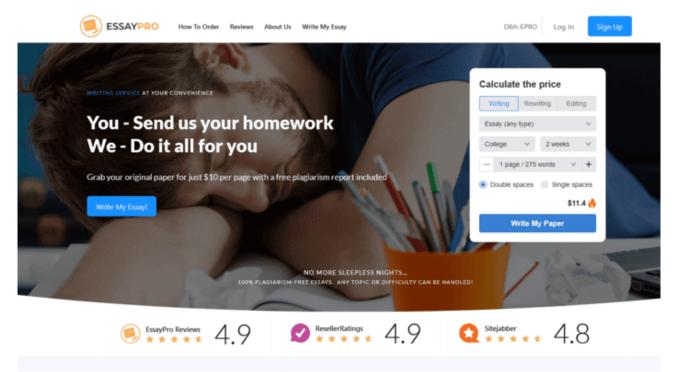
Private Schools vs. Public Schools



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In a recent report, a little over six million students were enrolled in a private school during the year 2003- 2004. That is roughly 11.5% of all students enrolled in schools.

But how do parents decide which private school is the best for their child? Parents consider many factors when <u>choosing</u> the right private school. They look at many factors such as the type of private school, class settings, academic curriculum, administration, accreditation and vouchers.

There are many different types of private schools. The most common private schools are Catholic, Religious Affiliated and non-sectarian. According to a report by the Private School Universe Survey of the school year 1999-2000, 48.6% of private school students attended Catholic private schools, 15.7% attended religious affiliated private schools and 15% attended nonsectarian.[1] Catholic private schools have greater diversity and larger enrollment than any other type of private school. [2] 85% of all private schools are affiliated with religious organizations.[3] According to the National Center for Education Statistics, "...in 1993-94, about one-quarter were Seventh-Day Adventist; 15 percent, Missouri Synod Lutheran; 10 percent, Episcopal; about 6 percent, Hebrew Day; 8 percent other Jewish; and the remainder, other religious groups."[4] Religious affiliated schools can be found all

over the United States. The main goal of religious schools is to implement religion in students' studies. Nonsectarian schools are not affiliated with any religion. In contrast with religious schools, nonsectarian schools generally emphasize development or moral character in their studies than the study of religion.[5]

There are also specialized private schools that focus on a general interest which makes someone's decision about a private school easier. A private school that focuses on a certain skill is called a trade or vocational school. These schools would be beneficial to students who already know what major they would like to pursue in the future. A trade/vocational school would be placed under a nonsectarian private school.

Reducing class size improves student achievement.[6] When students are in smaller class sizes the teacher is able to have more control over her class. The children receive more individualized attention from the teacher when the student- teacher ratio is less. The teachers can also identify learning disabilities sooner and engage family participation within the child's education.[7] In a study conducted in 1985, The Tennessee Student/ Teacher Achievement Ratio, the state randomly selected students in grades kindergarten through third and assigned them to small classes; 13-17 students, and regular classes; 22-28 students.

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