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McGraw-Hill's

SSAT ISEE

综合指导与模拟试题

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Foreword: What to Expect at an Independent School

前言：在私立学校中你可以期待什么？

Gregg W. M. Maloberti

Dean of Admission

The Lawrenceville School

If you or your parents have purchased this book, then you are most likely hoping to be admitted to an independent school. This short introduction will tell you more about independent schools. You'll learn about some of the benefits and advantages that an independent school can offer you, and you'll find out some important facts about the admissions process.

The Benefits of Attending an Independent School

就读私立学校的好处

When asked why they wish to attend an independent school, many students say they want to get a “better” education or to attend a “good” college. Parents often say they are looking for a school of the “highest” quality to give their children the “best” opportunity for success. Statements like these help explain how much students and parents value education, but they offer little insight into the advantages that independent schools offer their students.

By definition, independent schools exist as an alternative to public schools as well as to one another. Independent schools come in all shapes and sizes, coeducational and single sex, and day and boarding. They are free to specialize in anything and everything from academic rigor, to performing or fine arts, to character and leadership development, to helping students with learning disabilities. For you as a student, that means that you can choose an independent school that shares your values and allows you to focus on what is important to you. By choosing a school that has a mission and purpose closely aligned with your own principles, you can move closer to achieving your own goals.

Faculty Above all, independent schools pride themselves on the quality of their faculty. Independent school teachers often boast degrees from top-flight academic institutions, years of classroom experience, and a commitment to educational research and curricular development. They have been involved with many cutting-edge programs that are reshaping American education. For example, it was at independent schools that the Harkness method of teaching, sometimes called the Conference Plan, was originally introduced in the 1930s. Prior to this innovation, nearly all instruction took place in the form of a lecture. Now it is commonplace to see students seated around oval or round tables actively discussing the day's lesson. The Advanced Placement Program, known better as the APs, was originally

initiated in the 1950s through collaboration between three independent schools and three leading universities. Many programs and schools that include outdoor leadership training and experiential learning can trace their roots back to faculty who were given support, resources, and encouragement by independent schools.

Small Classes One of the greatest benefits that you're likely to find in an independent school is the small class size. Independent schools create student-to-teacher ratios that enable small classes and greater personal interaction. In these classes, teachers are able to give students the kind of individual attention that promotes student achievement. When the classroom experience includes discussion, active participation, and debate, students are much more likely to be actively engaged in the learning process. Just imagine yourself in this kind of classroom: If you and your classmates know you will be called upon in class, you will be far more likely to arrive in class better prepared and more willing to engage in the lesson. Many independent school faculty value student participation so much that it becomes a factor in assessing performance and assigning grades.

Class size becomes even more important when you consider the total number of students each teacher meets with daily. If a teacher meets 5 classes of 30 students each day, there are 150 papers to mark every time a writing assignment is given. Independent schools typically keep class sizes small enough and teaching loads reasonable enough to accommodate regular review of student work. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) reported that the average class size in their member schools was 15 and the average faculty-to-student ratio was 8.8:1. Teaching takes time and energy, and with fewer students and fewer sections, teachers not only perform better in their classrooms but also are able to meet with their students on an individual basis. Many schools reserve time during the school day when teachers are available to meet with their students in small groups or one-on-one. The chance to work individually with a teacher is just as important to a student who is in need of remedial attention as it is to a student who needs mentoring or enrichment.

Student-Teacher Interaction Independent school teachers often play a multitude of roles over the course of a school day. They may serve as teachers, coaches, academic advisers, or club sponsors, and in boarding schools they may be dormitory parents as well. While it sounds exhausting for the teachers, you as a student can benefit through interacting with teachers in a variety of places and situations. At nine o'clock in the morning, your teacher may be helping you as you struggle with a geometry proof, but at four in the afternoon, that same teacher may be coaching you in soccer as you score the winning goal. Situations like these that allow you to see and work with your teachers in a variety of situations help develop real relationships that can increase trust and communication. Few students can ever explain why, but they all know that they perform better for teachers that they like, and they like teachers who show an interest in them.

