



Position Title: Middle School Learning Specialist

Date Modified: June 8, 2022

FLSA Classification: Exempt

Reports to: Associate Head for Academic and Student Affairs

About St. John's Episcopal School

St. John's is an independent, coeducational Episcopal school serving approximately 500 students in grades pre-k through eight. Located in a park-like setting on 10 acres in East Dallas, the School offers its employees and students a supportive esprit de corps fueled by a common mission – one dedicated to a program of academic excellence designed to train the mind, strengthen the character, and enrich the spirit of each student in a Christian environment. We think of St. John's not only as a School, but also as a very special kind of community. We seek to employ people who – regardless of the role they play in the School – understand that they impact the lives of our students, families, and colleagues. The St. John's Code calls us to model honesty and respectfulness in our relationships, responsibility in the performance of our assignments, and a caring attitude that extends to all members of our community. Do you dream of becoming the best employee you can be? Of coming to work each day with a sense of mastery, belonging, and purpose? Of working with fun, collegial, collaborative, growth-minded professionals? If so, you could thrive at St. John's.

Position Purpose:

This full-time role is responsible for leading St. John's Academic Learning Support Program for fifth through eighth grade students, for managing the School's Learning Lab, and for providing individual and small-group direct support to Middle School students who have diagnosed learning differences.

The Middle School Learning Specialist is a key collaborator with students, parents and caregivers, Associate Heads, the Primary and Lower School Learning Specialist, the Director of Student Formation and Dean of Students, wellness clinic staff, faculty, admissions and enrollment personnel, leadership and administration, and outside professionals.

Key Accountabilities:

- In collaboration with the Primary and Lower School Learning Specialist, craft, implement, and manage a school-wide academic support process; provide oversight of the Middle School aspects of that process.
- Manage the School's Learning Lab by establishing, communicating, and maintaining usage guidelines and expectations; scheduling outside specialized professionals who provide services to Lower and Middle School students virtually or on campus; and supervising Middle School students who are working in the Learning Lab without a tutor.
- For Middle School:
 - Attend and participate in grade-level meetings to gather information on student progress and needs.
 - Lead Student Formation Team meetings to plan and follow up on interventions and support.
 - Lead the appropriate process for support when a student demonstrates a concerning pattern of performance.
 - Make recommendations and referrals for psychoeducational evaluation, screening, tutoring, and other services as appropriate.
 - Serve as student advocate and liaison by ensuring consistency and compliance and by maintaining regular contact with parents and educators.
 - Develop and maintain a program to teach Middle School students academic and executive functioning study skills. This includes meeting with groups of students regularly to assist in time management, organization, study skills, test-taking strategies, and workload balancing; it may also include teaching study skills classes.
- Manage the School's learning accommodation process for fifth through eighth grade students with a diagnosed learning difference, medication condition, or long- or short-term injury, which includes:
 - Develop and write Student Support Plans based on review and synthesis of psychoeducational evaluations, academic files, and standardized testing when applicable.
 - Consult with students, parents and caregivers, teachers, evaluators, tutors, and treating professionals; monitor student involvement and progress with outside professionals; adjust learning plans as needed.
 - At key transition points such as entry into Middle School or prior to eighth grade, meet with parents and homeroom teachers to review and receive parent approval of accommodation plans and/or to discuss student progress.
 - Work directly with faculty to ensure accommodations are implemented appropriately and effectively; meet with grade-level teams on a scheduled basis.
 - Maintain up-to-date learning support records so support and progress can be confidentially monitored.
 - Coordinate accommodations process related to standardized testing (e.g., ISEE, CTP, Milestones) and semester exams.
 - Monitor eligibility and file applications in a timely manner.
 - Advise families about documentation.
 - Provide supplemental testing and documentation, if appropriate.
 - Proctor extended-time exams.
- Consult with Middle School faculty and facilitate extended time accommodations for fifth through eighth grade students as needed.

