

## Department Description: Academic Services

Sayre School is proud to have a robust learning and support services program. We pride ourselves on having students that are scholars, athletes, artists, and everything in between. The Academic Services department is focused on providing both direct and indirect support to develop students' academic and functional skills. With a staff of highly qualified professionals, we use research-based methods and strong communication/collaboration with teachers and families to take students to their next level. We strive for students to feel confident in their academic abilities and to have the skills to advocate for themselves.

Opportunities for support at Sayre (Grades K-12):

### ➤ **Learning Specialist Support**

- When working with a Learning Specialist, students focus on their content-specific work. This also includes support on managing the workload and due dates that students face. Students are taught strategies in executive function as well as increasing their academic skills such as studying, written responses/essays, annotations, note-taking, etc. Learning Specialists support history, the sciences, and English classes and a specialist who focuses on math. Math support is available in all three divisions, and specific supported courses in the Upper School include Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.

### ➤ **Reading Specialist Support**

- Students will participate in an Orton-Gillingham based program, which are intervention programs that use multi-sensory approaches to phonics-based reading. Our Reading Specialists have Master's degrees in Reading Intervention plus additional coursework and certification(s). During sessions, specialists use these methods to increase reading decoding and comprehension. In addition to this, Middle School and Upper School students may work with a Reading Specialist on novel work and assigned written assignments.

### ➤ **Documentation of Supports**

- **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**
  - Students who have participated in a complete educational or psychological evaluation and have received a diagnosis from a professional (psychologist, doctor, etc.) are eligible for an Individual Learning Plan. This plan reflects what was found in the evaluation and will summarize

the findings, provide any noted classroom accommodations, and list appropriate testing accommodations. It should be noted that testing accommodations may not always be met due to the restrictions placed on specific testing (examples: standardized tests, ACT/SAT).

- **Statement of Accommodations**

- A statement of accommodations may be written for students with medically-based challenges that their doctor has documented. The plan includes an explanation of the diagnosis and the accommodations needed to meet the student's needs.

- **Functional Supports**

- Functional supports include both work with the Learning Specialists and coaching opportunities outside of Sayre. Upon recommendation, we can connect families with ADHD coaches who specialize in life skills, organizational strategy, time management, and the general ability to function within the expectations of being a student.

- **Pediatric Therapies**

- **Speech/Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy**

- Sayre works collaboratively with a variety of professionals who specialize in pediatric therapies. When a student is working with a speech or occupational therapist, we always try to connect teachers to the specialist in order to create a cohesive service for the student. Additionally, if students are not able to attend appointments outside of the school, we will allow for on-campus support.

- **Transitioning to College**

- The Director of Academic Services works closely with the college counseling team and Upper School families to ensure the transition to college is smooth. We begin conversations around ACT and College Board testing accommodations in the early years of Upper School and follow with supporting the transition to college. This may be providing documentation to the receiving school or advising the family on how to access needed support at the university level.

Ultimately, the goal of this department is to enrich student learning from a holistic perspective. We want to provide students more opportunities for learning academic content, and the skills to propel themselves forward in life. A Sayre student knows who they are, how they learn, and has strategies to get the most out of their education.

When working directly with one of our specialists, students and families can expect instruction tailored to their needs while also supporting their curriculum in the classroom. All students who work with Academic Services continue to follow the same expectations and curricular goals as their peers. The instructional program is closely coordinated with the classroom teachers, and the Learning Specialists have extensive knowledge of the courses that students take, and the methods being used. Since services are provided during the school day, our goal is to have a seamless transition between classes and sessions with this department.

Academic Services works with students for a variety of reasons. We work with many students who have diagnosed diverse learning needs. Other students do not. A student is not required to have a learning diagnosis to work with Academic Services. However, our deep knowledge of Universal Design of Learning and support strategies will benefit any student who works with us. Beyond the positive academic impact, the support of a specialist can ease feelings of frustration and being overwhelmed and can build self-awareness skills.

Outside of our direct support through the team of specialists, families and students work with the Director of Academic Services to set up plans and in-class support. From the start of the evaluation process to working closely to develop a plan that supports classroom accommodations, students and families build a relationship with the director that will last for years to come. The ILP and accommodations will travel with the students throughout their time at Sayre and can be updated to fit their most current needs. Once created, these plans are shared with staff that works directly with the student and accommodations are provided through the classroom teacher and supported by Academic Services as needed.

The Academic Services department is a multi-faceted group of professionals trained to support a variety of needs present in students. We prepare and manage the roster, assist families in finding support outside of school, if needed, and provide a vital service to the community.

### **Scheduling Sessions with Academic Services:**

Direct instructional support services are individualized for students who have a documented learning difference and also those who request the support of an Academic Service specialist, including those who need functional and organizational support.

Students are scheduled for Academic Services as space permits. Students with the greatest need are given first consideration. Planning for services starts in the spring prior to the school year. It is expected that students attend their scheduled sessions and communicate with their specialist if they are not able to attend (as developmentally appropriate).

The duration of services is determined by the amount of time scheduled for the class period that it is meeting, commonly 45 or 60 minutes. Lower School services are included in the cost of tuition, but Middle and Upper School support services are based on a fee schedule, available upon request. For Middle School students, services are provided during their electives, PE, or fine arts classes (never to exceed more than one class per week). Upper School students meet with specialists during their scheduled study hall.

### **Fee Schedule for Services**

Middle and Upper School supports are billed monthly through Sayre's business office. The family will receive an invoice through their Smart Tuition account. Billing is based on attendance in sessions, and rates are based on the length of the session and the number of students attending (individual vs. shared). Families can request that their student be in an individual and/or shared session, but it cannot be guaranteed.