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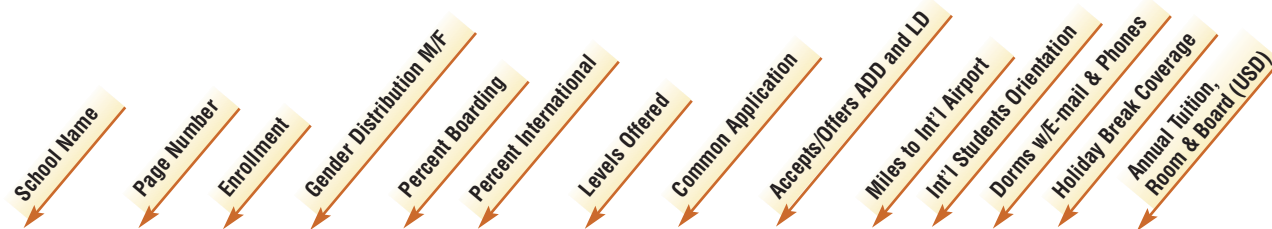
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SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Browne Academy	67	288	49/51	NA	1	PK-8	N	N	5	NA	NA	NA	12,210-20,240
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ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Congressional Schools of Virginia, The	67	365	53/47	0	20	PK-8	N	N	22	N	N	N	15,200-19,450
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ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Barrie School, The	87	400	50/50	NA	NA	PK-12	NA	Limited	31	NA	NA	NA	11,300-23,150
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart	91	740	All girls	NA	5	PK-12	N	N	15	N	NA	NA	10,000-19,275
Washington International School	73	885	48/52	NA	70	PK-12	N	Limited	8	Y	N	N	25,030

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

North Country School	74	92	49/43	88	23	4-9	Y	Y	125	N	Y/N	N	46,900
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JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Brandon Hall School	69	120	84/16	46	20	4-12, PG	Y	Y	32	Y	Y	N	25,500-49,000
British School of Washington	70	300	50/50	NA	50	PK-12	N	N	10	Y	NA	NA	19,465
Oldfields School	76	180	All girls	75	15	8-12, PG	Y	Limited	35	N	Y	Y	40,075

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Blue Ridge School	85	195	All boys	100	20	9-12	Y	Y	90	Y	Y	Y	33,800
Conserve School	71	130	50/50	100	33	9-12	N	N	250	Y	Y	N	30,000
Darlington School	79	473	53/47	33	16	9-12, PG	Y	Limited	75	Y	Y	Y	35,700
Foxcroft School	88	178	All girls	72	14	9-12	Y	Limited	30	N	Y	Y	40,950
Idylwild Arts Academy	88	270	45/55	85	32	9-12, PG	Y	N	120	Y	Y	N	42,500
Interlochen Arts Academy	70	475	40/60	89	18	9-12, PG	N	N	16	Y	Y	N	35,850-37,450
King George School	74	72	60/40	100	5	9-12	Y	Y	60	N	N/N	Y	5,800/mon
Lawrence Academy	73	398	50/50	50	15	9-12	Y	Limited	40	Y	Y	Y	44,200
Northfield Mount Hermon School	90	860	51/49	80	25	9-12, PG	N	Limited	70	Y	Y	N	33,000
St Mark's School	75	335	51/49	80	24	9-12	Y	Y	30	N	Y	Y	41,300
Wasatch Academy	83	205	70/30	95	40	9-12	Y	Limited	90	Y	Y	Y	37,500
West Nottingham Academy	77	123	40/60	67	18	9-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	34,900
White Mountain School	75	100	50/50	80	14	9-12, PG	Y	Y	110	N	Y	N	41,100

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82

Notes: NA - Not Applicable ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder LD - Learning Disability PK - Pre-Kindergarten PG - Postgraduate

SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 81

MILITARY SCHOOLS

Marine Military Academy	80	340	All boys	100	18	8-12, PG	N	Limited	1	Y	Y	N	24,750
Massanutten Military Academy	85	200	75/25	96	7	7-12, PG	N	N	60	N	Y	N	24,664

SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

Landmark School, The	88	447	60/40	50	10	2-12	N	Y	25	N	Y	N	Call
Glenholme School, The	77	100	80/20	98	2	7-12, PG	N	Y	30	N	Y	Y	Call
Gow School, The	86	148	All boys	100	22	7-12, PG	N	Y	20	Y	Y	N	46,250
Lab School of Washington, The	87	330	75/25	NA	1	K-12	N	Y	8	N	NA	NA	30,060+
Vanguard School	91	131	70/30	98	30	5-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	41,500

