



Real Estate Times

with Suzanne Dingley

COMPARISON SHOPPING FOR SCHOOLS

Real estate professionals are very often faced with a question from buyers that has nothing to do with houses: "What are the best schools in the area to which we're moving?" When you relocate, the most important thing you'll be moving is your child, and you want to be certain you are making the right choice for education.

One excellent resource for beginning your research is SchoolMatters.com, an online database of public schools. Begin with statistics that illustrate students' achievement levels in each school. Compare reports for all students, including minorities and children in low-income families. Schools in which all students perform well are providing balanced educational opportunities.

Also pay attention to extra-curricular activities offered, particularly if your child is interested in sports and other pursuits outside the classroom. The

School Matters database offers ratings and reviews directly from the parents, so you can learn from those with experience.

One thing you can't determine online, however, is the actual classroom environment, so you should absolutely schedule a visit to one or more schools in the area before making your decision. Meet with the principal and watch the manner in which teachers and students interact.

Once you have an understanding of the distinctions between schools, your choice will become clear. You wouldn't buy the first home you see, and "shopping" for a school is no different!

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Real Estate needs, call*

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