Some independent schools organize their dining halls to facilitate interactions between students and their teachers by offering family-style meals with a faculty member at the head of each table. Others create a casual environment where students and faculty can intermingle naturally. Regardless of the method, creating social situations outside the classroom helps students develop more natural and meaningful relationships with their teachers.

Environmental Awareness Increasingly, independent schools are taking an interest in the environment. Many independent schools are large land holders, and simply holding onto their land, which can be thousands of acres in some cases, helps stem the tide of urban and suburban sprawl. Schools that preserve open space are contributing to wildlife preservation, green space, and clean water supplies. Many independent schools are developing aggressive recycling and smart purchasing programs to curb the flow of packaging and containers into the waste stream. For instance, many independent schools now lease computers, a practice which frees them from the expense of their disposal at the end of their use cycle. Leased computers are then returned to the manufacturer for recycling, reselling, or proper disposal. Faculty and students take an active role in developing and implementing environmentally sound practices at their schools. By involving the students directly in issues related to the environment, independent schools are developing the awareness and skills that will help their students become more environmentally responsible as adults.

Sports Athletics play a major role in many independent schools. Competitive, intramural, and recreational sports are often offered as an alternative to traditional physical education. Great emphasis is placed on sportsmanship and fair play. Some independent school athletic leagues have rivalries that date back over a hundred years. Independent schools offer a uniquely wide range of sports options. In addition to American favorites such as football, basketball, baseball, and soccer, sports such as crew, squash, fencing, field hockey, and lacrosse are widely available.

Student Diversity Independent schools have embraced diversity as a way of preparing their students for leadership roles in a rapidly changing global society. Initially, financial aid helped break through the economic barriers of affording tuition. Through concerted efforts at recruiting minority students, independent schools offer an experience in racial diversity that is approaching the current composition of American society. Since independent schools can freely cross municipal boundaries to draw students, they are able to overcome the obstacles of real estate prices and taxes that have kept public schools from becoming less homogeneous. Indeed, boarding schools can draw from any neighborhood in the country or the world.

Through affiliations with outreach programs such as the Albert G. Oliver Program, Prep for Prep, the White Foundation, NJ Seeds, the Boys and Girls Clubs of New York City, A Better Chance, and the Black Student Fund,

independent day and boarding schools have been able to identify talented and motivated students from even the most impoverished schools in urban cities and rural America. Increasingly, independent schools are becoming attractive to the growing population of affluent minority families who wish to provide their children with the best educational opportunities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Private School Universe Survey, 1999–2000 and 2001–2002, there were 1,207,182 minority students in the total population of 5,341,513 private school students. This figure represents a 3.46 percent increase over the previous years. The trend is expected to continue as the population of the United States continues to change.

Independent schools are taking a leadership role in developing a multicultural approach to education. By recognizing and celebrating the racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural differences between their students, independent schools are building stronger communities by debunking stereotypes and building trust where there was once only fear and suspicion. Some independent schools are modifying their curricula to include perspectives that have not always been well represented, such as African-American literature and Asian history.

Preparing for College In standardized testing, students at NAIS schools demonstrate consistently high results. According to data from the College Board for the 2003–2004 academic year, SAT scores of independent school students exceeded the national average by more than 150 points, continuing the trend since the NAIS began keeping records in 1975–1976. Independent school students achieved an average verbal score of 593 and a math score of 600, compared to the national average of 508 for verbal and 518 for math. In the SAT II subject tests, independent school students outscored the national mean in 16 of the 23 subject areas.

As college attendance dominates the list of reasons why most families choose independent schools, it is reassuring to report that NAIS data reports that 98.9 percent of their member schools' students graduated from high school in the academic year 2000–2001. In the same year, 94.3 percent of NAIS graduating seniors attended four-year colleges.