DISTANCE LEARNING

University of Missouri Center for Distance & Independent Study	69	Independent study: Grade 3 through university. Bachelor's degree completion. For more information, go to cdis.missouri.edu/go/pFSJ8.asp											
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OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

Berlin Brandenburg International School	78	580	49/51	5	55	PK-12	N	Y	25	Y	Y	N	12,700-45,900
Escuela Campo Alegre	79	606	50/50	NA	80	N-12	NA	Limited	20	Yes	NA	N	19,895
Leysin American School in Switzerland	70	360	52/48	100	65	9-12, PG	Y	Limited	75	Y	Y	N	38,000
St. Stephen's School	77	218	40/60	17	58	9-12, PG	N	N	12	NA	Y	N	46,200
TASIS, The American School in England	86	659	51/49	25	35	PK - 12	Y	Limited	8	Y	Y	N	33,000

POST SECONDARY

Rutgers University	76	50,516	48/52	60	1.8	Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D.	N	Y	10-25	Y	Y	Y	29,265
										depends on campus			

OTHER

Foreign Service Youth Foundation	67	Assists Foreign Service Youth by coordinating development programs. Go to www.fsyf.org											
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Notes: NA - Not Applicable ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder LD - Learning Disability PK - Pre-Kindergarten PG - Postgraduate

A Different Kind of College Ranking

Washington Monthly continues to offer prospective college students and their parents a refreshing alternative to *U.S. News & World Report* "best" college rankings. The magazine's "Third Annual College Guide," issued last September, again sorts schools according to what they give to society.

Not surprisingly, elite schools don't perform as well in the *Washington Monthly* survey. Among last year's U.S. News top ten, only Stanford shows up in WM's top ten. And among the Ivies, only Cornell figures in its top 25, thanks to the large number of graduates who earn a Ph.D. or join the Peace Corps. Their "abysmal" record of taking on and graduating poorer students is one of the reasons they don't do well, reports *WM*.

Three years ago, *Washington Monthly* concluded that the public would be better served with more and different types of school rankings. Their annual guide ranks schools by how well they perform as engines of social mobility, as producers of the scientific minds and research that develops new knowledge and drives economic growth, and in promoting an ethic of service.

This year, Texas A&M University is number one in *WM*'s top 30 national universities, due to a significant level of ROTC enrollment and a generous amount of federal work-study funds devoted to community service. Presbyterian College, a women's school, is in first place in the top 30 liberal arts colleges list. And the guide also surveys the country's best community colleges.

You can find the *Washington Monthly* Third Annual College Guide online at www2.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2007/0709.collegeguide.html.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

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Continued from page 78

tant, especially for the student who is far away from home! Most students equip their dorm rooms with mini-fridges, microwaves, televisions, rugs, printers, etc., often dividing up the “must have” list with a roommate. Keep in mind that too much stuff can be a burden: whatever is acquired during the year must be dealt with at the end of the year.

One final note about dorm rooms: every Foreign Service student needs to pay special attention to safeguarding valuables like passports, tickets, credit cards and money throughout the year. It’s important for students not to be too trusting of others, and to ensure that there is a secure place for these items.

Settling In

College can be “the best four years” of a person’s life, and often is. But the adjustment is usually not as easy as the hype would have one believe. For Global Nomads who have grown up around the world, being in the U.S. for the first time without family can be a lonely and alienating experience. Coping with reverse culture shock without family and friends who understand international living makes the adjustment even tougher.

Recognizing the symptoms of cul-

ture shock can be very important in dealing with it. Some students report feelings of:

- Homesickness
- Alienation from the home culture
- Not fitting in
- Fear they’ve made the wrong college choice
- Confusion
- Missing old friends
- Loneliness
- Boredom
- A sense of loss

For most, these feelings pass with time as they settle into campus life. They eventually find new friends, clubs, sports and activities, or create the kind of on-campus organization to which they would like to belong. Many find a bond with other international students, who understand automatically that the question “Where are you from?” has both a short and a long answer! The most important thing is for students to draw on the same coping and adjustment skills they have used to adapt to international life.

That means looking for the good in people and situations, and acknowledging and celebrating people for their individual and cultural differences. Seemingly “boring” American students have a culture, too, and it

pays to try to understand where they are coming from, as well. Most students have some challenges adjusting to life at college, but many of them have never moved before and therefore have no experience in coping with change. The Foreign Service student’s strength is the resilience they have developed over years of moving around the world.

