



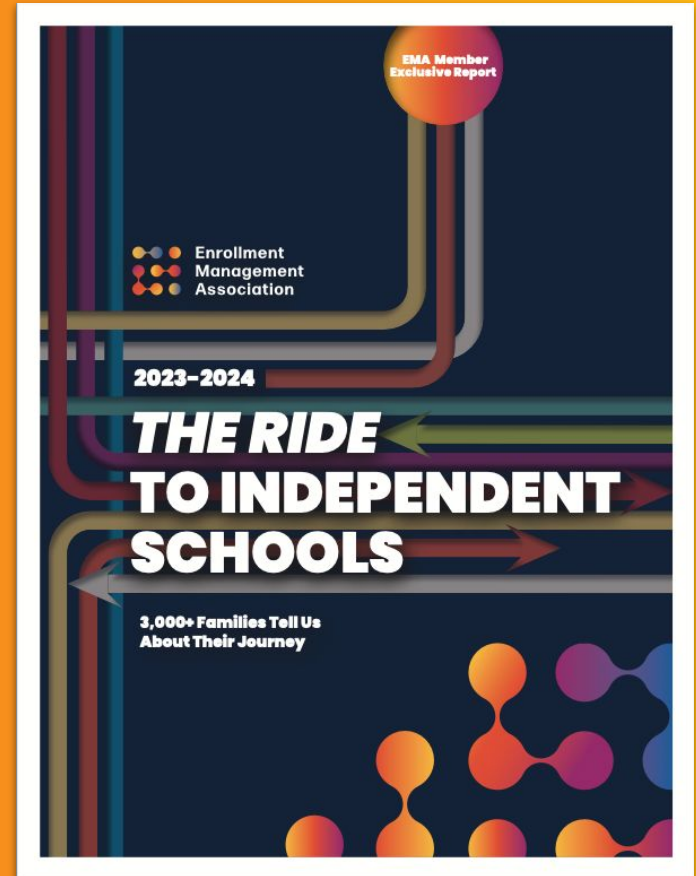
What Parents Want: An Easier Application Process



The 2024 Ride to Independent Schools

- Enrollment Management Association member-exclusive benefit
- Created from listening to over 3,000 parents
- In collaboration with Mission & Data

enrollment.org/ride



Insights From the Ride Report

55%

Rated the application process as a 7 or higher on a 10-point scale (a 12% increase from the 2020 survey).

49%

Said the work to apply was more than expected.

39%

Said essays are stressful for students.

“ I have been through college admissions with an older child, and the level of stress on my fifth grader was substantially higher than on a high school junior.

And for schools who say they care about the emotional well-being of children, putting such strain on their applicants diminishes their claim.”

— A SURVEYED PARENT

“The time required to attend events, complete applications, and prepare for testing is prohibitive for families who may only have one parent working full time, particularly at hourly-based compensation. . . .

The economic bias in the application process alone was astounding.”

— A SURVEYED PARENT

“I wish it was streamlined more—like the Common App when you apply to colleges. It was very time-consuming, and the amount of time that was spent on the applications for each school felt slightly gratuitous.”

— A SURVEYED PARENT

Why didn't these families use a common app?

37%

Schools they applied to didn't accept a common application.

40%

Didn't know a common application was an option.

7%

Believed their chances for acceptance were better using the school's application. This jumps to 40% for applicants from African countries and 46% from China.

The Rising Tide of Applicant Families

GENERATION	BORN	% SURVEYED
Generation Z	1998–2012	3%
Millennials	1981–1997	9%
Generation X	1965–1980	86%
Baby-Boomers	1946–1964	2%

- Baby-Boomer-led families are aging out of the application process
- Generation X comprises the vast majority of current applicant parents
- Millennials and Gen Z are on the rise, which will signify a shift in parent expectations

What do we know about Gen Z?

A recent [Stanford Report](#) provides insight.

- Often called **digital natives**, Gen Z has never known a world without the internet.
- Gen Z expects—and demands—change, having grown up amidst technological advancements.
- Gen Z embraces diversity and cares about mental health.



“ I came to understand that Gen Zers are, on the whole, much better adapted to life in a digital age than those of us who are older and that they can be very frustrated by what appear to them to be outdated and often irrelevant ways of doing things.”

— ROBERTA KATZ, FORMER SENIOR RESEARCH SCHOLAR AT STANFORD'S CENTER FOR ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES; [STANFORD NEWS](#)

Meet Rising Expectations With the Standard Application Online (SAO)

As the most widely used common K–12 application, the SAO is ideally suited to the inclinations of Millennials and Gen Z-led families.

