WOODSIDE PRIORY SCHOOL

THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING SPECIALIST

The Learning Specialist is appointed by the Head of School and is a member of the Department of Social-Emotional Counseling & Learning Support. The position reports to the Head of Upper School, Head of the Middle School and Director of Social-Emotional Counseling & Learning Support. It is the primary responsibility of the Learning Specialist to provide leadership, initiative in planning, coordinating and implementing the primary mission of the department, to identify and reduce barriers to learning, by supporting the whole student. The department aims to foster healthy individual, social, and academic development and resilience in our students. Systemic and collaborative in nature, our approach is about partnering—with the student’s innate resources and abilities, as well as the parents, faculty, staff and community strengths outside the Priory. We are dedicated to our students with learning differences and, to that end, work through the Academic Resource Center, in strong collaboration with faculty members, advisors, administrators, parents and the wider community outside the Priory.

DUTIES OF THE LEARNING SPECIALIST:

Overall:

- Reflect the Mission of Woodside Priory School to students, parents, and faculty
- Help move all students towards increasing self-advocacy and appropriately independent and interdependent academic work
- Supervise the activities of the Test Center Coordinator (if applicable)
- Supervise the Academic Resource Center (ARC)
- Provide in-service training, professional development and parent education for faculty, administration, parent and student groups on learning support related topics as requested
- Serve as the school’s SSD Coordinator with College Board and ACT
- Supervise the all-school testing program(s) for ERB, PSAT/NMSQT and AP testing, including maintaining records in SCOIR
- Develop, maintain, and communicate policies, procedures and protocols for serving students to reduce barriers to learning
- Prepare and maintain an up-to-date referral list of providers of psychoeducational and neuropsychological testing, tutoring, coaching and executive function skill-building
- Remain current with accepted and appropriate instructional theory, practice and research. Including engaging in regular and strategic professional development to advance the role of the Learning Specialist (including local and national seminars and conferences)
- Perform other duties assigned by the Head of Upper School and/or the Head of School

With Students:

- Engage and support students of varied identities, lifestyles, and beliefs
- Create and maintain a Personalized Learning Profile (PLP) system for all students with accommodations (and share that on Blackbaud and with each individual/family with the learning profile)
- Demystify learning differences to all students, especially those who are aware of their learning profile
• Provide one-on-one and small-group support/instruction for students, both in push-in and pull-out environments
• Oversee the educational programs and accommodations for students with documented learning differences
• Apply for and interface about accommodations with standardized testing companies, e.g., College Board and ACT for students, as needed
• Follow up on discussions and/or specific implementation strategies to reduce academic barriers to learning for all students
• Help to supervise and support students on academic probation
• Construct and implement the Tutorial Assistance Policies and Tutorial Programs
• Serve as a proctor for standardized and classroom testing whenever possible or work to arrange such proctoring

With Parents:
• Communicate with parents about how to receive accommodations at Priory and on standardized tests, how to secure a learning evaluation and explain the impact of diagnoses on learning inside and outside the classroom
• Identify and support learning styles of individual students based on:
  o Classroom and Study Hall observations
  o Meetings with Faculty Members
  o Meetings with Parents (and Students)
  o Conversations with outside resource providers
  o Reading and translating for others, psychoeducational and neuropsychological reports
  o Monitoring ongoing student learning progress

With Faculty, Staff and Administrators:
• Attend all faculty meetings and (whenever possible) school functions to become a part of the Priory community
• Participate in, as necessary, weekly Student of Concern and Staffing meetings in order to track students with academic and/or social-emotional barriers to learning
• Meet weekly with the Social-Emotional counselors to coordinate interventions with overlapping students
• Collaborate frequently with faculty members to help them understand the learning styles of students (both neurotypical and atypical styles), learning differences and disabilities and support their work with students
• Develop solid knowledge of the Curriculum Maps, Scope and Sequence and all other grade level curriculum in each content area taught, including the essential information, concepts and skills so as to better support students and assist classroom teachers
• Differentiate student instruction as needed (in content, process, product, and environment)
• Gives input to teachers regarding student progress reports and report cards as deemed appropriate and necessary
• Collaborate frequently with the Director of Social-Emotional Counseling & Learning Support, as well as the Heads of the Upper and Middle Schools
• Serve as a member of the Academic Affairs Committee and the Admissions Committee
• Collaborate to help the Director of Social-Emotional Counseling & Learning Support to prepare an annual budget for Learning Support/Academic Resource Center
• Participate in, as necessary, with the Head of Upper School, all Academic Honor and Award Ceremonies

Qualities of a Great Candidate

• B.A. or M.A. in Clinical Psychology, M.A. in Special Education or Speech/Language Pathology
• Two years post-graduation experience in working with adolescents in the school or clinical setting working with adolescents with learning differences (school experience preferred)
• Knowledgeable (and keeps current about) laws and regulations pertaining to special education
• Strong collaboration and cross-cultural competency
• Commitment to lifelong learning/professional development
• Commitment to equity and inclusion
• A sense of humor, warmth of personality, and energy
• Flexibility in a fast-paced environment

About the School
Founded in 1957, Woodside Priory is a co-educational, college preparatory, Catholic school originally founded by Benedictine monks. A small boarding and day school by design, Priory currently serves approximately 375 students in grades 6-12. Of the student body, 20% of upper school students are boarding on campus with the student to staff ratio at 7:1. Priory is set on a scenic 60-acre campus, in a safe, rural setting, but only 35 miles from San Francisco and four miles from Stanford University. The rural location of the campus allows for easy access to the outdoors and is beautiful and has a charming, rustic, homey feel, that embodies the family community that the school prides itself on. The Priory educational experience is centered around the Benedictine values of individuality, community, integrity and spirituality and is supported by a talented and dedicated faculty. Students have the opportunity to play 13 different sports and the school employs a “no cut” policy to encourage students to try new sports. Roughly, 62 faculty members teach a comprehensive curriculum offering over 20 AP courses with an average class size of 13 students.

Follow-up Directions

About the Position
Interested candidates should send a resume and letter of interest to Brian Schlaak, Head of Upper School, at bschlaak@prioryca.org, Micah Morris, Assistant Head of Upper School, at mmorris@prioryca.org and Michael Simon, Director of Social-Emotional Counseling & Learning Support, at msimon@prioryca.org.