



SAT? But We're Canadian, eh!

As a human resources and relocation professional, you try to make sure all the bases are covered when planning a major family move. But sometimes even the most successful relocation can turn up a few glitches down the road.

Take the case of the Millers, for example. Mr. Miller is a Toronto-based financial officer who was moved two years ago to head office in Cincinnati. The relocation worked beautifully. The family found their dream home and the children quickly settled into their new schools. They even became Cincinnati Reds baseball fans. The Millers' relocation was cited as a model move by the company's relocation specialist - until the family prepared to move back to Ontario.

Susan, the Millers' oldest daughter, was now in her grade 12 year, preparing to graduate from an American high school and submitting applications to Ontario universities. During this process, the family discovered that, in order to be admitted to an Ontario university, Susan would have to write the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs), even though she was a Canadian citizen and had pursued all but the last two years of her schooling in Ontario. Understandably upset, Susan had to scramble to rearrange her schedule to prepare and study for the SATs and meet the university application deadlines.

Susan and her family had assumed that because she was from Ontario and applying to Ontario universities, she would not have to write the SATs. This is a common assumption that is often overlooked when moving families with requirement for American students applying to American

universities. However, SATs are also a requirement for anyone graduating from the American school system who wants to apply to Ontario universities, regardless of country of origin.

Susan was lucky. The university she wanted to attend only required her to write the SAT I, a measure of verbal and math reasoning skills. Other Ontario universities also require that applicants take three additional SAT II tests, which focus on particular subject areas such as science, math, English and other languages. SAT I and II are standardized measures of a student's academic achievement. Because courses and standards can vary greatly from one high school to the next, Ontario and American universities see these exams as a dependable way of assessing whether a student can tackle post-secondary work.

Of course, universities look at other information such as high school records, essays, recommendations, interviews, and extracurricular involvement when making admission decisions, but the SATs are a key requirement.

SAT testing is conducted throughout the year at specified locations in every state and at international locations. Students prepare for the exams by studying independently or by participating in intensive test preparation courses, some of which involve 40 or more hours of work. If you wish more specific information about the SAT exams, you may visit the College Board web site at www.collegeboard.com.

In addition to writing the SATs, Susan was required to 'fill out a specific form (e.g., 105F) available through the Ontario University Application Center (OUAC) in Guelph, Ontario. This form is needed only for the programs which appear in the Listing of University Programs and Codes for Ontario Universities, mostly undergraduate programs. Separate application packages for programs such as Dentistry, Common Law, Medicine, Teacher Education (consecutive Programs) or Rehabilitation Sciences are available from OUAC. For more information, you may visit the OUAC web site at www.compass.ouac.on.ca.

The Millers' case illustrates just one of the pitfalls that can occur when a relocation involves school-aged children. Parents are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of their move on their children's education and are reluctant to relocate if the move jeopardizes their children's academic opportunities. If a move involves unforeseen educational surprises, the success of the overall relocation may be at risk. In the extreme, this can translate into lost dollars or a targeted manager who refuses to relocate.

If you are relocating a family with school-aged children, here are some of the questions you and the family should consider:

- Has the child been diagnosed with a learning exceptionality, such as gifted, learning disabled or a speech or language disorder?
- Is the child currently enrolled in an enrichment program such as music, sports, or fine arts?

- Is the family looking for specialized services such as daycare, after-school care, academic pre-school or a Heritage program?
- Is the child currently enrolled in a second language program such as French immersion or Spanish? Is the student non-English speaking?
- Is the adolescent currently attending high school in Grade 10 or beyond, transferring between a semestered and a non-semestered school, or preparing for IB, OAC, AP, A-level or OAC credits?
- Is the child under 6 years of age currently enrolled in a full-time preschool or academic program?
- Is the relocation taking place during the school year or overlapping two school years because of a cross-hemisphere relocation (i.e., moving between Australia and Canada)?
- Is the child currently in a private or independent school or is a request for private schooling being made in the target destination?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, you should consider the services of an educational consultant to ensure a smooth school transition. An experienced educational consultant can provide an independent, professional approach to identifying the school options that match a family's needs. Consultants take into account the full range of public and/or private schools available in the family's new community, and provide objective information and guidance to match a school with the children's learning needs and the family's educational values. Children's educational needs are far too important to be overlooked in a major relocation.

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