

MESA VERDE

Living

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Meet the Ronvelias:

**Cooking, Sharing,
and Living
Their Dream**

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Creating An Educational Advantage

By Carrie Mizera, Executive Director of Renaissance School International

There is a lot of misinformation about what is required for admission to top U.S. universities. In general, if a student cannot keep up with the top international standards, it makes acceptance to top U.S. universities more difficult. In addition to demonstrating excellence in science, math, reading, and writing, students must also exhibit leadership, creative abilities and foster unique talents.

When choosing a school to best prepare your child for success, look for these attributes:

MATH AND SCIENCE: In the areas of math and science, international test results show that U.S. students typically lag behind their counterparts from other countries. The performance results are routinely topped by students in Singapore and China. So, what is it about the science and math curricula in these Asian countries which we can learn and adopt to improve our students' skills? Schools which follow the math and science curricula in Asia focus on developing a deeper understanding with regular practice and a mastery approach. The mastery approach leads to early number sense, mental math practice, math fluency, and a logical approach to understanding numbers without rote memorization. Mastery in math and science provides competency with each concept and incremental skill-building at each level before progressing to the next. At each mastered step, concepts are reintroduced with increasing complexity and application.

ENGLISH: The most robust schools teach classical English literature, formal grammar, critical writing skills, and analytical thinking. Students are empowered to find their voice through discussion and public speaking as they explore culture, history, and geography within the context of the Great Works literature. Additionally, students are encouraged to develop a multitude of soft skills that position them for success in higher education and the workplace.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION: In the U.S., creative abilities are as crucial as academic proficiency. It is imperative that your child's school has a cross-disciplinary (including art, science, math, music, writing, etc.) creative and innovation component incorporated within the curricula. Many schools bill art and music programs as creative outlets. However, in most cases, students learn by convention so these programs do little to prepare students for creative work.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE: To adequately prepare students for admission to top universities and high-quality employment, the best U.S. schools now require foreign language study every year, at least during middle and high school. Also, schools like Renaissance School International teach foreign languages by immersion, whereby no English is used in the classroom.

PROJECT WORK: Does the school require hands-on application of science, math, and humanity skills? Does the school bolster cross-cultural alliances for this work? Creative application of academic concepts is required for admission to top universities. If the school you choose for your child does not have this requirement, your child will have to complete this work on his/her own time. Typically, adult support is required, so you will have to help in this area if it is not already incorporated into the school curriculum.

LEADERSHIP: Top U.S. universities are looking for leaders. Good U.S. secondary schools prepare students for leadership assignments. This preparation includes public speaking in all languages (native and foreign languages) in each year of secondary school and opportunities for students to take on leadership roles.



In light of the global pandemic environment, U.S. colleges are now considering a number of additional factors when evaluating applicants. Recently, 300 U.S. college admissions deans shared a collective statement underscoring the importance of the following during the global pandemic: self-care, academic work, service and contribution to others, family contributions, extracurricular and summer activities.

Renaissance School International (RSI) provides children from preschool through twelfth grade with an exceptional education that draws out the brilliance and potential in every student while preparing them for an extraordinary life. For more information, call 714-783-7070 or visit www.rschooloc.org.

