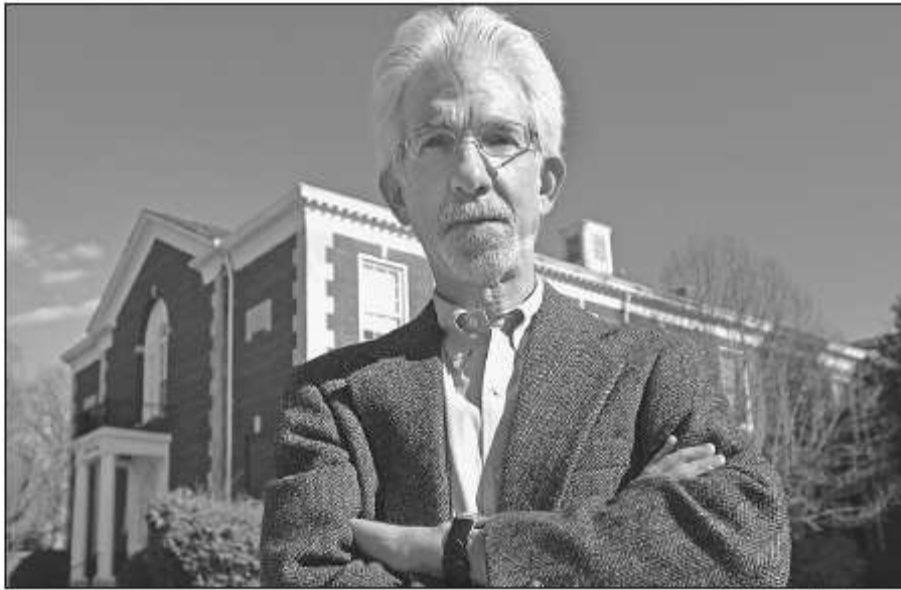


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CH N G THE CURRENT

SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS



Bill Petros/The Current

Leonard Jewler recently conducted an analysis that examined the college admissions for members of Lafayette Elementary's Class of 2000.

Lafayette study eyes college years

By **TERESA G. GIONIS**
Current Correspondent

A recent report by Chevy Chase resident Leonard Jewler analyzes the college admissions of Lafayette Elementary's 2000 graduating class, determining that the quality of college attended was not affected by whether students attended public or private high school.

Jewler, who has 20 years of professional experience in public-interest analysis, has a son who graduated with the Lafayette class of 2000 and attended Wilson High School. Jewler initially took this project on to satisfy a personal

curiosity.

"If you are a parent in Northwest Washington, this is a common conversation once your child is in fifth or sixth grade," he said. "Should I send my kid through Deal and Wilson, or should we go private? And what does that mean for his or her chances of getting into a good college?"

He wanted parents to have more than just anecdotal evidence on which to base their decisions. "Unless you have a neighbor or friend that attends Deal and Wilson, you are likely to have misperceptions about those schools, because often the media is too critical," said Jewler.

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His study came about in large part because of data that fell into his lap. Last May, the 2000 Lafayette class organized a reunion picnic at the Lafayette playground. Most were about to graduate from high schools throughout the D.C. metro area.

At the picnic, a special edition of Lafayette's weekly newsletter, the Tuesday Bulletin, was distributed, detailing the post-graduation plans for each class member. Jewler realized the information gave him enough data to answer some questions he had grown curious about. For example, what number of Lafayette students went to public high schools and what number to private? And did the student admissions to public versus private colleges and universities vary between public and private school attendees?

Using the Tuesday Bulletin data, the college and university rankings from U.S. News & World Report,

and some follow-up interviews with individual students, as well as the principals of Deal, Wilson and Lafayette, Jewler assembled his report. It is filled with bar graphs, tables and photos of the Lafayette grads at different stages of their school careers. It looks only at the schools the students were enrolled in — not those they decided not to attend.

Among Jewler's conclusions was that approximately equal numbers of Lafayette students attended public versus private high schools, and there was no significant difference based on gender in the rankings of schools where students enrolled. But female students tended to enroll in better national universities — as opposed to liberal arts colleges, a distinction made by U.S. News & World Report — than did males.

Schools such as University of Michigan, Yale University, College of William & Mary, Sarah Lawrence College, University of Wisconsin, Emory University and

Georgetown University are included in the list of places members of the Lafayette class of 2000 are now attending. Jewler's son is a student at Oberlin College.

"I wasn't surprised by anything I found in the data," said Jewler. "Because I had already heard anecdotally from my son's friends what their college plans were, I knew that many of them were going to excellent schools."

Jewler believes the issue warrants further study, and he is particularly interested in studying data from other elementary schools that feed Wilson High School and the area's private schools.

Although conducting the study took a great deal of his time, Jewler said he would like to do it again this year, in order to have even stronger data. "My main interest is making these results available to the public. I am just a citizen who wants to contribute something valuable to the public discussion," he said.

The full Lafayette study is available at evernowchronicles.org.