

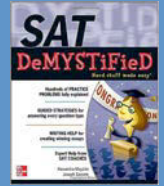


**PRIVATE  
SCHOOL  
REVIEW**

# **13 ELITE TIPS: THE ULTIMATE ADMISSIONS CHECKLIST**

Can't miss admissions advice from 13 schools, thought leaders, administrators, authors, and consultants.

Alexandra Mayzler  
Founder  
Thinking Caps Group  
Author, SAT Demystified (2012)  
Author, ACT Demystified (2013)



## Remember the full package.

### TIP #1



*“Schools aren’t looking for just perfect scores, a great essay, or a flawless interview. Grades matter, test scores matter, interviews matter, as does the fit of the family, the student’s interests, and the student’s intention and interest in being part of the community. Too frequently I see families focus on one side of the puzzle and ignore the others. Remember that the whole package matters.”*

---

Don’t focus on any one factor in the admissions process—remember that your full persona, skillset, and experience contributes to your candidacy to any given school.

## Pick the “right” school.

### TIP #2



*“Pick the school that best matches your family's philosophy about education. Some schools are all about academics, while others take a more holistic approach focusing on not just the academic, but also the emotional and social development of students. It's better for your child to be in a school where they will flourish, rather than at a 'prestigious' school where they will be unhappy.”*

---

A private school might be ranked in the most elite of elite lists, but that doesn't mean it's necessarily right for you. Make sure to choose a school that fits your personality and has the curriculum and culture to best help you develop as a person.

## TIP #3

### Control your digital footprint.



*“The importance of students having a positive digital footprint is key for admissions.”*

---

What you do online has consequences! Be smart about sharing photos, videos, and writing online that you may not want an admissions group to discover. Instead, consider using the Internet to your advantage by sharing your accomplishments and positive work.

## Expand your target schools.

### TIP #4



*“I’ve seen too many preschool parents put all their hopes and resources in one school based on hearsay. This only adds additional stress and anxiety to the process. Parents should take more time to consider at least 3-5 potential schools that are an ideal fit for their child.”*

---

Don’t lock yourself into one school. Understand that there may be a few options that make sense for your school fit.

## TIP #5



### Be up front about who you are.

*“Imagine that if you are not really upfront about who you really are during the admissions process and what you are looking for in your child's preschool or K-12 education, you will spend up to 14 years being someone you know you are not.”*

---

Be honest about you are. Fabricating information during the admissions process may result in the child truly not being a great academic or cultural fit for the school, which results in a lose/lose for all parties.

## Play up personal touch with school strengths.

### TIP #6



*“When parents write a letter expressing high interest in a school to the admissions director, they should write a very personal letter. It should not be a letter that could be sent to every school on their list. Rather, they should delineate school strengths that have personally resonated with them.”*

---

Apply a personal touch to a professional application letter by authentically conveying why you have a particular interest in the school. Make your case by touting the strong qualities that the school is known for.

## TIP #7



### Prioritize student body diversity.

*“We now live in a global society, not in small, homogeneous and insular communities. Learning in a truly culturally, ethnically, racially, socio-economically and visibly diverse school community is a valuable asset in a global society where communication is essential.”*

---

Research the student diversity at schools you are considering. Recognize the value in a student body that is diverse in terms of culture, ethnicity and race.



## TIP #8



### Read. Read. Read.

*“Why is reading so important for the admissions process? Students are asked to talk about their reading material during the interview process, and this can become an opportunity to shine, especially for kids who struggle to talk about themselves and their own accomplishments.”*

---

Encourage students to read voraciously- not only does reading increase critical thinking, literary proficiency, and reading/writing skills, it also provides an opportunity for students to talk about their completed books during the admissions process.

## As a parent, present yourself with confidence.

### TIP #9



*“Often overlooked is the role of parents in private school interviews. Body language: Don’t forget to smile and stay calm. Posture is important, so sit up straight and make eye contact. Attire: Most private schools are conservative, so a nice dark suit for men and a well fitted dress or pant suit will do for women. Be engaging: It’s important to relax and be yourself! Engage the interviewer by asking insightful questions..”*

---

Remember it’s not always just prospective students, but parents as well, who are interviewing for a school. Be prepared and present yourself with professionalism and confidence.

## TIP #10 Start early and stick to deadlines.



*“Call in time to schedule a school visit and request an application packet. Adhere to all application deadlines.”*

---

It may sound simple and obvious, but too often parents are careless about deadlines and details in the admissions process. Stay organized and track important dates and requirements carefully, and give yourself plenty of time to prepare.

## Avoid hyperbole.

### TIP #11



*“If your child isn’t a National Merit Scholar (for example), don’t give schools the impression that he/she is – the truth will eventually be revealed. If your child has only been to the local food shelter once, don’t mention in their application that they have done “extensive” volunteer work.”*

---

Stretching the truth is a risky endeavor that may trip up a student when asked to elaborate further or share examples in detail.



## Customize your application answers to each individual school.

### TIP #12



*"They want to know that you've actually listened to what they were saying on the tour, that you've been to the website and read their materials. They want you to be thoughtful about the questions. For questions like: 'How do you think our school will be a good fit for your child?' A cut and paste response is not going to work here. What you need to do is respond to each individual school, knowing what the personality of each school is and being authentic about your child and your family."*

---

Just like a strong cover letter or resume for a professional job application, customize your school application for each particular school's personality and values.

## Master your elevator pitch.

### TIP #13



*“Part of the preparation I do with students is have them give a quick ‘elevator pitch’ to each other. I ask what they remember about each other’s pitches. If no one remembers what you said, you are not creating a lasting impression. Therefore, you want the student to be authentic, poised without sounding coached, self-assured, transparent and engaging.”*

---

Practice your elevator pitch until you master it, in order to portray your best unique self in a memorable way to school administrators.