One of the things I hear a lot about from Foreign Service kids is how hard it is to be so far from home — any home. They long for a sofa to flop on, downtime to relax, a home-cooked meal and some tender loving care. If they can find a relative, family friend or even a professor who will take them home from time to time, it can really help them get through the rough patches.

Some students have an especially difficult time. If things do not go well for an extended period of time, and your child seems to be slipping into apathy, despondency or depression (or you don’t hear from them for an extended period), urge them to check in with teachers, advisers, deans or mental health professionals on campus. The worst scenario is for a student to fall into a slump without reaching out for help.

Health and Wellness Concerns

Students also need to be aware that they are in charge of their own physical well-being. Often, young people think they are invincible. But seemingly minor medical issues can quickly become major if they are not taken care of. What seems like “just” a cold, flu or cough can develop into a dangerous secondary infection or even pneumonia. Sore throats and fevers can easily turn into mononucleosis in a dorm setting.

The university health center is a student’s first line of defense, and health care personnel can refer a student to local doctors when needed. Students who depend on medication need to remember to refill the prescription before it runs out; also, con-

Continued on page 87

Resources:

Love this for students: *Been There, Should’ve Done That II: More Tips for Making the Most of College*, Suzette Tyler, Front Porch Press, 2001.

Excellent resources for parents:

The Launching Years: Strategies for Parenting from Senior Year to College Life, Laura S. Kastner, PhD., Jennifer Wyatt, Ph.D., Three Rivers Press, 2002.

Don’t Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to the College Years, Helen E. Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller, St. Martin’s Griffin, 2000.

A Web site on the transition to college for parents:

www.mnsu.edu/fye/parents/familyguidebook/collegetransition.html

Evergreen books, really good for understanding your young adult:

Ready or Not, Here Life Comes, Dr. Mel Levine, Simon and Shuster, 1995.

Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties, Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, Oxford University Press, 2006.

To keep our kids safe:

Security on Campus, Inc.: www.securityoncampus.org/

Campus Safety Tips and Evaluation Brochure: www.securityoncampus.org/students/tips.html

To understand who our kids are and what they might be going through:

Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds, David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2001.

— Rebecca Grappo

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Continued from page 84

tact lenses need to be reordered in a timely fashion.

All students are required to have health insurance on campus, so they need to know how to use their cards, apply for benefits and either pay or forward the bills home.

The best medicine, of course, is prevention. Students need to understand their own responsibilities regarding diet, exercise, and sleep, as well as the dangers of substances such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs, in order to maintain their own health. Parents should also talk to their kids about matters related to sexual health.

Moving Out

Moving out of the dorm at the end of the year is another major undertaking, especially if Mom or Dad is not there to help. The DSSR-280 allowance now allows for the storage of a student's personal effects instead of

*The more we can help
prepare them for what
lies ahead, the smoother
the ride will be.*

shipping them back to post, as long as the cost does not exceed that of air-freight (see the regulation for details).

In the late spring, signs start to appear on many campuses for college moving companies that drop off boxes and packing materials, pick up sealed boxes for storage, and then deliver them again in the fall. But these services need to be booked in advance.


Another option is to look at short-

term storage facilities; many of these businesses know "mom and pop" moving companies that can help out. Some college campuses allow summer storage on campus for international students — call residence life to ask.

The student needs to allow plenty of time for pack-out, as it always takes more time than one expects. And remind them to check *every* drawer for items like passports, eyeglasses and other valuables before leaving for the summer.

College is an exciting time. It means accepting responsibility for one's self — one's well-being as well as personal and intellectual growth. We want our children to have this opportunity, but we want them to travel wisely and stay safe and healthy. As parents, we know there will be bumps in the road, but the more we can help prepare them for what lies ahead, the smoother the ride will be. ■

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SPECIAL-NEEDS KIDS AND THE FOREIGN SERVICE: DISPELLING THE MYTHS

CORRECTING MISCONCEPTIONS CAN HELP FS PARENTS OF
SPECIAL-NEEDS KIDS GET OFF TO A GOOD START.

BY PAMELA WARD

Having a child with special learning, physical or psychological needs is a challenging and frustrating, but potentially rewarding, experience for any family. All of these emotions are multiplied exponentially when a family is internationally mobile. It is not only necessary for the employee parent to find an appropriate position every few years, but also to identify locations where the educational and medical needs of all family members can be addressed.