Applying to an Independent School 私立学校的申请

When you apply for admission to an independent school, you are typically asked to visit the school, have some type of interview, take a standardized test, write an application, and submit supporting documents including a current transcript and teacher recommendations. The admission office at any school should be able to tell you exactly what is required and give you a schedule that includes any deadlines for testing or the submission of application materials, as well as the date by which you will be notified of whether or not you are accepted. Most schools follow a traditional cycle of inviting visits and interviews in the fall, collecting application materials in midwinter,

and mailing decision letters in the early spring. Some schools have open admission year-round, while others may follow a rolling admission program throughout the year. Even the most selective schools sometimes have last-minute openings in the summer months.

School Visits On a school visit, you may do nothing more than take a brief tour and have an interview with an admissions officer or a faculty member. On the other hand, the visit may be a full-day program during which you may be given a test and produce a writing sample. School visits may take many forms, including open houses, opportunities to visit classes, and individual tours. Most independent schools have fairly firm ideas about how they conduct their visits. Some schools are quite open to guests, encouraging you to pay a lengthy visit and participate fully in school activities. Keep in mind, though, that some schools receive hundreds or even thousands of visitors a year, and these schools must structure their tours in such a way that they do not interfere with the current students' normal school day. If there is a new visitor in a classroom every day, the dynamic between the teacher and the students is likely to be altered in some meaningful way. In almost all cases, once a school has accepted you, you will be invited to pay an extensive visit that will include time in the classroom.

Before you come for a visit, make sure you inquire about dress code. You'll feel more comfortable if you can present yourself in a manner similar to that of students enrolled at the school. Schools typically run on rather tight schedules with only 5 or 10 minutes between class periods, and guides, who may be students or faculty, typically give tours during a free class period or break in their schedule.

Try to be punctual so that your visit gets off to a good start and concludes without anyone feeling rushed or inconvenienced. If you have any special requests to meet with program directors, coaches, teachers, administrators, or other school personnel, make your requests in advance of your visit. Schools can be very accommodating, but the more notice they have of your expectations, the more likely they will be able to arrange an interesting visit. The most important thing to remember about visits to schools is that first impressions are lasting.

Testing Like any examination at school, preparing for an entrance test such as the SSAT or the ISEE is an important activity. Even though there is no way to know exactly what will be on the test, understanding the kinds of questions that will be on the test and being familiar with the directions for each section will help you be more relaxed and confident on the day of the test.

Good testers come to the exam with an understanding of how the test is scored and have a strategy in mind for guessing. For instance, the SSAT gives one point for each correct answer and only takes away one-quarter point for each wrong answer. Given that information, making educated guesses between two answer choices after eliminating the others will likely help you

increase your test score. This does not mean that guesses should be made in every instance, as those quarter-point penalties do add up. The message here is that guessing is part of the test-taking strategy and should be formulated well in advance of the test date.

Many students think that taking the test multiple times will increase their scores dramatically. Although students who take the test without adequate preparation, when in poor health, or under emotional duress may benefit from a second try, on average only about 10 percent of testers who use test preparation guides or attend a test preparation course in advance of taking the test improve their scores by 10 percent in subsequent test administrations. In most cases, improving your test scores by 10 percent will not likely significantly alter the admission decision for a given candidate.

Each school has its own philosophy about the importance of test scores and their use in the admission process. It is important to remember that even when a school provides the range or the average of the test scores of the admitted candidates, these ranges or averages should not be viewed as either minimum requirements or guarantees of admission. Admission committees typically consider more than just a candidate's test scores when making an admission decision.

The Application Completing an application for admission should not become an onerous task or require substantial parental involvement. Many applications specifically request that the application be completed in the student's own handwriting. The application affords little opportunity for gamesmanship, and the goal should not be to win an essay contest for originality but instead to present a clear and accurate representation of your interests, talents, activities, and abilities. Experienced admission committees can quickly spot the contrived essay or the heavy hand of the parent as editor.

