

To the parent/guardian of an awesome IHS Student,

Welcome! Thanks for your interest in signing your student up for the East Coast trip with Smithsonian Tours. As you'll learn in this meeting, I've supervised these trips before, both as tour leader and as a chaperone, and can honestly say that it's one of the most valuable educational experiences that I've come across.

Very quickly, let me get to the question that many of you want answered immediately: "How much does it cost?" I've done East Coast trips with several different organizations, and Smithsonian easily offers the best deal from what I've seen: 8 days - \$1866 for students, \$2151 for adults. The adult price is higher because we book you 2 to a hotel room instead of 4 to a room like we do with students. This price includes airfare, nightly accommodation, breakfast and dinner each day on tour, admittance fees for museums and the Broadway show, medical coverage for most accidents, and transportation by bus while on tour. **Not** covered are lunches, souvenirs, travel insurance*, and tips for the tour director/bus driver.

What will we be seeing? Well, here's a general overview (subject to minor changes...):

Washington, D.C.

The famous monuments
Arlington Nat'l Cemetery
Mount Vernon
Supreme Court/Congress/White House
Smithsonian Museums
Holocaust Museum
National Archives

New York City

Empire State Building
Ground Zero
Times Square + Central Park
Ellis Island + Statue of Liberty
Broadway Play

Philadelphia

Independence Hall
"Rocky" Steps
Irish Potato Famine Memorial

Boston

Prudential Skywalk
USS Constitution
Bunker Hill Memorial
Lexington and Concord
Quincy Market + Harvard University

I sincerely hope that you and/or your student will be able to join us in celebrating our shared American heritage on this trip. Each day, we're really running at top speed for 12 – 16 hours or sometimes even longer, so if you're going to invest this amount of money into this endeavor, make sure it's something you really want to do. Attitude is everything. ☺

I'm sad to be including this paragraph, but it needs to be discussed. In the past, some students have signed up for the trip, then been disqualified because of their poor behavior at school. I'm thrilled to have the chance to take motivated and disciplined students on an 8 day transcontinental trip, but simply won't allow individuals who want to screw around to detract from the magic of this week. When possible, I will send home a written warning before removing a student from our roster in the hopes that we can have a meeting about the behavior in question. In serious disciplinary cases, however, no warning will be given. Students who engage in serious rule violations while on the trip will be immediately sent home at their guardian's expense.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions. I look forward to working with each of you as we try to make this wish a reality for these deserving students.

Very sincerely,

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* - Travel insurance costs \$85 in addition to the costs of the excursion, and covers situations like pulling out of the trip after you've signed up.