

School Choices Program

Tips on Doing a Successful Program for Parents of School Aged Children

Is this Program Right for Your Community?

- ▶ Know Your Community
- ▶ Not all communities are the same.
- ▶ Will the community you serve benefit from this program?
- ▶ Talk to parents, teachers, school administrators to find out if this program is needed in your area.

Middle School or High School Panel?

- ▶ Decide if you want to do a Middle School or High School Panel.
- ▶ Same basic programming principals apply.
- ▶ Some schools offer 6-12 grades (LACES, New West)
- ▶ Some private schools offer 7-12 grades .
- ▶ You could do a joint Middle School and High School Panel or two separate programs.

Which Schools to Invite?

- ▶ LAUSD offers many programs and options beyond Magnet CHOICES.
- ▶ Parents might be looking for a certain program for their child(ren).
- ▶ It is a good idea to know what programs (and strengths) the schools that you are inviting to your panel possess. This will help you in choosing which schools to invite to participate in the panel.
- ▶ Not all schools that you invite will be able to participate.
- ▶ Some schools that you did not include might want to participate and contact you.

Types of LAUSD School Options

- ▶ **Magnet** -- The Magnet Programs are Court-Ordered voluntary integration opportunities available to students in grades K-12 living within the LAUSD boundaries. Magnets have specializations.
- ▶ **Charter** -- Charter schools are open to any child residing in the State of California who wishes to attend. If the number of students who wish to attend a charter school exceeds the school's capacity, the school determines admission based on a public random drawing (lottery).
- ▶ **SAS** -- The Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS) Program offers an intensive academic articulated program in which both innovative and traditional courses are taught. The SAS program is offered to LAUSD resident students in Grades 1-12 who meet the criteria.

Types of LAUSD School Options

- ▶ **Dual Language Immersion** --Dual language immersion programs – in which students work across subjects to attain fluency in English and a second language – have proven a popular specialized instruction program for LAUSD.
- ▶ The District currently offers students at selected schools the option of participating in a **Spanish/English, Korean/English, or a Mandarin/English** dual language program.
- ▶ Both English learners and English proficient students are mixed in the same classroom to promote bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism

LAUSD Options for Advanced Learners

- ▶ The Los Angeles Unified School District offers a number of **Advanced Learning Options** for students including the Advanced Placement, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Gifted/Talented Programs (GATE), and International Baccalaureate (IB).
- ▶ The purpose of each District Advanced Learning Options program is to widen access to educational opportunities, increase student academic performance and enhance college and careadiness and success.