The SAO is an EMA member-exclusive benefit.



SAO By the Numbers

574,457

All-time SAO applications submitted.

400+

Participating schools.

11,482

SAO searches this year for EMA member schools that don't currently accept the SAO.

53,851+

Estimated hours families would have saved if those schools accepted the SAO. **That's over 6 years of time!**

THE EMA VISION

**To champion transformational
education journeys.**

One momentous way EMA champions transformational education journeys is by building relationships with community-based organizations.

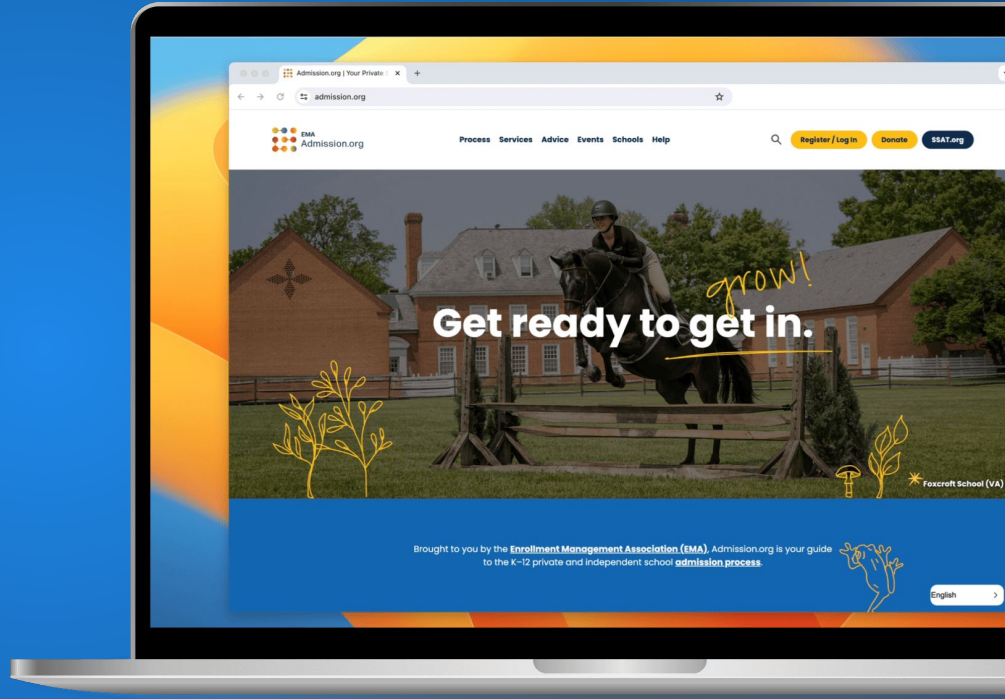
5,300

SAO applications submitted this year alone from CBO candidates.

- 360 Academic Sports Academy
- A Better Chance
- Alexander Twilight Academy
- Alma del Mar Charter School
- Breakthrough New York
- Christina Seix Academy
- CitySquash
- Covenant Preparatory School
- Daniel Murphy Scholarship Fund
- George Jackson Academy
- Grace Academy
- Harlem Lacrosse and Leadership
- Hartford Youth Scholars
- Inspiring Young Minds
- Institute for Educational Advancement
- KIPP SoCal
- New Age Prep
- Oliver Scholars Program
- Our Sisters' School
- Paul Robeson Charter School
- Rainier Scholars
- Reach for Excellence
- SEEDS
- TEAK Fellowship
- The Boys' Club of New York
- The Steppingstone Foundation
- The Wight Foundation
- Wadleigh Scholars Program

Admission.org

A trusted EMA resource helping families navigate the independent school application process, Admission.org is changing the SAO funnel.



Admission.org By the Numbers

User traffic this application year:

271,377

Unique users.

13%

Year-over-year user growth. Over 300K users last year.

36%

New users from referral (e.g., links from schools and SSAT.org).

38%

New users from organic search (e.g., Google).

