

Celebrating 50 Years



CHARLES  
ARMSTRONG  
SCHOOL

**HIGH SCHOOL  
PLACEMENT GUIDE  
2019-2020**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARMSTRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES	3
OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS	4
WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW	6
ATTRIBUTES TO CONSIDER BEFORE VISITING SCHOOLS	7
PREPARING FOR A SCHOOL VISIT	8
SAMPLE QUESTIONS AT AN INTERVIEW	9
APPLICATION PROCESS	10
HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS	11
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	13
CHARLES ARMTRONG TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM	16

# **ARMSTRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES**

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## **OUR GOAL:**

The Next School Placement Team (NSP) is committed to partnering with Armstrong families to assist you and your child in finding a high school where your child will continue to learn and thrive just as they have at Armstrong. We are continually inspired by our students and are looking forward to being included in the process of supporting our 8<sup>th</sup> graders and you as they mature and grow into high school freshmen.

## **OUR NSP TEAM:**

Director of Middle School

Lora Buchler, Manager Next School Placement

Regina Lewis, Admissions Coordinator and Interview Specialist

Margie Curran, Scheduler

Your Child's Classroom Faculty

Jessica Miller, Head of School

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

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**You will need to sign up on Ravenna Hub or  
The Individual High School Website  
for shadow visits and open houses.**

**Log-in during late August or early Sept. to start getting organized**

- **June** - Start ISEE/SSAT or HSPT test prep throughout the summer (page 10 for tutors, test prep books and sites)
- **Aug - Sept** Parent signs student up for ISEE/SSAT, be sure to request accommodations test date! or HSPT if required – usually Nov. sign up times. Dates varies per school so check schools web-site.
- **Sept. – early Dec.** – Families visit Open Houses, sign up on-line or at school’s website.
- **Oct. – Dec.** Parent signs student up for shadow visits. Let Regina Lewis know students shadow dates so she can schedule practice interview sessions for your student. [rlewis@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:rlewis@charlesarmstrong.org)
- **Oct. - Dec.** Parent and student fill out application *before deadline*, deadlines vary per school.
  - **On Ravenna (OR) On High School website**
- **Late Nov.** - Parent signs **Armstrong Transcript Release Form** with **list of 3-4 schools** you are applying to. E-mail or drop off form to Margie Curran. [mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org)

**Oct. - Dec.** Parent tells the Team **WHO** they assigned the online recommendation link to; please email Margie Curran at [mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org) with information. See list below.

## **Recommendation Form Outline:**

### **Recommendation Request per subject:**

As you are filling out the applications, there is a section for you to input the teachers emails per subject. If you are not sure which teacher this is, e-mail Lora Buchler first. [lbuchler@charlesarmstorng.org](mailto:lbuchler@charlesarmstorng.org).

- **Math** - Your student's current teacher
- **English** – Your student's current teacher
- **Counselor/Principal** – Middle School Director
- **Recommendation Letters:**  
These are not mandatory. If you decide to add an additional recommendation letter it could come from a coach or family friend that knows your child well and can speak to their strengths. Armstrong will provide a letter of recommendation *only* to the school(s) we can recommend for your student.
  - **Oct. - Jan.** Students take ISEE/SSAT or HSPT if required

### **Once we know which schools you are applying to:**

- NSP Team follows up with teachers to assure the recommendation links are completed by deadline
- Regina Lewis conducts mock interviews with students on campus.
- NSP Team sends transcripts and recommendation requests to each school.

### **After decision day in March**

- Families receive application results and shares information with the Team

## WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

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- Attend High School Fair and Rising 8<sup>th</sup> Grade meeting on **Thursday, April 4th** from 8:30-10:00 am
- Join the Armstrong Parent Alumni Yahoo Group. Send email to: [Armstrongalumni-subscribe@yahoo.groups.com](mailto:Armstrongalumni-subscribe@yahoo.groups.com)
- Assure Psychological Education Evaluation (Psych Ed) is current – **within the last three years**. If your child's Psych Ed is not within the past three years, decide who will do testing and contact them ASAP:
  - A) **Private Evaluator**
  - B) **IEP/504** through Public School District: At Armstrong the IEP process is coordinated by Margie Curran, [mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org) Start the process by going to the Armstrong website → Parents → Transitioning → Download IEP/504 Guide

