



## Christopher Center Pathways Program

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Christopher Center Pathways Program at St. Paul Academy and Summit School is designed for students with high academic potential and a primary diagnosis of dyslexia. Using the Orton-Gillingham approach, the program supports students in their acquisition of skills in reading, spelling, writing, and math. For the 2024-25 academic year, the Pathways program will be available for Lower School students in Grades 3-5.

SPA's Pathways program is based on more than 60 years of research showing that students with dyslexia thrive as learners when given direct instruction in a multisensory, systematic, and sequential way. Students with dyslexia need teachers who understand how the dyslexic brain works and can help them develop new neural pathways for reading, writing, and spelling. Our Pathways faculty are master teachers who are trained in the Orton-Gillingham (OG) pedagogy and have deep experience teaching upper elementary-aged students.

At SPA, the Pathways program is transitional in nature. The program's goal is to provide a foundation for students with dyslexia to build the skills needed to meet and often exceed the benchmarks of SPA's academic program. Every year, SPA graduates numerous students with a dyslexia diagnosis; with the proper support, these students are excellent candidates for our academic program and enrich the community with their exceptional gifts.

The comprehensive tuition for the Christopher Center Pathways Program for 2024-25 is \$40,900. Financial aid is available for families who qualify.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

Students in the Pathways program are very much a part of the larger SPA community. In the Lower School, Pathways students work every day in small grade-level cohorts of 4-6 students with an OG-trained teacher for their literacy and math blocks. They join with their homeroom cohorts for the remainder of their academic day, including art, music and movement, PE, recess, lunch, assemblies, and our "mini" elective courses. Participation in the homeroom cohort and the larger SPA community provides a robust social base for students while maintaining the specialized support necessary for progress in literacy and math. A student's daily work in the Pathways program should replace the need for after-school tutoring in OG.

### ADMISSION CRITERIA

A student entering the Christopher Center Pathways Program will typically demonstrate high intellectual potential and lower than expected academic performance due to a documented learning difference established through psychoeducational testing. A successful Pathways student will have solid abstract reasoning abilities and the potential to succeed in a college preparatory academic environment with the appropriate support; students also need to be receptive to new ways of learning and be willing to work hard to acquire strategies as a means of achieving academic independence and success.

The Pathways admission selection process for Grades 3-5 includes:

- ◆ **Completion of the SPA Application for Admission**, which includes two teacher recommendations, the current school record/transcript, and a student visit.
- ◆ **Neuropsychological evaluation**: An educational psychological evaluation must be conducted by a licensed psychologist working independently of St. Paul Academy and Summit School and must be current within a two-year period at the time of application. To qualify for the program, a student must have a primary diagnosis of dyslexia and the ability to succeed in SPA's robust academic program.
- ◆ **Testing**: Applicants work with a member of the Admission team and the Director of the Center for Learning and Teaching to complete SPA admission testing.



*"The Christopher Center Pathways Program is an exciting endeavor for the Lower School. It will provide critical academic support for students with dyslexia, while providing the experiences and relationships that define the magic of SPA's Lower School. The addition of the program to our Lower School will enrich the whole community through effective pedagogical practices that help students develop both skills and confidence while maintaining strong connections to the broader program."*

—Beth Nelson, Lower School Principal



*"The Christopher Center Pathways Program builds on what we now know about the science of reading, brain development, and how to best support the gifts that children with dyslexia bring to a learning community. We know that early intervention is key to helping students with dyslexia, and we now have the tools to track literacy skill development and provide the more targeted interventions that the Pathways Program offers. The program's Orton-Gillingham curriculum will provide a foundation for acquisition of reading, writing, and math skills during the school day, preserving critical "down time" for students and their families outside of school hours."*

—Karen Rassmussen, Christopher Center Pathways Program Director

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE  
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