Both the SSAT and ISEE include a timed writing sample that will be collected during the test. That sample will be compared to other writing samples in your application, and while many students write better with more time or the use of a word processing computer program, wild discrepancies between the writing on the application and that in the writing sample rarely work to the advantage of the candidate.

Some candidates have been known to go to great lengths to create portfolios of their accomplishments, recordings of their musical performances, and even videos showcasing talents and experiences. Not all schools are interested in receiving such materials, and it is worthwhile to inquire as to how such materials may be viewed by the admission committee. On the other hand, schools that are interested in learning more about a candidate's abilities may have specific guidelines for submitting audition tapes, athletic highlight films, or artistic portfolios. You should inquire whether such materials may or may not be returned prior to submitting them. It is not advisable to submit anything that cannot be replaced if lost or damaged. Whenever possible, it is best to limit yourself to answering all the applicable questions

and satisfying all the necessary requirements of an application. Exceeding these expectations may not always have the desired effect.

Candidates should be mindful of the fact that their current schools may have many documents to prepare for other students as well. Requests for transcripts and teacher recommendations should be made well in advance of the deadlines for submission. It is a generous courtesy to provide an envelope with postage addressed to the school. In most cases, the current school will send the materials directly to the admissions office. These materials are generally regarded as confidential, and you and your parents should not expect to see or review them once they have been completed.

The admission office will notify candidates when all the materials have arrived and the application is complete. Given the amount of paperwork involved in the process, many parents become quite anxious and make frequent and regular calls to both the school sending the documents and the admissions office receiving them. Until a reasonable amount of time has passed, these calls are not terribly welcome. Looking into these matters takes time away from the actual process of completing the forms or sorting and filing the documents once they arrive. Most schools will notify you of any missing credentials in a timely manner.

To ease the process of applying to multiple schools, many independent schools now receive some version of a common application or recommendation form. It is wise to consult each school about their policies and preferences regarding the use of such applications. While a growing number of schools accept common recommendations, they may not also accept the candidate statement portion of the common applications. An increasing number of schools are accepting online versions of applications through either their own or the SSAT web site. These online applications often have web-based tracking systems that help candidates manage the application process.

Any candidate who is applying to multiple schools should consider using at least common recommendation forms as they are quite convenient for teachers who otherwise have to complete redundant paperwork. If you use a common application or any portion of a common application, be aware that additional forms or materials may be required. Schools that accept these common forms agree not to penalize candidates for availing themselves of these resources that help them complete the application process in a timely and efficient manner. Ultimately, admission committees are more concerned with the content of an application than with how it was completed or delivered.

Affording an Independent School 私立学校费用的支付

Applying for financial aid adds another dimension to the application process, but it should not be viewed as a barrier to admission. Nearly all independent schools provide assistance for families who cannot afford the full tuition.

While a few schools offer merit awards and loans, in most cases financial aid is awarded on the basis of need as determined by the School and Student Service for Financial Aid, a service of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Some schools will complete their own evaluations or may use the services of a similar organization.

Application forms for financial aid are available at most admissions offices and through the School and Student Service (SSS) web site at sss.ets.org. According to the NAIS web site, in the academic year 2004–2005, a total of \$815.7 million in financial aid was awarded by the 956 member schools. At these same schools, an average of 18 percent of the student population received some financial aid in the form of grants, with an average award of \$14,430 for boarding schools and \$8,499 for day schools. While the vast majority of financial aid comes in the form of need-based awards, 317 NAIS member schools reported in 2004–2005 \$24.8 million in merit awards, averaging \$3,225 per award.

Since fewer than 5 percent of enrolled students receive merit awards, it is worthwhile to inquire about the particulars of a merit program before moving forward with the application process. Most schools either offer their own loan programs or have relationships with lending institutions that offer loans specifically designed to help parents finance the cost of an independent school tuition. Information about these programs is available from most admissions offices or the SSS web site.