### Summer

- **Set up a high school placement meeting** – We will e-mail a link in late May to sign up for your Next School Placement meeting this summer. This meeting is for you and your student.
- Complete **High School Questionnaire** – you and your child will complete this TOGETHER. (Attached) – PLEASE SEND THIS AT LEAST 2 DAYS BEFORE YOUR MEETING TO MARGIE CURRAN.
- **Meet with Next School Placement Team** in June - September.  
Parents and student attend initial meeting. The following will be discussed:
  - Team will review the NSP process and discuss your child's preferred learning styles
  - Discuss goal for High School & Identify schools of interest
  - Student will be asked to step out of the meeting for the last 10 minutes
- **Explore High School websites to learn about:**
  - Open Houses & Tours, Shadow Date Information
  - Mission of the School,
  - Learning Support
  - Testing Requirements
  - Start Test prep

# ATTRIBUTES TO CONSIDER BEFORE VISITING SCHOOLS

Public or Private  
Co-ed or Single gender  
Faith-based or Secular  
Number of Students in Class  
Student to Teacher Ratio  
Number of Students in School, Size of Campus (i.e., one building, several buildings, etc.)  
Location: Commute time, Proximity to public transportation, Carpools  
Program philosophy and methodology  
Independent vs. Teacher-directed instruction  
Technology Resources  
Reporting System (letter grades, un-graded evaluations)  
Ethnic, Cultural, Gender Diversity  
Tuition, Financial Aid

## **Do they have a LEARNING SUPPORT SPECIALIST?**

- Do they work directly with the student?
- Are they involved in the admission process?
- Are they full time?
- Are they able to instruct teachers to provide accommodations for students?

## **Questions to Ask When Visiting Schools**

- Does the school have a **philosophy** or educational approach?
- Does the school have and/or allow **on-site learning support resources**?
- How is **technology used to support teaching and learning** at school?
- What is your **homework** policy?
- What **extra-curricular opportunities** are available? (i.e., sports, clubs, community service, etc.)
- Is there an A-B block schedule or a different model? Are there **flexible options** for course selections?
- What foreign language classes are offered? Can American Sign Language be substituted for credit?
- Can students use a calculator in math class?

# PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR A SCHOOL VISIT OR INTERVIEW

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**We recommend that your child learn about the schools they are interested in before visiting them.**

**We will do practice interview sessions here at Armstrong with Regina Lewis.**

At home it is helpful to talk informally with your child about their interests and accomplishments so that they can be ready to talk about those things with an interviewer.

## **BEFORE INTERVIEW:**

- Look at the school's website for basic information
- Be ready to talk about who you are as a learner, your strengths and areas that you have been working on
- Be ready to talk about why you are interested in the school
- Dress appropriately
- Practice giving a firm handshake
- Participate in Armstrong student practice interviews with Regina Lewis.

## **DURING INTERVIEW**

- When you are introduced say "nice to meet you" and extend arm for a firm handshake
- Be polite - Say "please" and "thank you"
- Look at the interviewer in the eyes
- Listen carefully
- SMILE!! :-)

## **AFTER INTERVIEW**

- Send a thank you note

## **QUESTIONS ARMSTRONG STUDENTS MAY BE ASKED WHEN VISITING OR INTERVIEWING AT SCHOOLS**

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**1) What type of learner are you?**

Describe your learning style and give examples of how this works for you.

**2) What are your strengths?**

Give examples of how you use your strengths at school.

**3) What are your challenges at school?**

How are you working on them?

**4) What subjects interest you the most?**

Explain why.

**5) What does it mean to advocate for yourself at school?**

Describe a situation when you advocated for yourself.

**6) Are there accommodations that help you be most successful in school?**

Describe them.

**7) What interests you about attending (\*Name\*) School?**

Can you see yourself here and what might you be able to add to the school as a community member?

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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### **INDEPENDENT High Schools:**

There are two ways to fill out applications:

- 1) On the High School website
- 2) On Ravenna

If a high school's application is online, their paperwork requirements will vary and may only require one teacher to fill out a recommendation form. This is typically an automated link, but it may be a paper form.

If there are any paper "forms" that the school requires be completed by teachers or school personnel, please send them to Margie Curran at [mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org). Margie will make sure the appropriate person fills them out.

**\*Please Do NOT send to teachers directly unless you are directed to on the application. See page 5 for application forms outline.**

### **What is Ravenna?**

Ravenna is an online application system that many schools are using. If the high school you are applying to uses this system, you must register on Ravenna first.

