

## High School Fairs and Open Houses

**Fairs and open houses offer opportunities to learn more about high schools you want to consider for your child's high school application.** Fairs bring together many, sometimes several hundred schools at one location. Each school has a table with written materials and school representatives to answer questions. At most fairs, schools have both staff and students representing them, so you can get different viewpoints. **Open houses**, on the other hand, provide a chance to visit a particular school, go on a tour and ask questions. Both fairs and open houses can be useful to your research, but they require different strategies. At both fairs and open houses—bring pen and paper to take notes, as well as a bag to carry the material schools will provide.

### High School Fairs

#### Before the fair

- Talk to your child about his/her interests and goals to begin to identify schools that might be a good fit.
- Use the high school directory to identify schools you and your child are interested in so you can make sure to visit their tables at the fair.
- Conduct additional research on your selected schools.
- Make a list of questions to ask so you can collect new information. Questions might cover both what the school offers as well as what they are looking for in potential students.

#### At the fair

- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.
- When visiting tables:
  - Find someone you can ask your questions.
  - Pick up information about the scheduled open house or tour.
  - Obtain the name, title and phone number of a school contact person for follow up questions and the dates of the open house or tour.
  - Be sure to **sign in** at every table you visit. (This is an admissions requirement for some schools.)
- If the fair is very crowded, focus on schools you are not already planning to visit at an open house. The conversation at the fair may help you decide if an open house visit is a good next step.

### **After the fair**

- Sort through all the materials and information you have gathered.
- Review the schools and information with your child.
- Create a calendar and post it in a place that is always visible and where it can be checked often, include:
  - Open house dates and tour dates for any schools in which you are interested.
  - Audition dates for any schools in which you are interested.
  - Dates of the specialized high schools admissions test if you want your child to take the test.
- Find out if your middle school will host its own high school fair for follow up opportunities.

## **Open Houses**

### **Before an open house**

- Make a list of questions so you can collect new information.
- Take note of the travel time from your home to the school via public transportation.
- Obtain the name, title and phone number of school contacts for any follow up questions or concerns you may have.
- Be sure to **sign in**.

### **At the open house**

- To get there, use the mode of transportation your child is likely to take if they become a student at the school. (Test the route and commute time.)
- Observe the classroom teaching styles.
- Check out the school facilities.
- Ask questions about the program aspects important to you, as well as questions about the admissions process.