Choosing an Independent School 私立学校的选择

Identifying and selecting a list of schools to consider may seem a daunting task. Your selection of day schools may be limited by distance or the realities of commuter traffic in your neighborhood, but the possibilities for boarding schools are virtually unlimited. There are many printed directories available in bookstores and libraries that will help both expand and, later, narrow your search.

School and Other Web Sites The Internet is a wonderful source of information as well. Most schools have invested in rather sophisticated web sites that reveal as much if not more than traditional printed materials. In addition to describing the academic curriculum, the faculty and students, the athletic programs, the fine and performing arts programs, and the physical plant, many web sites offer detailed information about the activities and events that shape the culture of the school. Most web sites are brimming with pictures of events and performances as well as candid shots revealing the character of daily life.

The school's web site is an excellent place to begin to gather information that will inform your visit to campus. It will give you an idea of questions to ask and some notions about what you might like to see on your tour or even people you would like to meet.

The National Association of Independent Schools collects data on nearly one thousand member schools each year. Most of their data are accessible to the general public at no cost through their web site, <http://www.nais.org>. You can find statistical data on a variety of subjects, ranging from tuition, to class size, to SAT scores. These data represent the schools broadly, and while some reports designate both boarding and day schools, information on individual schools is not offered.

Two other associations do offer information about individual schools. The Secondary School Admission Test Board (SSATB) manages a database of nearly six hundred of their member schools. At <http://www.ssat.org>, you can find detailed information about individual schools as well as contact information and a direct link to individual schools' web sites. The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) manages a database of over three hundred boarding schools, which includes a host of data that will help you differentiate one school from another. Also, BoardingSchools.org offers a click-through service that connects you directly to individual school's web sites.

It is worth noting that NAIS, SSAT, and TABS are credible sources that are managed by professional organizations to which independent schools belong and support. Each of these associations is a not-for-profit organization governed by a board made up of independent school educators and dedicates its mission to the promotion of independent schools.

Directories Additionally, there are several printed directories that have long served the promotion of independent schools. These include *Bunting and Lyon Private Independent Schools*, *Porter Sargent Handbook of Private Schools*, *Vincent Curtis Educational Register*, and *Peterson's Guide*. Most are available at libraries and bookstores. Some of these publications have accompanying web sites, and none of them ranks schools.

As is often true on the Internet, there are less credible sources of information. Some of these sources even rank schools. This is a practice that is frowned upon by most schools and all the aforementioned professional associations. In today's consumer-minded society, too much emphasis is placed on ranking, and most educators do not believe that ranking schools helps students make a wise choice between schools.

Furthermore, it may be of interest to know that some of the web sites that do rank schools accept payment for advertising those same schools. Their fee structures vary according to the amount of exposure a school wishes to receive, and the data on these web sites are self-reported by the same fee-paying schools. You may notice that some schools are missing from these rankings because they have chosen to not support the practice of ranking and have not posted their information on these web sites. As with all decisions, consider information from a wide range of sources and then make informed choices.

School Accreditation One way to judge the quality of an independent school is to identify its accrediting body. Independent schools have the

option of seeking accreditation from regional, national, and international accrediting organizations. The regional accrediting bodies include Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSACS), New England Association of Colleges and Schools (NEACS), North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCACS), Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). These are some of the same accrediting bodies that serve colleges and universities throughout the country. In order to receive accreditation, independent schools must complete an evaluation that is supervised by an accrediting organization. The process is designed to ensure that the independent schools hold themselves publicly accountable and operate in a manner that demonstrates that they meet acceptable standards of educational quality, professional competence, and fiscal responsibility. It is important to note that some schools that are not accredited may be in the process of becoming so. Independent schools complete the accreditation process on a schedule dictated by their accrediting body.

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格雷格·马洛博蒂，劳伦斯维尔中学，招生办主任.....XIII

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