



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS ESP?

- A 14-month student academic and self enrichment program which seeks talented and motivated 4th graders from limited income families.
- It is tuition free, with no cost to participating families and offers a rigorous curriculum, small classes, and personalized attention.
- It is a long-term investment strategy to develop the leadership potential of able young women and men from segments of society grossly under-represented in our local, regional and national leadership pool.
- It is a vehicle for social change, not a means of dispensing social welfare, which seeks out the "best and the brightest" young people who are willing to accept the challenge of transforming their own lives through the highest possible utilization of their intellect and abilities.
- It is an affirmation that the potential for academic excellence exists in all economic classes and all ethnic, racial, and religious groups.
- ESP builds on existing strengths and identifies youngsters who have a realistic chance of succeeding in independent schools which provide a demanding academic program and a challenging social environment.

WHAT ARE ESP'S GOALS?

- Prepare students from limited income families for success in top independent schools and beyond and to provide a school setting in which it is safe to be smart.
- Introduce students to a diverse cultural environment, to empower ESP families to make the best middle and high school choices, and to introduce and assist ESP families with financial aid options for their child's schooling.
- Expand the nation's leadership resources.

WHO AND HOW DOES ESP SERVE?

- Students apply and are admitted while in the 4th grade, participate in a 7-week summer session as rising 5th graders, attend Saturday classes during their 5th grade year, and participate in a second 7-week summer session as rising 6th graders.
- ESP'S strategy is to identify talented students from limited income families, prepare them for placement in independent schools at the 6th grade, and provide a sense of community, peer support, critical post-placement services, and a range of leadership development opportunities.
- ESP seeks to identify those boys and girls who are most likely to benefit from attending academically-demanding independent schools
- ESP seeks students who excel academically, demonstrate leadership qualities, are motivated to learn, are from diverse backgrounds and include girls and boys from any race, nationality, or religion, but ESP recruits families not just students.
- ESP students are from low and middle income families who need financial assistance to attend independent schools. The admissions process gives preference to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Nearly every student admitted to ESP requires very substantial scholarship aid in order to attend an independent school. However, the dynamics of ESP are best served by a broad socio-economic mix.
- ESP attempts to prepare these youngsters for admittance to and success at academically-demanding independent schools and to instill in them a commitment to educational achievement as a means of developing their leadership potential.

- ESP looks to the private sector in education because there it finds the combination of high academic standards, individual attention, and personal accountability that ESP believes is essential to ensure its students' success.
- In pursuing a strategy of independent school enrollment as a means of increasing the number of well-educated leaders from families from limited income backgrounds, ESP believes it is also serving the interests of the independent schools which have a long-stated commitment to increasing the economic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of their student bodies
- ESP recruits, selects, and admits the entire family, not just the participating student.
- ESP attempts to be a community, membership in which strengthens the resolve of each student to master the unfamiliar aspects of the independent school and college environment. Each graduate's continuing membership in ESP, it is hoped, will also promote a sense of social responsibility and, through networking, increase the potential for effective leadership.
- ESP hopes to instill in each student an ethic of leadership, a sense of purpose, a commitment to social change, and an appreciation of the role of education in empowering people.
- ESP's mission is to guide exceptionally able and motivated young people from families with limited income towards a belief that they are full and vital members of our larger, shared community.
- Success in ESP does not guarantee a child admission to a participating independent school because an Admissions Committee at each participating independent school makes the final decision on particular candidates to that school. However, it is ESP's expectation that every child who remains in good standing in ESP will be admitted to one or another of the participating independent schools.
- Parents and the students are central figures in the decision as to in which independent school a particular child will enroll. Counseling is provided by ESP staff to ensure that appropriate choices are made. After visiting the schools most suiting their needs each child applies to two or three schools. If more than one school admits a particular child, ESP will provide guidance in helping them make their final selection.
- In order to ensure that every child in the program who is in good standing be admitted to an appropriate school, it is not possible to honor the "first" choice of every child. For that reason, ESP will ask each child for two "co-equal" choices. Also, if a student is not offered a place at either of the first schools selected, ESP will ask families to consider an additional school(s) for further applications.
- ESP students admitted to participating independent schools are guaranteed financial aid to the extent that each child's family situation warrants it. Each parent is asked to fill out a financial statement in December or January. Each situation is analyzed individually, according to a complicated formula, by the School and Student Services for Financial Aid and by the independent school. The formula takes into account not only family income but a great variety of factors that might affect a family's ability to contribute toward educational expenses. The underlying premise of the financial aid process, however, is that each family is responsible for the costs of education for its children to the extent that each family is able to pay, and financial aid is supposed to make up the difference. ESP staff members are available to help families with the process.

HOW TO CONTACT ESP?

- For additional information or for an application, please telephone, fax, email or write:

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