Types of Advanced Options for LAUSD Students

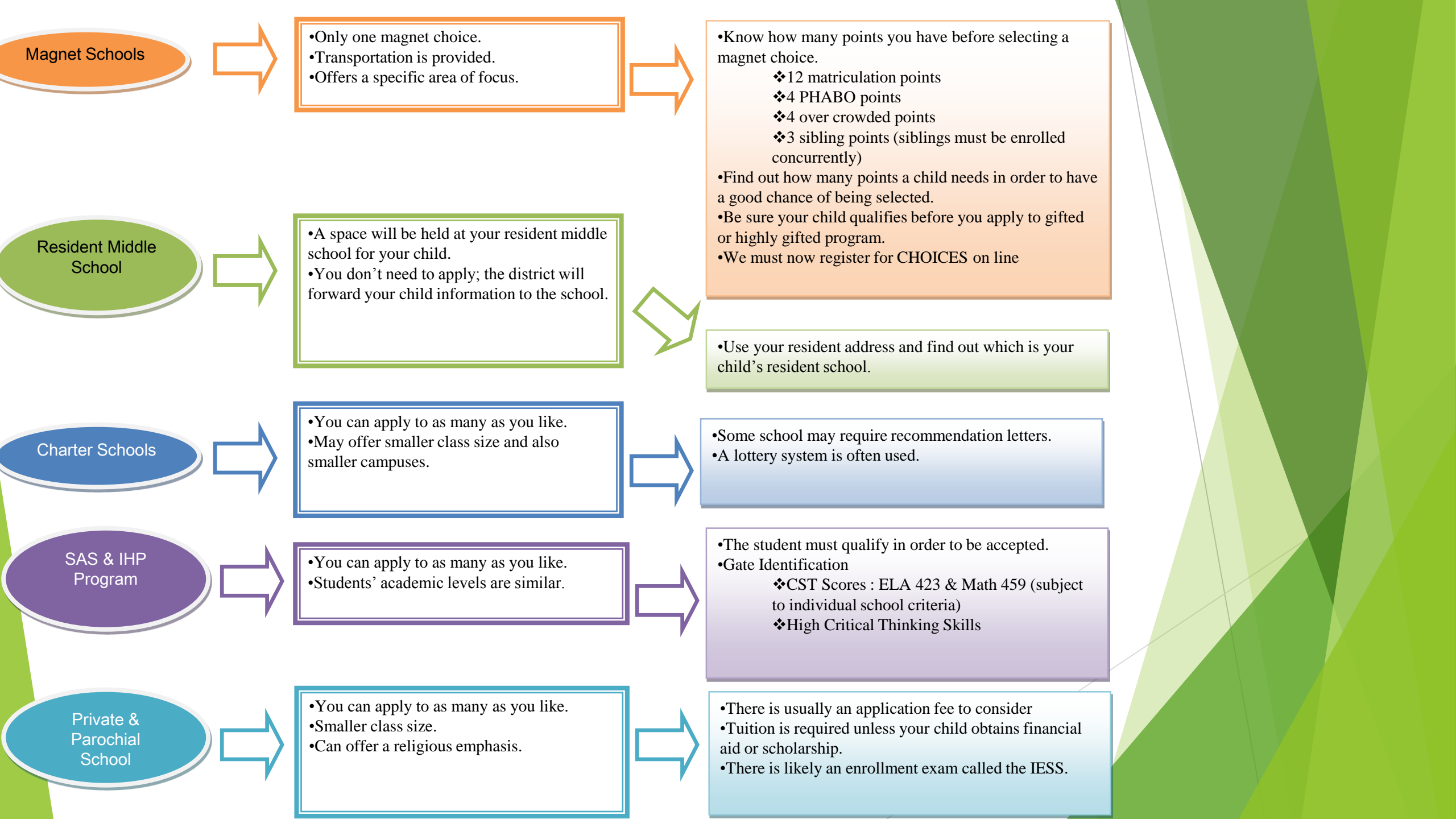
- ▶ **The International Baccalaureate Programme (IB)** This programme offers three levels of international education that span the primary, middle and secondary school years, which are designed and authorized by the International Baccalaureate.
- ▶ **Individual Honors Program (IHP)** -- Non-Magnet Centers
(Offer self-contained classes to identified highly gifted students with a score of 99.9% on an intelligence test administered by an LAUSD psychologist.) No transportation is provided and application is made directly to the school. A rigorous-accelerated academic course of study for eligible students to pace themselves and pursue own interests.
- ▶ **AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)** is a sixth through twelfth grade system to prepare students in the academic middle for four-year college eligibility and success. It has a proven record in bringing out the best in students and closing the achievement gap.

More Options at the Same School

- ▶ **Note:** Some schools offer **more than one program** at their school.
- ▶ Palms Middle School offers a Gifted/High Ability Magnet (through CHOICES), and SAS.
- ▶ Paul Revere Middle School offers both Charter and Magnet options.
- ▶ Both schools are also neighborhood schools.

Other Options Outside of LAUSD

- ▶ **Private Schools** - Independent, fee based schools, they can be religiously orientated. To have elementary or secondary private schools at your program contact www.laais.org. Please note -- There are some local private schools not affiliated with this alliance.
- ▶ **Other Public Schools Systems** - Parents can choose to opt out of LAUSD. Other options include Culver City, Santa Monica and Beverly Hills school districts. Parents must fill out proper forms to leave LAUSD and be accepted to the other school district.



Magnet Schools

- Only one magnet choice.
- Transportation is provided.
- Offers a specific area of focus.

- Know how many points you have before selecting a magnet choice.
 - ❖12 matriculation points
 - ❖4 PHABO points
 - ❖4 over crowded points
 - ❖3 sibling points (siblings must be enrolled concurrently)
- Find out how many points a child needs in order to have a good chance of being selected.
- Be sure your child qualifies before you apply to gifted or highly gifted program.
- We must now register for CHOICES on line

- Use your resident address and find out which is your child's resident school.

Resident Middle School

- A space will be held at your resident middle school for your child.
- You don't need to apply; the district will forward your child information to the school.

- Use your resident address and find out which is your child's resident school.