Until recently, it was not possible to consider a career in the Foreign Service if the family included a special-needs child. That has changed, but there remain concerns about the complexity of choosing assignments that provide needed educational and medical resources, especially when the time to identify appropriate bids is limited. Within the Department of State, a number of offices and a myriad of professionals stand ready to assist and support families from civilian foreign affairs agencies headed overseas.

Often, however, just the question of where to start can seem overwhelming. And, unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation that can lead families in the wrong direction. To help give families with special-needs children a head start, let me dispel some of the common misconceptions held by internationally mobile parents.

Misconception 1: The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements apply to all American or international

Dr. Pamela Ward has been a Foreign Service officer and parent, a university professor training special educators and an administrator in schools — public and private, in the U.S. and abroad. Formerly education and youth officer in the Family Liaison Office, she is now the regional education officer for Africa in the Office of Overseas Schools.

schools, no matter where they are.

Until the late 1950s, children and young people with physical or mental disabilities were simply allowed to fall by the wayside in regular schools. Or, if the disability was severe, they were placed in schools or institutions where care was custodial at best. The activist spirit of the 1960s and the efforts of disabled veterans returning from Vietnam turned all this around. Federal laws were enacted requiring that in the U.S. those with challenges have physical access to buildings, jobs and transportation, and that an appropriate and free public education in the least restrictive environment be available to all children of school age.

But this legislation has never applied to private schools anywhere, and definitely not to public or private educational authorities outside of the United States. Most of the schools our children attend overseas are independent institutions with boards of directors that set policy. Even though many of these schools get grants, albeit relatively small ones, through the Office of Overseas Schools and other divisions in the Department of State, they are not obligated to adhere to IDEA or any of the other U.S. federal mandates on special needs.

That said, there are numerous programs and initiatives designed to encourage the schools that serve our families to provide services. These programs include special grants for the salaries of specialists; summer workshops for faculty and administrators; consultants for in-service training; the development of targeted training materials, such as the publications *Transitioning Overseas with a Special-Needs Child*, *Making the Difference: Differentiation in International Schools*; and more. The Office of Overseas Schools puts out a list, updated yearly, of several hundred schools around the world that provide special services.

Misconception 2: None of the various offices in Washington involved with identifying special needs and evaluating services at Foreign Service posts talk to

each other.

There are several offices in the Department of State staffed by professionals with a mandate to assist families with special-needs children, and they all have each other on speed dial. Families who know or suspect that their child has special needs must first contact the Employee Consultation Service, which is part of the Medical Division. Families abroad should contact their Regional Medical Officer. A highly experienced social worker will be assigned to continuing coordination of the case including assessment, educational planning and clearances.

If the child has been in special education programs in the U.S. and has a current Individual Education Plan (describing the specific program to be offered), the next move is identifying posts where the specified accommodations are available. If the child needs to be evaluated, ECS will organize the assessment to produce the IEP for the

Within the Department of State, a number of offices and a myriad of professionals stand ready to assist.

child here or abroad. ECS then works with the Office of Allowances to authorize the funding of the accommodations specified in the IEP.

Keep in mind that the governing regulation for the special-needs education allowance states clearly that only those educational services identified as actually "required" for the child in the IEP or equivalent document are reimbursable.

If the employee parent is due to be assigned overseas, the search for appropriate educational and medical services should begin early. The employee should work with his or her Career Development Officer to generate a short list of assignment possibilities. Parents can then follow up with ECS and the Office of Overseas Schools to determine which posts have schools that can provide the specified accommodations.

The Overseas Briefing Center at the Foreign Service Institute and the FS Special Needs Listserv are also good sources of information. If boarding school is a possibility, the Education and Youth Officer in the Family Liaison Office is an excellent referral resource. All of these offices have user-friendly Web sites and can also be contacted by phone, e-mail or in person.

Once the research is complete, the final step for the parents is to contact



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the school directly to make sure it has space available and still offers the services required. In many cases, the school may want detailed test reports to be e-mailed or faxed to assure a good fit.

Misconception 3: All the information available in Washington is outdated.

All of the offices mentioned above have good sources of information on schools and services and are working continually to improve the quantity and accessibility of that information. The Office of Overseas Schools is staffed with five experienced international educators, who serve as Regional Education Officers and spend much of the year traveling abroad and visiting schools. In addition to the OS-assisted schools, they visit other schools used by U.S. families and any facility that might provide a quality special-needs program.