- In collaboration with the Primary and Lower School Learning Specialist:
 - Coordinate the scope and sequence of the study skills curriculum, which will begin in third grade and progress through eighth grade.
 - Collaborate on the transition of students from Lower to Middle School.
 - On an ongoing basis, educate and advise faculty, staff, and administrators on learning differences, remediation, accommodations, teaching strategies, and the general needs and challenges of students who require additional academic support.
 - Oversee the School's standardized testing account(s) by completing annual renewals, calculating and purchasing stock, and opening, reviewing, closing test administrations, and preparing and sending reports to parents.
 - Plan and lead the School's standardized testing process for Middle School students; create and send parent and faculty communications.
 - Monitor and analyze norm-based test results, such as those from IXL, Membean, Literably, CTP, Milestones, or other. Provide summary and detailed information about analyses to faculty; discuss results with parents as needed.
 - Review analyses with Associate Heads to help identify areas of strength and need in the academic program.
 - Assist the Parent University coordinators with the organization and coordination of Parent University initiatives, especially as those relate to academic learning and learning differences.

Opportunities and Challenges:

The Middle School Learning Specialist plays a pivotal role in the life of many St. John's families. The Learning Specialist is a strong and valued member of the community who helps students develop the habits, skills, and attitudes they will hone throughout their middle school years in preparation for high school. The Learning Specialist must:

- Model the St. John's Code of respect, responsibility, honesty, and care.
- Develop trust and rapport with students, their families, and faculty and staff.
- Demonstrate clarity and promptness in verbal and written communication.
- Demonstrate strong listening skills.
- Demonstrate and exercise confidentiality regarding student personal and educational information.
- Embrace the School's Episcopal identity, ethos, and commitment to respecting the dignity of each individual.

Growth Mindset:

- Collaborate with colleagues on the development of curriculum and practice of instructional strategies in support of students who have learning differences.
- Leverage the knowledge, skills, and abilities of colleagues on the Student Formation Team in support of students' academic, social, and emotional needs.
- Pursue growth in relevant technology skills.
- Network with peers at other local and national independent and Episcopal schools.
- Demonstrate commitment to personal and professional growth. Able to meaningfully receive, reflect on, and apply feedback to one's professional growth.
- Attend conferences and professional meetings to remain current with role-specific curriculum, interventions, instructional strategies, culturally responsive instruction, and social and emotional learning to advance the role of the Middle School Learning Specialist.

Qualifications:

Candidates should have excellent interpersonal skills and also possess a deep understanding of the developmental needs of early adolescent and adolescent children. They should demonstrate a passion for working with both children and adults, and should clearly communicate a desire to collaborate with parents and caregivers, students, educators, administrators, and outside professionals.

- Bachelor's degree in education or a discipline related to special education required; advanced degree related to education preferred.
- Minimum of three years of experience supporting students who have learning differences.
- Independent school experience preferred.
- Strong knowledge of learning accommodations, assistive technologies, and learning resources.
- Extensive knowledge of learning differences, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, other language-based disorders, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.
- Experience with psychoeducational testing and reports, administering and interpreting assessments and test results, academic achievement, and diagnostic testing.
- Background and interest in guiding a program for middle school students in which all students experience success in learning.
- Experience in education practices, learning needs and related legalities, teaching or training students and faculty.
- Excellent organizational skills, internal motivation, and the capacity to establish and manage multiple priorities within a complex and fast-paced environment.
- Proven leadership, initiative, and communication skills.
- Must be proficient in use of technology, including the ability to work in online Student Information and Learning Management Systems, to schedule and conduct classes via Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and to use the Microsoft 365 Suite.

Requirements for the Working Environment:

- Maintain emotional control under stress.
- Ability to lift approximately 30 lbs.
- Ability to work for extended periods of time, including weeknights and weekends when required.
- Ability to work with children and adults in indoor and outdoor settings.
- Ability to work in on-campus, home, and field trip settings.
- Ability to participate as a chaperone on overnight field trips.

How to Apply:

For more information, or to submit your letter of interest and resume in PDF format, please contact:

Mrs. Pam Jordan, Associate Head for Academic and Faculty Affairs

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214-328-9131

In our commitment to diversity and equity, St. John's Episcopal School does not discriminate regarding race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, age, genetic information, disability, pregnancy, marital status, religion, military status, and/or any protected category. This commitment

extends to our employment, educational, admission, and financial-aid policies, and other school-administered programs.