Charter Schools

- You can apply to as many as you like.
- May offer smaller class size and also smaller campuses.

- Some school may require recommendation letters.
- A lottery system is often used.

SAS & IHP Program

- You can apply to as many as you like.
- Students' academic levels are similar.

- The student must qualify in order to be accepted.
- Gate Identification
 - ❖CST Scores : ELA 423 & Math 459 (subject to individual school criteria)
 - ❖High Critical Thinking Skills

Private & Parochial School

- You can apply to as many as you like.
- Smaller class size.
- Can offer a religious emphasis.

- There is usually an application fee to consider
- Tuition is required unless your child obtains financial aid or scholarship.
- There is likely an enrollment exam called the IESS.

How To Get Schools To Attend Your Panel

- ▶ Plan the program about two (2) months ahead. (i.e. --If you are planning a Fall program best time to start is around the middle to end of August.)
- ▶ Write an email letter to Principals and Administrators inviting them to the program. (See attached sample).
- ▶ Give the participants date/time options to try obtaining as much representation as possible.
- ▶ I prefer email because it is easier to keep track of who is attending and to communicate with them.
- ▶ Call schools to follow up if they have not responded to the initial email.
- ▶ In my experience, most school administrators are responsive and willing to come.

Sample of Initial Email to Educators

- ▶ Dear Educators, Teachers and Principals,
- ▶
- ▶ Last year we had a very successful Middle School Panel here at the Palms-Rancho Library. You are getting this email because you (or your school) participated in this program.
- ▶
- ▶ I would like to invite you to participate in our 2nd annual Middle School Panel on either Tuesday, October 7 or Wednesday, October 8 at 6 p.m. Please let me know if you would like to attend and which date you prefer.
- ▶
- ▶ If you are no longer involved with the school, please feel free to forward this message to the appropriate person or let me know, so that I can contact the school to find a representative.
- ▶
- ▶ Once I get your response, I will send a follow-up email with more detailed program information.
- ▶
- ▶ I look forward to another successful Middle School Panel program!
- ▶
- ▶ Thank you,

Sample of Follow Up Letter to Educator

- ▶ Dear Mr. Aguilar,
- ▶
- ▶ Please let me know if you are available to attend the Middle School Panel at the Palms-Rancho Library as soon as possible so that I can set the date.
- ▶
- ▶ The tentative dates are either Tuesday, Oct 7 or Wednesday, Oct 8 at 6 p.m. Please let me know which date is better for you. Right now, I am leaning towards Tuesday, October 7. Once I hear back from everyone, I will let you know which date is most preferred.
- ▶
- ▶ I look forward to working with you!

Sample of Final Follow Up Email to Educators and Parents

- ▶ Hi Everyone,
- ▶ Just a reminder, we are having the Middle School Panel this Wednesday night (October 8) from 6-8. We will have 13 Middle Schools attending -- including Magnets, Charters and Private Schools.
- ▶ Each Middle School representative will present a 5 minute formal presentation, then there will be a Question and Answer session, followed by an informal Meet and Greet. In the last part of the program, parents can meet school representatives and ask them individual questions.
- ▶ Information about the schools including tour dates, application deadlines and tuition (if applicable) will also be available.
- ▶ Schools scheduled to attend are the following:
 - ▶
 - ▶ Angeles Workshop, City Charter School, Emerson Community Charter School, Incubator School, LACES, Magnolia Science Academy 4 and 6, New West Charter School, Norte Dame, Palms Middle School, Paul Revere Middle School, St. Timothy, Webster Middle School.
- ▶ Hope you can join us for this informative program. Please feel free to forward this information to anyone who might be interested in attending.

Advertise Your Program

- ▶ Get the word out! Let people know about the program.
- ▶ Advertise it on flyers, school e-blasts or newsletters, library e-blasts, parent meeting, library website, etc.
- ▶ **Important:** If you are planning a **Middle School Panel**, made sure to advertise the program to your **local elementary schools**. Check with your Children's Librarian for help with this.
- ▶ Word of mouth is very powerful. This is a very hot topic in some areas, so parents might help you get the word out.

What Season Should The Program Be Held?

