

Recent newsmagazine opportunities have given parents new tools for deciding on good schools for their children. But these tools were created for the wrong reasons and fabricated without allowing for diverse methods, philosophies, and environments of the nation's independent schools.

The wrong reasons are clear:

- Magazines continue to need attractive storylines to get readers on a seasonal basis.
- Parents are looking for a quick list of the “right” criteria on which to make choices. We see it every day in advertisements that “rank” one product ahead of another, by name, nowadays.
- Parents assume that sanction by a major newsmagazine assures enduring value, if the choice is made according to the criteria offered. Just go UP the list until you cannot afford the transportation or tuition. There, says the magazine, is your school. Simple.

The fabrication is just as clear:

- The formula chosen (perhaps with “expert” advice) by the magazine is only one of many possible ways of judging schools. What about the other formulae not chosen? Who guarantees that this formula will work ... for all children in the nation, no less? Is the parent of a child willing to risk future outcomes of education on a popular magazine's version of the latest “view” of what makes a great school?
- This pre-ranking may give parents what might look like a time saving device, but drastically undervalues the time and analysis needed to match parent/child needs with school opportunities. Even worse, such wide spread publications can develop a “herd” mentality among parents who would otherwise make excellent individual decisions. Choosing a school because all the neighbors or business partners agree can lead to poor results for YOUR child.

No magazine formula can match the careful judgment of parents in this decision.

The better process is not complicated:

1. Get a good “directory” of schools in your library or bookstore.
2. Narrow your search to affordable schools (for YOU), offering the program you value, in your transportation area.
3. Take the time to visit the top four or five schools on YOUR list. Remember, more than one school probably can do a great job for your child.
4. Look for teacher competence, environment, financial stability, sensitive administrators, and good governance.

... and there, for the very best reasons, is YOUR school.