

Speaker 1 ([00:03](#)):

Welcome to Be Evolved, a podcast for parents and educators who prioritize developing possibility and expansion within the total educational process for themselves and their children or students. We invite you to listen to the podcast with your child or student in mind and with yourself at the center of the learning experience. Ultimately, our goal is to bridge the gap between educational expertise and research, translating it into practical action. Gaining knowledge plus taking action is what it means to be evolved.

Speaker 2 ([00:40](#)):

Hello everyone. It is May. Isn't that exciting? Welcome to be Evolved with Mary Miele. I am so excited for today's discussion because I'm going to be sharing with you information about two important tests that we take to gain admissions to private schools. We are also about to launch our next edition of 10 Steps to Private School Admissions. This version incorporates the entire school placement and school consulting team here at Evolved Education Company, and we are giving away the entire process of what works for kids and really helps families through this process. So we hope that you get your copy and that you come and consult and work with us along the way. We are so excited to launch this and I hope you do check it out. It will be out about a week or so after the dropping of this particular podcast. So definitely stay tuned.

Speaker 2 ([01:40](#)):

And in addition, we are also launching information for parents around test prep. We are especially giving parents a guide for the ISEE and the SSAT. It helps parents understand the way in which we work at evolved as well as the way that parents can partner with their children during the test prep process. And don't worry, I'm not giving you a huge to-do list. It's just a couple of really easy pieces for you to implement that will really make the most of this time for your child. And I just want to say we were at an event for our 10th birthday last month and there was a client there who both of her kids went through the test prep process with us and she went over to Amy Nathan, who's the head of our student services, and she said, it's so interesting because the school that we actually ended up going to, the one that we said yes to, didn't even really need this test.

Speaker 2 ([02:36](#)):

They actually were test optional and they didn't need the test. But we are so glad we went through the process because it really was important for our children to shore up all of those academic skills to also just go through a studying process of that magnitude with success. And to get to the point of feeling confident when taking a standardized test is something that I am so glad we gave our kids, and that was really, really important feedback for us to get because it's so in alignment to what we want to be putting out into the world, which is this experience for kids where they learn and live well. And if your kid has to prepare for the ISEE, if they have to prepare for the SSAT here at Evolved, what we promise you is a partnership in which your child will, yes, learn the content and the strategy and the pacing and the skills they need to know.

Speaker 2 ([03:36](#)):

But they will ultimately come out of this evolved. They will come out of this with skills that they need for life. They will be able to problem solve. They will be able to write a cohesive essay on demand. They will be able to understand reading at a higher level and math at a higher level. They will have confidence that they can get through something that is anxiety provoking and in the healthiest of ways. These are all important experiences for developing children, and the test is a catalyst to get us through all of that. So doesn't that sound exciting, right? This is great. So we're going to get into this test. I'm going to give you everything that you need to know and again, hopefully you'll come and work with us. We will give you our guide that we give all of our families this year.

Speaker 2 ([04:22](#)):

We've just put it together. It's absolutely one of the most comprehensive things we've done here and I'm so proud of our team, Amy, Nathan and Steff Blackmon and Taulant Ibraj and all of the people that do test prep here at Evolved Education Company are just exceptional and always are willing to come together and share what they have experienced and what they know and that is really special. So thank you to everyone who helped with today's episode content. First of all, let's just get into a couple things you need to know. First is the names of these tests. So ISEE and SSAT may be acronyms that you've never heard of but you know have to get into it. So let's learn about it. ISEE is the independent school's entrance exam. You can take it starting for applications in grade two all the way through high school. There's a primary two, a primary three, and a primary four exam.

Speaker 2 ([05:12](#)):

These are done on the computer only and they are appropriate for the age group. So the reading levels of grade two is different than reading levels at grade four, but there's just reading and math components. There is an auditory comprehension component to the primary two only, and then you get into the lower level ISEE. This is for anyone applying to grades five and six. So certainly any of our middle school applicants will take the lower level ISEE. Please teach your children which level they're taking. It's always important. Sometimes we have kids coming into mock testing situations and they got the wrong exam. If the child knows which level they're taking, they can eliminate some of those human errors, but also they really need to take ownership of the test that they're taking. They're going to be the masters of this lower level ISEE. That's the goal.