Audience by Country

Year-over-year user growth by country (all over 1K users):

- United States: +5%
- Canada: +3%
- France: +154%
- China: -14%
- India: -22%
- South Korea: +60%
- Nigeria: +80%
- United Kingdom: +33%
- Hong Kong: +5%
- Saudi Arabia: +282%
- Australia: +44%
- Japan: +30%
- South Africa: +79%
- Mexico: +17%
- Germany: +27%
- Singapore: +17%

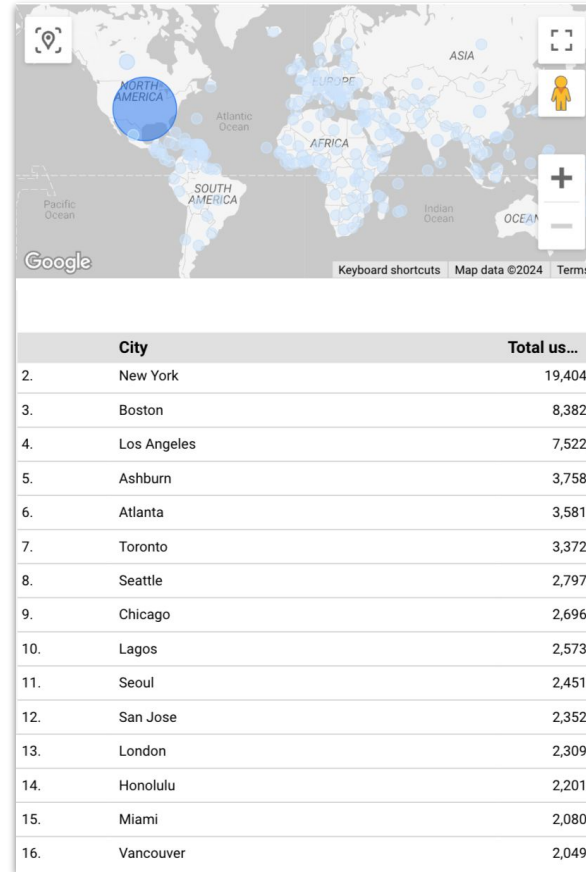


COUNTRY	USERS
United States	182K
Canada	15K
France	5.9K
China	5.7K
India	4.7K
South Korea	4.5K
Nigeria	4.1K

Audience by City

Year-over-year user growth by city :

- New York: 0%**
- Boston: +27%
- Los Angeles: +7%*
- Ashburn: +22%*
- Atlanta: -11%*
- Toronto: -6%*
- Seattle: +6%*
- Chicago: +14%*
- Lagos: +106%*
- Seoul: +47%*
- San Jose: +0%
- London: +12%*
- Honolulu: -18%
- Miami: +58%*
- Vancouver: +11%*



*Cities with less than 5 SAO schools within 100 miles.

**New York meets the 100-mile criteria but there aren't 5 within the city.

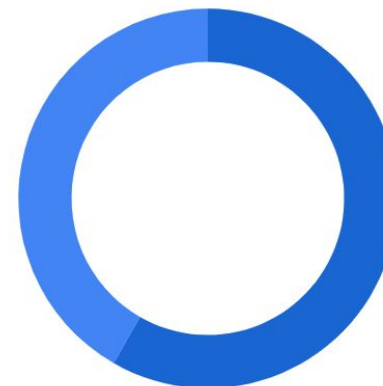
*Data from 8.1.23 – 3.13.24

Audience Demographics

GENERATION % of Users

Generation Z	26%*
Millennials	40%
Generation X	25%
Baby-Boomers	9%

*Google Analytics doesn't report on users under 18 so it is likely the percentage of Gen Z users doing their research is much higher.



