How to pick a school!

1. **Start with your child in mind**
   Talk to your child—what excites them, what are their interests, how do they learn?

2. **Identify the 2-3 things that matter the most to you, when picking a school**
   - Academic performance
   - Culture & climate
   - Transportation & hours
   - Extra-curricular activities

3. **Explore this guide—choose items that best reflect what’s important to you & your child**
   - Review profiles—academic data & highlights
   - Look at websites
   - Talk to friends & family

4. **Tour 2-3 schools**
   Bring this guide to remind you of what you might look for or ask:
   - How does it feel to be in the school?
   - Write down your first impressions of each school

5. **Apply to a few schools & enroll in 1 school**
   - Minneapolis district schools—submit a ‘School Request Form’ (check with Minneapolis Public Schools for the 2020 priority enrollment deadline)
   - Charter schools (public schools)—for the schools you’re interested in, look for their application on their website or call them directly
   - Independent schools (private schools)—for the schools you’re interested in, look for their application & information about financial assistance on their website or call them directly
Some questions to start with:

1. How do you ensure all students are working at grade level?

2. What are your interventions for students who are not mastering grade-level content?

3. How does your curriculum & instruction reflect the backgrounds & interests of your student community? Do you partner with local organizations & experts?

4. What are your special education & Emotional Behavior Disorder rates by ethnicity? Why?

5. How are you ensuring that the student demographics in advanced courses, or other special programs, mirror your school’s enrollment?

6. How do your teachers & staff reflect your student population? What are you doing to improve this number & keep staff who reflect my community?

7. How do you welcome parent feedback & respond to it?
There’s diversity, experience & cultural intelligence among educators

What to look for:
- Percent of teachers of color reflect student demographics, diverse school leadership
- Educator completion of cultural competency trainings

Sample questions:
- How do you help teachers become well-versed in data-informed practice, positive youth development, social-emotional learning or other frameworks?
- What are you doing to improve this number & keep staff who reflect my community?
- How do you accommodate different learning styles & tailor instruction?

Communication is responsive to cultures & needs

What to look for:
- Meetings scheduled around parent availability
- Interpreters & translations are standard practice
- School personnel changes are communicated to families in real time

Sample questions:
- Do you empower families to reach out to each other, including those who might be less engaged?
- What are you doing to reduce the number of discipline actions? Do you collect feedback & respond to it?
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Culture & climate is welcoming

What to look for:
- Signage is multilingual (main office, library, cafeteria)
- Accommodations (interpreters, transportation, child care, food)
- Examples of diversity & inclusion (e.g., named in the school’s mission &/or a core value)

Sample questions:
- Do you provide interpreters for home visits or family teacher conferences in the community?
- Do you provide interpreters for events?
- What ways & how often do teachers make contact with families (e.g., positive or multilingual notes)?

Discipline rules & rates are fair

What to look for:
- Percentages are reported out by ethnicity (e.g., suspension)
- Communication is sensitive to historical trauma, avoids triggering words

Sample questions:
- Is there a family satisfaction survey—in multiple languages?
- How do you use the feedback?
- What is the family grievance procedure?
Family Advocates can help you!

NEED HELP?
Contact a Family Advocate:
FamilyAdvocates@MinneapolisSchoolFinder.org
612-567-6810