

SCHOOL TOURS - SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES Common Questions to Ask

This questionnaire can be used to help you decide if the public school of your choice will be able to effectively meet your child's needs. It is meant to help you ask questions and think about the fit of the school. Your child's needs are unique, so adjust your questions for your child's particular situation.

All public schools, both district and charter, are required by law to serve all children, including those with disabilities. Under special education law, children with disabilities are entitled to a "free and appropriate education and related services." Charter schools provide programs for and services to students with disabilities - some partner with OUSD for the provision of Special Education services and some operate their own Special Education programs and related services.

School Overview:

Does this school have a particular educational philosophy, mission, or focus?

What is the school's enrollment?

- Total Students by Grade:
- Demographics (and how they compare to Oakland city-wide):
- Students with IEPs:
- Students who are English Language Learners:

How many students and adults are in a classroom?

What is the typical daily schedule - length of day, does it include art, music, gym, recess, lunch, etc.?

Does the school offer before and/or after school programs?

- What type of extracurricular opportunities (sports, clubs, community service, etc.)
- Are these open to all students? Are there associated costs?

How does this school keep parents informed of school information and activities?

What are some of the school's greatest accomplishments? What are some of the biggest challenges this school faces?



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Programming and Support Services:

How does the school deliver instruction, what methods and materials are used?

How does this school encourage/monitor students' progress toward meeting grade-level standards?

How does this school support students who have academic, social or emotional difficulties?

How will the class/school meet an IEPs recommendations and goals?

What special education programs and/or support services does the school currently offer? How are these programs staffed? How are these staff certified?

What strategies are used to teach students who are not fluent in English?

Where are related services (such as speech therapy) provided at the school (see room)?

Is there a specific contact at the school who knows about Special Education resources?

What professional development opportunities do teachers have? In what ways do teachers collaborate?

School Environment

What is this school's approach to student discipline and safety?

How does the school/teachers approach classroom management? What behavior techniques are used?

How do children enter the building and classrooms (see the physical layout of classrooms within school)?

What kinds of opportunities do children have to interact with each other? What opportunities are there for students in special education classrooms have to interact with general education students?



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