● FEMALE

58.3%

↑ 8.4%

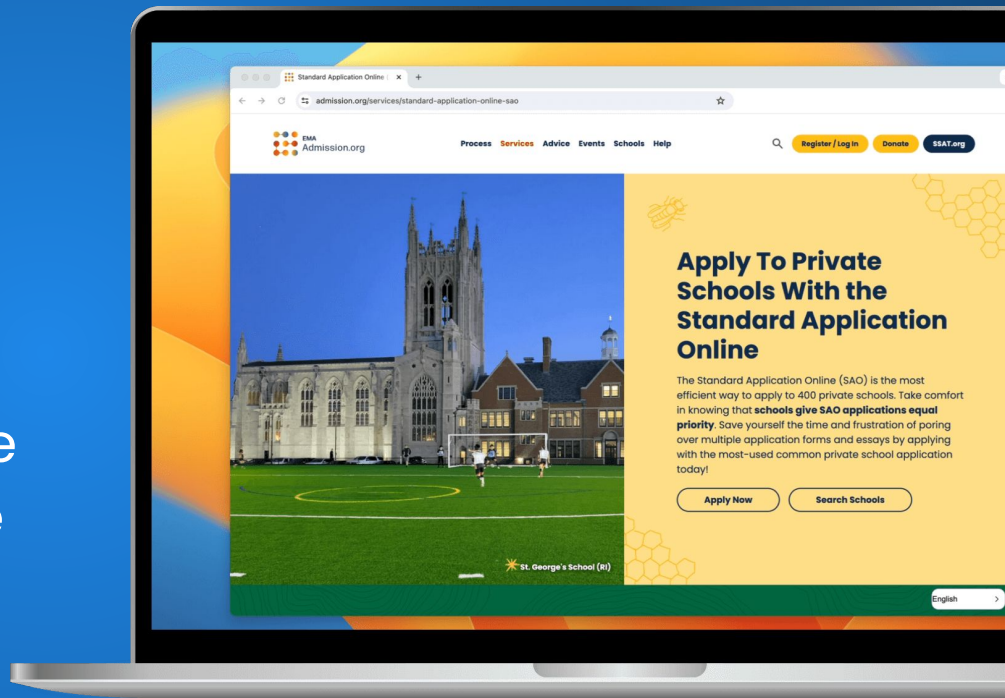
● MALE

41.7%

↓ 1.9%

40%

of Admission.org users this year visited the SAO page—the most popular page on the site by **over 200,000 views!**



Admission.org Impact on SAO Applications

This admissions season, Admission.org traffic has referred:

15,802

SAO accounts.

27,120

Applications created.

1.7

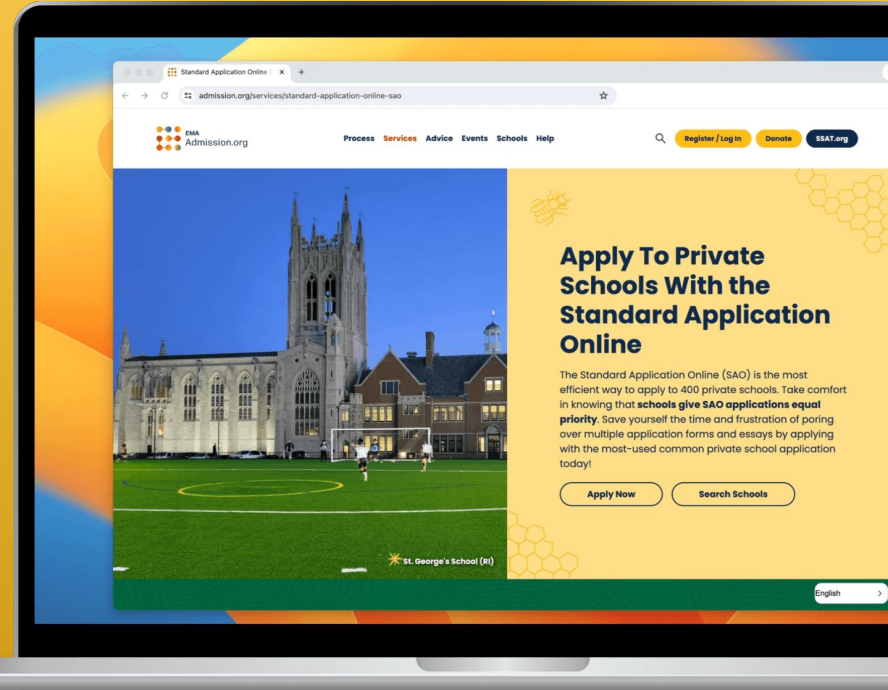
Applications per account, below the average of 3 for all users.

90%

SAO applications created with the “interested in” flag turned on.

What does all this data really mean?

- The SSAT is no longer the sole driver for SAO usage.
- Admission.org is introducing new families to the SAO in day school markets and worldwide.
- Chicken or egg? Many SAO users referred from Admission.org aren't fully receiving the time-saving benefits because they are in day school markets where the SAO isn't widely accepted.



When schools accept the SAO, families save time...

- Inputting profile and demographic data
- Writing a single-set of student essays
- Crafting a single parent statement
- Understanding and managing applications through a consolidated dashboard
- Managing recommendations and transcripts



Those time savings add up fast!

14

Hours per 3 applications.

28

Hours per 5 applications.

49

Hours per 8 applications.

Admissions teams save time, too!