Speaker 2 ([05:59](#)):

We really want to empower these kids through the process to own these tests, not to avoid them, right? That's not the skill we want them to have. We want them to embrace the test as something they can do, almost like a rock climbing wall. They can get to the top of that promise you, you can do it, but you got to engage with that wall. You got to learn about it, you got to study it. You have to gain some skills to get there. That's what we're going to do together. So the first things first, you do need to know that the children will be tested on verbal reasoning, which will include synonyms and sentence completions, quantitative reasoning, which is problem solving type math, reading comprehension, math achievement. And then there will be an essay that's not scored, but it goes directly to any of the schools that you give this test to.

Speaker 2 ([06:44](#)):

I should pause here and tell you that you do not need to give the prospective schools all of your child's tests. You can wait, have them take the test, get the scores back, and then decide whether you're going to submit one test over the other. So there is a timed component to this. So most sections are between 20 minutes and 35 minutes for the lower level exam. And then you get to the middle level ISE. This is for grade seven and eight, and then you have the upper level, which is anyone applying to high school. All of those have the same flow, verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, reading comprehension, math achievement, and the essay. So students need to take this test one time per season. Now I will say at the time of this particular podcast recording, we are recording in May of 2024 and sometimes some of this other piece of information changes.

Speaker 2 ([07:37](#)):

So I always say to families, if you're not sure how many times the student can take the test or when they can take the test or how they can take the test because some of 'em are online, some are paper pencil, you will want to go to ERB learn.org to get the most current information for your child. In addition, here at

Evolved, all of our clients are invited to information sessions that we provide along the way, and we have them also for fee for families who are not our clients, but you can look out for them on our events page. And what we do is in August for example, we'll teach a class on how to register, how to file for accommodations. We'll teach about different ways that families might struggle or have setbacks and what to do about them, that sort of thing. So you can always come to us for those kinds of learning opportunities.

Speaker 2 ([08:22](#)):

Okay, now we're going to get into the secondary school and interim admissions test, and that's the SSAT. Now historically, the SSAT was really for boarding schools and the ISEE was for day schools, but the SSAT has now come into the market in a similar fashion to how we look at SAT and ACT. All of these tests are accepted in most of the private schools. Of course, I always preface this by saying, please just check with the schools you're applying to make sure they do take everything that you're preparing for. But historically speaking, in my experience, schools in the private school world take both the SSAT and ISEE. So the SSAT is just another option. Some kids do better because of the way the questions are asked and the format of the test perhaps is more conducive to how they like to work and how their brains work.

Speaker 2 ([09:10](#)):

What I will say is that you have a start test here as an elementary. SSAT is for students in grades three and four, and then you have the middle level SSAT for students currently in five through seven. And then the upper level is for students currently in eight through 11th grade. Now what you will find here is a little bit of a difference in how the questions are asked. So in verbal, you'll have synonyms still same as ISEE, but you'll have analogies. That's those comparative ones. Like frog is to tadpole as a dog is to puppy, right? They have the same relationship. So then we have reading comprehension and quantitative math section. So there's three sections. There's a math, verbal and reading, and then there's a writing sample as well. So just a little bit of a different way of constructing the test. But some of the other changes here is that when you're in the upper level test, you're going to be penalized for incorrect problems.

Speaker 2 ([10:09](#)):

So there's a little more strategy involved in this particular test. And again, if you're not sure which test is best for your child, you can have them take one of each in a mock testing sense and see what the child feels about it and also where the scores lie to begin with and then go in the direction where the strengths are always. So let me just tell you also a little bit about how we work with students here at Evolved. And again, we've just created some of this content. We have been wanting to do it for a very long time, but we're really excited about where we've landed in terms of the framework that we work with students around. It really incorporates what we know about teaching and learning research as well as what we know from best practices in test preparation. So there is a visual to this.

Speaker 2 ([10:56](#)):

So again, if you become our client, we give you all this material as a supplemental instructional piece for you. And what it is is really a triangle and at the bottom start with assess and customize. So we always want to understand our student as best we can. We want to hear from you, the parent as much as we can in the beginning, your child best, tell us about how they have been learning. Tell us about where their anxiety lies in this process. Tell us about what their goals are, where do they want to go with all of this and give us as much information about what will be successful for your child. As we can know, we may mock them right away, but again, we kind of look at anxiety on a continuum. There is always anxiety As part of this test prep process, what we want to do is make sure we channel that energy of anxiety into action, into competence within the testing situation.

