

The Role of an Educational Consultant

When I am working with a family as an educational consultant, my main goal is to use my years of experience in both boarding school admissions offices and as a university counselor to guide a family strategically through the process of admissions and to remove as much stress as possible so that it can be an enjoyable process. For me, it is important to find the right match between the child's potential for the future and a school or university that will help that child reach his or her dreams and develop their potential.

It is my job as an educational consultant to develop a strategic plan that includes academic advising, mapping out a schedule for testing, preparing the student for interviews, developing a list of appropriate schools, and overseeing the entire application process. As an educational consultant, I work with both the student and the parents as a team to support the child and to achieve the best possible outcome with acceptances to schools and universities.

Educational consultants work exclusively for the family. There cannot be a conflict of interest, thus, an educational consultant does not accept any money in any way from a school. Professionals, who do accept money from schools, tend to recommend their clients to the schools that pay them and not to the schools that are the best fit for the child. Parents need to understand this and be very careful. Unfortunately, there are many groups and people that are only in China to make as much money as they can without regard to ethical proceedings. They will write essays for students, forge transcripts and produce bogus recommendations. Universities and the US and boarding schools in the US know that this occurs and they watch for essays that don't match a child's voice or ability. This can cause a school to reject a student that they might have accepted.

When a family hires anyone to support them in the application process, it is very important that they research the person or group of people that they are considering hiring. No one can guarantee admissions to an Ivy League school, so if someone tells you they can, you should move on to someone else. You need to know what actual experience the person has, how long they have been advising families, and what they see as their role in the process. It is important to ask for their credentials and to not be impressed with the word "Ivy" or the idea of rankings. You also need to know if they have ever visited schools and universities in the US. Do they attend professional conferences? Do they meet regularly with admissions representatives from the US? Finally, what experience do they have working with Chinese students?

It is unfortunate that Chinese families need to be so careful. It is also very difficult for families when they do not speak English and they only want the best for their child. There are many people out there trying to take advantage of families so be careful, do your homework, and ask good questions.

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