All schools on the Ravenna system share documents however you designate a Math teacher, English teacher and a Principal. Before starting any applications write down the email address for each of the Armstrong faculty your student is working with per subject.

Important to note: As Armstrong administrators on the Ravenna system we CANNOT see any applications in process. We can only see that you are registered and that application has been submitted. We cannot see which teachers you have designated recommendation form links to.

**\*It is ESSENTIAL you coordinate with us the names of the teachers you have listed so Margie Curran knows who to follow up with to assure they are completing the necessary forms.\***

### **For Public High Schools:**

**General Public High Schools:** Sign up with your local school district and participate in the IEP process for appropriate accommodations. Please see IEP/504 Guide located on CAS website under parents, Next School Placement. Once enrolled you will have an articulation meeting before transitioning to high school, usually happens in the spring.

**Charter Public High Schools:** Charter High Schools are public and usually have a lottery system. Every public charter school is different and may have different application steps for enrollment.

## HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

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Summer Test Prep: Test taking strategies are basically the same for each test. We recommend you start test prep over the summer to pace learning the strategic skills portion of test prep and minimize stress in the fall. If possible, we also suggest setting up 5-6 private tutor session for your student over the summer.

Get a Book: Barons, Princeton Review

**Group Classes:** Kaplan or Ivy West (we do not typically recommend group classes since they tend to focus on accelerated information delivery, which can be stressful for Armstrong students)

**Private Tutoring:** Tutors recommended by your student's teacher, AJ tutoring  
<https://www.ajtutoring.com>,

**Compass tutoring** <https://www.compassprep.com/services/isee-ssat-hspt/>

**Test innovators** – online test prep. <https://iseepracticetest.com/how-it-works>

**Bellarmino** – Free HSPT test prep on line. <http://www.bcp.org/admissions/hspt-prep/index.aspx>

**HSPT Saso test prep tutor** - <http://www.sasohighschoolprep.com/>

### **INDEPENDENT High Schools** (Non-Catholic)

Most private schools require the ISEE or SSAT. Contact Lora Buchler

[lbuchler@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:lbuchler@charlesarmstrong.org) at Armstrong to help with coordinating your efforts to receive appropriate accommodations and sign up for the ISEE or SSAT.

### **What is the ISEE?**

The Independent School Entrance Examination (ISEE) is a test that many independent schools require as part of their admission process. Families are responsible for completing their own registration for the ISEE and for applying for any necessary testing accommodations. All documentation for accommodations must be within the last three years and must be uploaded directly to the ISEE website ([www.erblearn.org](http://www.erblearn.org)).

What is the SSAT?

The Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) is a test that can be taken **INSTEAD** of the ISEE as part of the admission process by **Independent Non-Catholic High Schools**. You can apply online at <https://ssat.org/about-ssat/about-the-ssat> or mail in your application.

**\*Note: Students only pick ONE TEST (ISEE or SSAT). Armstrong recommends the ISEE because the ISEE will not take off points if you answer incorrectly. SSAT will deduct a quarter point for each incorrect answer.**

### **CATHOLIC High Schools**

The HSPT is **\*REQUIRED\*** for anyone applying to Catholic Schools. It is offered on various dates in January and hosted at several schools in the Bay area. Catholic schools including but not limited to: Serra, Riordan, Mercy, Notre Dame, Sacred Heart, etc.

### **What is the HSPT?**

The High School Placement Test (HSPT) is a test that is required for 8th grade students as part of the admission process by **Catholic High Schools**. The test dates vary, but all are completed by the end of January. Please check tests dates and locations with the school you are applying to. Follow instructions to request testing accommodations ([hspt.com](http://hspt.com)).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**1. Are we behind if we have not organized everything by the time the school year starts in our search for next year's schools?**

You are NOT behind. **Fall is the correct time to start planning** your explorations of next schools.

**2. When should we be scheduling shadow visits?**

Arrange shadow visits from mid-October through November, if possible. This gives your child time to transition into the school year and gives Armstrong time to work with your child to reflect on the search for next schools. Please **update us with the dates of your student shadow visits and interviews** so we can schedule their practice interviews with the Team.

**3. When does Armstrong start scheduling the practicing interview sessions with the students?**

We schedule **practice interviews starting in late September through the fall**. For students who have shadow days, etc., scheduled before mid-October, we want to make sure we have seen these students and spent time facilitating their thinking about next steps. The areas we cover in practicing and coaching for interviews are applicable for shadow visits as well. **Our overall goal is to encourage reflection on the next schools process and focus on students' comfort level and depth when "telling their own story."** We also focus on helping extend their thinking about what they are looking for, and why, in their next learning environment.