- ▶ If your program is focused on the **Magnet Choices** then the program needs to be held in the Fall (early October is best) for parents to complete to the LAUSD Magnet Choices applications by the due date.
- ▶ If your program is focused on **Charter** choices then the program can be held later in the school year. Every Charter School has their own application and lottery due date, so you will need to check with them to determine the best date for a program.
- ▶ If your program is focused on **SAS** choices, the applications come out in early April, so you could do a program in the Spring.
- ▶ If you plan to have a program that incorporates **all** of these **LAUSD Choices**, then it is best to have the program in the Fall to accommodate the Magnet Program.

What Time and Day Should You Do the Program?

- ▶ Typically, I hold this program during the week, after work to get the largest audience.
- ▶ I have done this program on both a Tuesday and Wednesday night from 6-8, but really it could start at 5:30 to get everything in.

How Long Should the Program Be?

- ▶ This depends on how many schools are participating and how long you want each school to present.
- ▶ When I did my program last year, I gave each school 5 minutes to present. I had 13 schools and it took over 1 ½ hours to present because there is time in between each speaker.
- ▶ In my experience, 2 hours is barely enough time to get everything in. Usually, parents and educators stand outside the building after we close, still discussing.

How Many Schools Should Attend the Panel?

- ▶ This is up to you, your space and your community.
- ▶ The first time that I did the Panel, I had 8 schools.
- ▶ The second time that I did the Panel, I had 13 schools.

How and Why Was it Different?

- ▶ I tried to get more schools for the second panel because my goal was to give parents information about more choices.
- ▶ New schools are opening up all of the time and they contacted me.
- ▶ I started working on the panel earlier to allow more time to contact the Educators.

Middle School Panel Flyer Sample

A great opportunity for parents to hear about the local Middle Schools and their programs offered. School Representatives from the schools listed below will present information about their school and answer questions.

Angeles Workshop
City Charter School
Emerson Community Charter School
Incubator School
LACES
Magnolia Science Academy 4 and 6
New West Charter School
Norte Dame
Palms Middle School
Paul Revere Middle School
St. Timothy
Webster Middle School

Palms-Rancho Library
2920 Overland Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90064
(310) 840-2142
www.lapl.org

Middle School Panel

Los Angeles Public
Library



**Wednesday,
October 8, 2014 at 6-8 p.m.**

6 p.m.

How Often Should You Repeat this Program?

- ▶ You can hold this program annually because:
 - ▶ Each year, different schools will be represented. There are new schools opening every year, like GALA (all girls 6-12 school this year.)
 - ▶ Each year, different parents will attend.
 - ▶ Even if the same parents attend, they may be looking for something different for siblings.

What is the Program Format?

Every librarian will have their own style and format and what works for them and their community.

This is what I do:

- ▶ Before I start the program - I **open with an address** to the parents to explain out the program, the format, introduce the schools being represented etc.
- ▶ I typically have **3 components** to my program:
 - ▶ 1) **The Formal Panel** - School Representatives speak about their school. This is the longest component of the program.
 - ▶ 2) **Q & A** - In the beginning of the program, I ask parents to hold questions until after the presentations. Then I open the Mic for parents to ask their questions.
 - ▶ 3) **Meet and Greet** - After the formal presentations and questions and open up the program to let parents go up and meet the school representatives.

Be Prepared!

Tips for A Successful Program!

- ▶ Be prepared for a large attendance. Set up the room in advance for early attendees.
- ▶ Prepare school/name plates ahead of time and place them front of each school representative, (so parents know what school they are from).
- ▶ Some schools bring laptops and other electronic devices to show presentations. Have the projector set up and ready for the presentations.
- ▶ Use a microphone if possible.
- ▶ Be flexible - someone might cancel at the last minute.

Additional Tips - Room Set Up

- ▶ Have a table available (in the back of the room, so parents can get them on the way out) for CHOICES brochures. Make sure you have plenty on hand as they go fast during this program.
- ▶ Have another table available (also in the back) for handouts and flyers from the schools.
- ▶ I set up the room audience style and have a panel of tables at the front for the speakers.

What to Expect

- ▶ This program has proven to be one of my most successful programs in terms of attendance and parental appreciation.
- ▶ Hopefully you will have the same success with this program that I have had!

Useful Articles and Websites

- ▶ Helpful Article on School Choices
- ▶ <http://argonautnews.com/reinventing-school/>

- ▶ Private schools Website
- ▶ <http://www.laais.org/>

What if I Think I Need More Guidance?

- ▶ Please feel free to contact me at mrobins@lapl.org if you have an additional questions. I will be happy to walk you through the process.