP Reception sponsors, especially our Diamond Sponsor, InnerChange, and our Platinum Sponsors, North American Boarding Schools Workshop, Newport Academy and The Winchendon School. More than seventy schools, programs, and individuals – including a large number of IECA members – ultimately answered the call to sponsor the event, and we can’t thank you enough. We are also grateful to Trustees of the Foundation for their fundraising efforts which included gaining many first-time sponsors, with a special tip of the cap to Krissy Naspo and David Tuttle for spearheading the sponsorship efforts.

A wonderful time was truly had by all, and as New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) trio played their last note, one could hear many a reveler making comments about looking forward to the Foundation’s 25th Anniversary in 2021!





# Celebrating 20 Years of Philanthropy –

## IECA Foundation 20th Anniversary

By Robin Abedon,  
IECA Foundation Chair

The 20th Anniversary of the IECA Foundation has been a year to celebrate all the years the Foundation has met its mission to support programs that help young people achieve educational opportunities by extending the reach of IECA consultants to those who cannot afford consultant services. It has also been a year to celebrate all who have supported the Foundation, allowing us to meet our mission.

At the outset of the year, the Foundation set goals to distinctively commemorate the anniversary. Twenty micro grants of \$1000 each were announced to be awarded to programs for the underserved that IECs support. Ten were awarded in Boston in the Spring; the final ten were announced on the Fall conference in New Orleans. The IECA's eagerness to respond to this opportunity has been overwhelming and evidence of the volunteerism that is an integral component of our membership.

Further evidence of that volunteerism has been demonstrated by the response to a survey conducted by the IECA Gives Committee, a joint committee of the IECA Foundation and the Association. Initiated by Marilyn Emerson and now chaired by Betsy Donnelly, the committee conducted a survey to document the volunteering of IECs. The result: a database of volunteerism that captures the pro bono work of IECs and their volunteer services to programs serving the underserved. That database will evolve.



IECA Foundation Chair, Robin Abedon and Small Boarding School Association President and IECA Foundation Board Trustee, David Tuttle with sponsors from St. Andrews School RI Kristel Dunphy and Jaci Arnone.

Luisa Rabe, Chair of the 20th Anniversary Committee, brought the year to a close with a celebratory event that allowed the Foundation to highlight the talented musicians of the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA). This program that serves aspiring youth, focused on music, to achieve their educational goals will receive one of the Foundation's 2016 grants. We were delighted our many sponsors and supporters could see first hand the good work their support allows us to do.

Indeed, we met our goals for the 20th Anniversary. And thanks to our generous Sponsors and Supporters, we shall be able to offer other programs, such as NOCCA a number of grants from the Foundation for 2016.

# Irvin W. Katz Service Award

by Betsy Donnelly

Irvin W. Katz, one of the founding members of IECA, lived his life in service to others, as a mentor to many consultants and as a steward of community volunteerism. In 2006, his family established The Irvin Katz Memorial Award to honor those members of IECA who make extraordinary voluntary contributions of their time and talents to community organizations that benefit the educational needs, health and well-being of all our children. This year, our committee identified two outstanding IECA members who will receive the award on Thursday, Nov 3, 2016. Kristina Dooley is a seasoned consultant who continues to make a mark within IECA through committee work, through teaching and mentoring new members, as a member of the IECA Board, and a new Trustee of IECAF. Renee Joseph is a relative newcomer to our profession, but continues to show her passion and dedication to the service and education of children. Our committee deemed them our “Shining Star” and “Rising Star”. A plaque will be presented to each honoree and a \$2,000.00 award will be given to the non-profit educational program of their choice.

This committee has made a commitment to create a formal protocol to identify Katz Award recipients. We will continue to work with the President of IECAF, Robin Abdeon, Brooke Dudley, and Jason Katz to ensure that award recipients are held to the standards established by the Katz family in honor of Irvin Katz. Our goal is to have a protocol in place by March 2017 and to begin the identification process for 2017 shortly thereafter.

## Overview of College Now Greater Cleveland

### Kristina Dooley's Designated Charity

College Now Greater Cleveland, the first college access organization in the nation, serves more than 25,000 students and adult learners a year, providing college access advising, financial aid counseling and scholarship and retention services. Serving low-income families and first-generation college students since 1966, College Now is the largest college access organization in Ohio and one of the largest in the nation. The College Now Mentoring Program, developed in 2011, serves 1,100 students with the mission to aid retention and college completion of College Now scholarship recipients.



Katz Award Presentation: Renee Joseph, Robin Abdeon, and Kristina Dooley

## About On Point for College

### Renee Joseph's Designated Charity

On Point for College is an organization dedicated to changing the lives of traditional and non-traditional, 17- to 29-year-old students by breaking down barriers through access to training, college, and careers for success in life. They work with students from application to graduation, and beyond.

The majority of On Point for College students are first generation, low income, high school students or GED recipients who didn't go to college immediately out of school and have no access to guidance and support services available to current students. Thirty percent of the On Point for College students are young adults who are homeless, aging out of the foster care system or are refugees. Others are adults who have been involved in the court system, who are in recovery or who are seeking a new path.

On Point for College started in 1999, when founder Ginny Donohue quit her job as a corporate CFO to start the organization, working out of the trunk of her car. Today, On Point for College is a United Way agency and a nationally recognized College Access and Success model with offices in both Syracuse and Utica, NY.

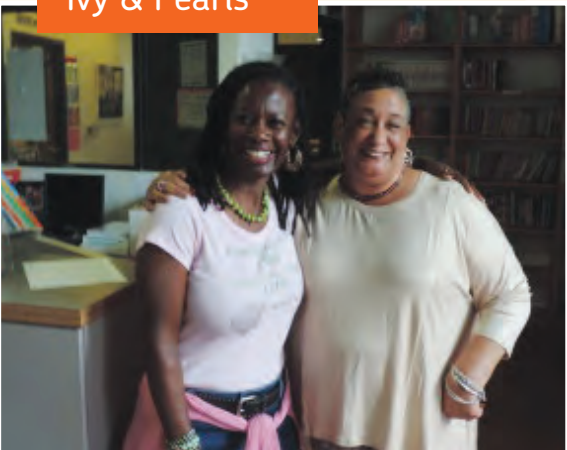
### Members of Committee:

Betsy Donnelly, Deborah Davis Groves, Antoinette Battiste



# Microgrant Awardees

Ivy & Pearls



Nominated by: Antoinette R. Battiste



BUILD in Business  
to Learn

Nominated by: Don McMillan



West Valley  
Child Crisis  
Center

Nominated by:  
Gail Curran



North Campus

Nominated by: Lynette Mathews



The Possibility Project

Nominated by: Marilyn Emerson





## Sky's the Limit Fund

Nominated by:  
Sue Luse,  
Jenny Buyens,  
Garth Robertson,  
Clarinda Low  
and Susan Hoff



## MACAC



Nominated by: Louise Slater



## Champions for Learning

Nominated by:  
Gay Stebbins Pepper



## Peloton Rethinking College

Nominated by: Patricia Nehme

## Momentum Bike Clubs

Nominated by:  
Bill Dingeldine  
and  
Victoria Jeffries





## Good Times at the New Orleans Conference



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WayPoint Academy

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The National Coalition of  
    Girls' Schools  
Vermont Academy



## IECA Foundation Mission

The Mission of the IECA Foundation is to identify and support programs that have significant impact on students and their educational environments. Priority is given to programs that assist students as they make educational choices.



3251 Old Lee Highway, Suite 510  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
[info@iecafoundation.org](mailto:info@iecafoundation.org)  
[www.iecafoundation.org](http://www.iecafoundation.org)

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