**4. What are the important deadlines to be aware of as our family explores next schools?**

**PLEASE make sure to check ALL steps in the application process for each school you are interested in exploring**, whether you are thinking of transitioning to public schools or private schools. Each school has unique application processes and steps, different tests they may require, and **different deadlines** for various components of the application process. **YOUR family is responsible for knowing these deadlines**. You are also responsible for creating a calendar system to manage these deadlines and application steps for whichever schools you choose to explore. Armstrong is here to help and provide advocacy; we rely on regular communication with families and check-in coffees to ensure that the process goes smoothly for your child and family.

**5. When are Open House dates for high schools in the area?**

Most schools offer a list of several schools' Open House dates on their web site by late August, early September. Our best advice to you is to **search the websites of the high**

**schools you are interested in** and be proactive about signing up for their Open Houses; dates and times are usually posted mid-August. Your NSP team will post events as they come in from schools who actively recruit our students.

Questions? contact Lora Buchler, [lbuchler@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:lbuchler@charlesarmstrong.org)

#### **6. When should we fill out the school applications?**

Please take your time with the applications to High Schools. Allow the school year to get underway and allow your children time to participate in the process of exploring schools before completing the applications. Know the deadlines of the application process for each individual school. We suggest organizing your thoughts and project timelines for completing application questionnaires and essays in October and November. Begin answering questionnaires or essay questions in November and December. **Using helpful tools such as graphic organizers, outlines, and timelines can help students structure meaningful answers to questions** that include specific examples and/or anecdotes that back up your statements in a compelling way.

#### **7. What do I need to do about Psychological Education Evaluations (Psych Ed) and/or IEPs when transitioning to high schools?**

**If your child's Psych Ed or IEP is three years old or more, you must renew the evaluation** to be considered for support at future schools to receive accommodations on placement exams. If your child's Psych Ed is not within the past three years, decide who will do testing and contact them ASAP:

A) **Private Evaluator**

B) **IEP** through the Public School District: The IEP process is coordinated by Margie Curran, [mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org). Start the process by going to the Armstrong website → Parents → Next School Placement → Download IEP/504 guide Guide

#### **8. Are there forms I need to give the team so they can share my child's academic information?**

**YES.** Before sharing any recommendation forms we must have a signed Armstrong Transcript Release on file. AND each school has their own form which you will sign per school as you fill out the application.

**Please note:** While you are filling out applications each school requires slightly different Transcript Release forms. Most will have you sign them on-line; but a few will request you print out their Transcript Release form and turn it into Armstrong; an example of this is Mercy B, Notre Dame, Mid Penn and Kehillah.

**Please send a signed copy of the Armstrong Transcript Release form to Margie**

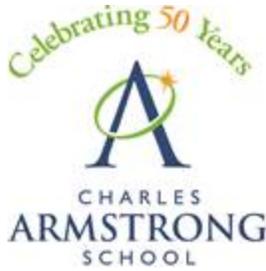
Curran, Scheduler, [mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org)  
Armstrong Transcript Release Form attached – Due early Nov.

Once we receive this form we will know you are applying and can legally share your child's academic information; no action can be taken until we receive this form.

**Specific forms, and recommendation letters outlined on page 4 and 5.**

**9. Does Armstrong send confidential letters of recommendation?**

In most cases it's not mandatory. Some schools will request a clergy referral. If you decide to add an additional recommendation letter it could come from a coach or family friend that knows your child well and can speak to their strengths. Armstrong will provide a letter of recommendation *only* to the school(s) we can recommend for your student.



### Transcript Release and Confidentiality Form

As part of the high school admissions process Charles Armstrong School is asked to send copies of your child's academic records for the past two years and recommendations to the secondary schools.

Please sign any Transcript Release forms that the high schools require to be submitted directly to them. This form is for Charles Armstrong School only.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

For the student named above, I authorize the release of Charles Armstrong School records as part of the high school application process. This includes an official transcript of all grades for the past two years and the results of academic testing. I understand that these documents will be utilized by the high schools for the purpose of evaluating this student's application for admission. I acknowledge that I waive my right to read any recommendations from Charles Armstrong School staff or to obtain copies of them from the secondary schools.

Please list all schools you will be applying to:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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