Speaker 2 ([11:45](#)):

If a student is having so much anxiety that what we say is they're sort of underwater, they're gasping for breath, they're just barely making it up there, we didn't need shore up their skills a little bit more and give them more strategies to handle that so that they can then take that mock test. So we may or may not begin with a mock. Sometimes we delay it after a little bit of instruction, but a lot of times parents will help us make some of those decisions in the beginning. We always teach content. Often students need to learn vocabulary, mathematics, reading strategies, pure content. They need to understand content and we teach strategy. These are some test taking strategies that are very common for standardized tests. You need to back solve. Guess what? Eliminate the ones are not the answers. Make sure you understand that there are little tricks here and there with this section or that section that you can always employ.

Speaker 2 ([12:33](#)):

Let's write those strategies down and really rehearse them and you help yourself by telling us how those strategies actually work. Steff Blackmon just taught me something really brilliant, which is I teach kids how to think and that is exactly it. We want to teach kids how to think through taking this test. So no matter what question they see, even if it's something they've never seen, they know how to think through the solving process. So that is what our instructors are so good at doing. Then on the sides of the triangle going all the way up, we are building that endurance and stamina and we're increasing that pacing. We're working on both of those on the sides of the triangle all the way up to the top, which is confidence and successful outcomes. We are always about that and it is our pleasure to work with families and year after year after year after year, our students have the most successful outcomes because that is where we're working towards.

Speaker 2 ([13:29](#)):

It's our priority. So the next part of this is parents often come in and there's a lot that they need to learn in this process. So you all listening are probably parents and you are going to go through a learning process here too. So what does that learning process look like? Let me give you a bit of an overview in our documents that we give out again to families who come and work with us. We have a workbook that teaches you what you would want to know during this entire process and gives you so many different resources for anything that comes your way. In addition, our team, Steff Blackmon, Taulant Ibraj, Amy Nathan, give consultations to families all the time, whenever needed. You can book a 30 minute call with them and just sit down and say, okay, here's what's happening. I don't know how to exactly problem solve this.

Speaker 2 ([14:12](#)):

It's not the best. And they will give you some really great ideas and strategies. So think of this visual as a timeline. So all the way over on the left at the starting point is foundation. The foundation is your child is unique. You know them best, you the parent. We want to know what you know about them to create their prep program. So tell us everything. Tell us everything that's going on. Then we want to know where their goal is. We want you to also understand our model for our instructions so you know what to expect. Your child's going to be assessed, your child is going to learn content strategy, increase that endurance and stamina as well as increase their pacing so they can get to those goal scores and have that confidence. So that's our foundation is really, your child is unique. Tell us everything and also introduce the model for our instruction.

Speaker 2 ([15:01](#)):

Then we have starting points. So make sure that there's a couple of recommendations that we have. We always say it's a good to have about four to six months to prep. If we count, we'll work with you. Don't worry. But that's a good recommendation. It's a good idea to have two sessions a week. It's a good idea to

have two practice sessions a week. That's when your child's actually doing the practice and the memorizing and the working on the testing. It's a good idea to have four mock tests per cycle, per time that you're doing it. You can do more. Of course. It's a great idea to set up your materials, your supplies, and really work on your timeline. Figure out if you're going on paper or online, if you're going to register, how are you going to get that done and how many tests should you take?

Speaker 2 ([15:44](#)):

When should you take the test? What kinds of accommodations are needed? Once we get through all of that, these are all the starting points. We kind of work through all of that. Then we kind of work on, okay, now you are the parenting partner. Let's just talk through some of the ways that this is going to work for you. What do you need to learn? A lot of times our parents need to learn when and how to partner with their child. Sometimes we need parents to back off. Sometimes we need them to get more involved. It depends on the child of course, but we're always working on understanding that we're going to empower you to engage with the test and post schedules in your work area and having the materials ready for your child. We'll give you lots of strategies for engagement so that your child has success in that studying process, ways to memorize, ways to get the work done.

Speaker 2 ([16:30](#)):

Writing an essay on demand, teaching you a problem. What was clear about the homework or how was your lesson? Just giving you some ways to talk to your child about things. There's always going to be some setbacks. We welcome setbacks. They do not upset us in the slightest. We just want to understand them fully. We want to support children through them first and foremost. And the most important thing is whenever there is a setback, we want to understand and give families the notion of there is always a way forward. We can always evolve and move forward within whatever we're handed. So if a child is crying or having a mock test that goes badly or a comment, I don't want to do this comment. I don't want to do this. I don't want to go to this lesson today. How do you handle all of this?