The office also collects information from schools directly through questionnaires and through Community Liaison Office coordinators. At times, OS sends consultants to a certain country or region to evaluate the special needs resources.

The information gathered is available at any time from the office or from the REO responsible for that area. REOs can be contacted by e-mail, even when they are on the road. ECS also has extensive information on resources at various posts. And the Overseas Briefing Center, part of the Transition Center at the Foreign Service Institute, has a range of materials, including some with comments from individuals serving at posts in *Personal Post Insights*.


All that said, sometimes things change quickly. A therapist may move away or a school may eliminate a program. That is the reason for the requirement that a family make real-time contact with the school before an assignment is confirmed.

Misconception 4: If a school abroad can meet a child's educational needs, it will also be able to provide other services such as

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speech therapy or occupational therapy.

Parents accustomed to the one-stop-shopping of U.S. public school systems are often dismayed to find that international schools — even large schools with special education programs — do not provide services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy or psychological testing and counseling. Sometimes it is because these services are not typically found in an educational setting in the host country or because the number of students requiring these specialized services is too small to make it cost-effective. Parents may need to work with the Regional Medical Officer, the Community Liaison Officer or other embassy personnel to identify local service providers.

Misconception 5: All students with the same diagnosis should be able to be served at the same school or post.

Most parents with special-needs children are aware that there is a wide degree of variation within the same diagnostic category. The autism spectrum, for example, ranges from girls with Rett Syndrome, who are non-ver-

bal and often must use wheelchairs, to highly gifted young people with Asperger's Syndrome, and everything in between. A learning disability may be auditory or visual, mild or severe. Determining a good fit requires an IEP for that particular child, with the required accommodations spelled out very clearly and in detail. Word-of-mouth that a certain community worked for a child with the same diagnosis as your son or daughter is not good enough.

Misconception 6: Gifted services are handled just like any other special-needs case.

Young people with intellectual gifts and talents are not covered in the U.S. by the same federal legislation as students who are challenged. But many American school systems do provide services for students identified as intellectually gifted. If a pupil has been identified as gifted by his or her school or a special program in the U.S. and is subsequently enrolled in an overseas school without such a program, a Supplementary Instruction amount for enrichment activities is available to augment the at-post education allowance.

If an international school or parent believes that a student may be gifted and in need of services, an assessment by a major university can be arranged through the Office of Overseas Schools. The Regional Education Officer will assist families with arrangements.

Misconception 7: Boarding options are limited for special-needs students.

There are many excellent boarding schools that provide every level of academic and psychological support available in the United States and abroad. The Education and Youth Officer in the Family Liaison Office is the primary resource for boarding school information for all students, including those with special needs.

Some college preparatory schools have structured study-skills options that may provide enough support for a student with a mild learning disability

or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Other schools and therapeutic programs are specifically dedicated to the education and treatment of young people with more severe challenges, such as Pervasive Developmental Delay or serious psychiatric conditions.

If a student needs a highly specialized placement or one on short notice, the Education and Youth Officer may refer the family to one of several specialized consultants in the Washington area or around the world. Organizations such as the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs or The Association of Boarding Schools have excellent Web sites and may be helpful, as well.

A Support Network of Professionals

The Transition Center at the Foreign Service Institute held a full-day workshop for parents on May 29 that included representatives of all the offices charged with supporting families with special needs children. The Family Liaison Office continues to advocate for assignment and allowance policies that give families maximum flexibility. The Office of Allowances works closely with FLO, Overseas Schools and the Office of the Legal Adviser in revisiting the legislative and regulatory guidelines and assisting families and posts with the technical and financial aspects of special education accommodations.

The Office of Overseas Schools sponsors several summer workshops for teachers and administrators specifically focused on serving special-needs students and continually develops materials, consults with schools and researches options around the world. The Employee Consultation Service reviews every case yearly to be sure that each child is moving toward maximizing his or her potential.

This network of professionals and the informal information-sharing among parents in our community will continue to make the path smoother for special-needs families. ■

Resources

Department of State Internet

Office of Overseas Schools – www.state.gov/m/a/os/

Family Liaison Office – www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/

Overseas Briefing Center – www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c6954.htm

Department of State Intranet

Employee Consultation Service – <http://medical.state.gov>

Office of Allowances – <http://aoprals.a.state.gov/>

Other

National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP) – www.natsap.org

The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) – www.schools.com/