- Fully online application and school dashboard
- Data authentication on addresses for consistent input
- Responsive member support
- Integrations with all major Enrollment Management Systems



SAO Integration Partners

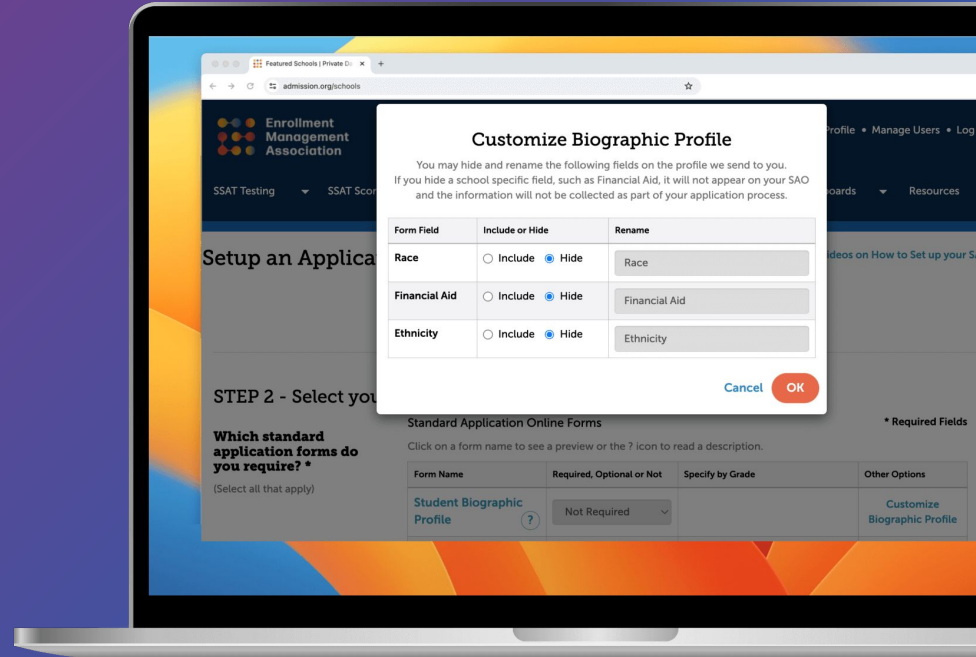
 blackbaud® FINALSITE proof
+geist
communitybrands® OpenApply VERACROSS®

Community Brands includes the former inResonance, Senior Systems, and Ravenna platforms. Finalsite is the former SchoolAdmin system.

NEW FEATURE!

SAO race and ethnicity enhancement:

- Proactively aligns with U.S. Supreme Court ruling against race-conscious admissions in higher education.
- Allows schools to hide race, ethnicity, and financial aid information from the application.
- Schools can reveal the data at any point if necessary.



Families have spoken.

“For only applying to four schools, it was a mountain of work since all four required their own essays.”

“Too many websites to keep track of and deadlines to follow. Lots of tedious work to get transcript requests and recommendations sent to the school from each school.”

“*The amount of essays with different word counts was ridiculous. My daughter did 54 long and short answers, but while some had similar questions each required too much work.*”

“**The process itself is basically a part-time job.**”

These SAO schools are listening.

Andrews Osborne Academy (OH)
Asheville School (NC)
Avon Old Farms School (CT)
Berkshire School (MA)
Blair Academy (NJ)
Brewster Academy (NH)
Brooks School (MA)
Canterbury School (CT)
Cardigan Mountain School (NH)
Central Catholic High School (MA)
Cheshire Academy (CT)
Concord Academy (MA)
Cranbrook Schools (MI)
Culver Academies (IN)
Doane Academy (NJ)

Dunn School (CA)
Emma Willard School (NY)
Episcopal High School (VA)
Fountain Valley School (CO)
George School (PA)
Holderness School (NH)
Hopkins School (CT)
John Burroughs School (MO)
Kent School (CT)
Loomis Chaffee School (CT)
Mercersburg Academy (PA)
MICDS (MO)
Middlesex School (MA)
Millbrook School (NY)
Milton Academy (MA)

Miss Porter's School (CT)
Northfield Mount Hermon (MA)
Peddie School (NJ)
Pomfret School (CT)
Princeton Day School (NJ)
Proctor Academy (NH)
San Domenico School (CA)
St. George's School (RI)
Stevenson School (CA)
Tabor Academy (MA)
Taft School (CT)
The Masters School (NY)
Virginia Episcopal School (VA)
Williston Northampton School (MA)
Westtown School (PA)

Will yours?

*Representative sampling of the
400+ SAO schools.

What's next?

Member schools: Contact your EMA account representative if you have questions about your SAO configuration.

New schools: Let's find a time to talk! Simply fill out our quick inquiry form: enrollment.org/inquire or use the QR code.