Speaker 2 ([17:16](#)):

How do you handle it if the child says it's boring? All of this is stuff that we've seen and we know, but also it's super important to know that there's ways forward here that builds skills for everyone involved. And that's the key, right? So lastly, there's going to be this taking of the test and you're going to get to this point where we're taking the test and we want to educate you. We want to educate your child if something goes wrong, what do you do? If you're in a testing center and the test is weird or there's a weird noise and it's distracting, and how do you handle all of the things that come your way in these? We will educate you ahead of time so that you will know how to handle these kinds of things. But first and foremost, if you want to know about that, you want to make sure that the child's educated, that they need to tell somebody before they leave the room.

Speaker 2 ([18:01](#)):

If something has happened, they should not leave the room to tell you and then you handle it because there's too much room there for you to get involved and change the story and all of this. So it's really important to empower the child to go to the proctor and let them know what's going on and document it and all of this, and then of course tell you, okay, but we also help families with interpreting results or knowing when to stop the test taking process. Sometimes we encourage families to keep going. Other times it might make sense to not keep going. And obviously we don't ever want to be here, but what to do if the goal scores aren't met? How do we adjust? How do we change? How do we navigate those kinds of situations? And of course, how to submit to schools. So all of this is covered in addition to the test prep that we do because we recognize that families you are learning in addition to your child.

Speaker 2 ([18:49](#)):

That is the whole thing. So you need support to get through this as well as your child and you will. And then at the other end, you will be just, as I mentioned, our client telling us in the earlier part of this podcast, she will be you, which will be hopefully lovely where she'll say we are at a school which either needed the test or didn't, but we're so happy we went through this process. It was such a good one for our entire family. And by the way, it wasn't a good one in a way that was void of any challenge or didn't have any hardship to it. That wasn't the case. There were challenges and there were hard things that happened. But with the support and with all of the skills that we were able to give, both the parents as well as the children, we are able to get through this in a way that is successful and does ultimately reach our goal, which is to learn and live well.

Speaker 2 ([19:38](#)):

So I appreciate your time today in listening to today's podcast. I hope you found it very helpful. And again, some resources for you. Just to end the podcast, first of all, just remember we are publishing our second version of the 10 Steps to Private School admissions. It's the team edition and this is going to be coming out by the end of May. And we are also doing some amazing talks with some financial institutions and alumni groups at different colleges. And we're using that book just as an additional resource. So we decided to make it available to the entire community that we serve in. So we can hopefully check that out. It'll be available on Amazon. And then we also have again, our ISEE and SSAT tutoring that's available. You can do that in home or online with also teachers who recognize learning differences. And you also get within that anybody who preps with us gets the resources that I've just gone through the model as well as the parenting workbook that helps you understand how to go through this process and learn as well.

Speaker 2 ([20:45](#)):

And if you need very consulting around the test prep process in any point of it, maybe to make up your schedule or to go through results or to figure out a way through a setback or a challenge or whatever have, you can book a consultation with one of our test preparation consultants and they will help you through anything that you need. So we really have it covered from understanding the process at top level to a very individualized high level support piece. I'm super thrilled to be able to share that with you today. So I appreciate you of course, tuning in to be evolved and for caring so much about your child's education. It is my pleasure to be here with you each month, and I love all of the feedback that we get as well. And I do want to say that I'm very active on our socials.

Speaker 2 ([21:32](#)):

We have an NYC Schools group on Facebook. We have our Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn and Twitter X account. And I always try to respond whenever I can to anyone's questions and give even sometimes a video or something to share how to get through something. So if that helps you, please engage with us there and I'd love to hear from you and help you through anything that you're going through. And I thank my team again for their input and just tireless dedication to our mission of learning and living. Well. You all are just amazing to work with, and it's really obviously an important part of what makes Evolve so special is that we have this huge, amazing expert team of just people who add to my experience as an educator every single year and also who are extremely dedicated to our clients and families and are always taking things to the next level in their evolution. So with that, I wish you the very best month and I will see you or hear from you in June.

Speaker 1 ([22:38](#)):

This transcript was exported on May 10, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Thank you so much for joining us today on Be Evolved. We hope you learn something and that you can take direct action toward helping your student to learn. Well. If you enjoyed this content, please consider subscribing or writing a review. This is how this information gets to others who could benefit from it. Our education systems are complex, vast, and various, and the student you're parenting and teaching is unique. Thus, if you could benefit from one-to-one holistic guidance provided by educational experts, please visit us at www.evolvededucationcompany.com. If you have any questions you'd like to ask or ideas for this show, please email us at admin@evolveded.com. That's A-D-M-I-N at E-V-O-L-V-E-D eed.com. We are so pleased to serve you and connect you with the best educational expertise.