St. Christopher’s School
Richmond, Virginia
Head of the Lower School
July 2018
www.stchristophers.com
The Position

For more than a century, St. Christopher’s School in Richmond, Virginia has been educating a diverse and talented community of boys in Junior Kindergarten through 12th grade, preparing them for college and life in an ever-changing world. Through a rigorous academic program and a supportive community experience, the School fosters personal integrity and honor, the achievement of each boy’s full potential, love for learning, spiritual growth, respect for others, leadership, and civic responsibility.

St. Christopher’s success in its first century is rooted in its exceptional understanding of boys and their particular strengths and needs. Across all grades and divisions, faculty and staff at St. Christopher’s fully grasp the ways in which boys’ intellectual, emotional, and social development are unique and offer a holistic educational experience tailored to those exceptionalities. In its second century, the School is continuing this tradition as a global leader in the education of boys. St. Christopher’s commitment to its Second Century Vision is reflected in the 2014 launch of the Center for the Study of Boys, which is dedicated to developing and promoting best practices for engaging and teaching boys. The Center serves the St. Christopher’s community—teachers, parents, and the boys themselves—through research, professional development, and programming, while also serving as a resource, locally and globally, for those interested in understanding and working effectively with boys.

At this exciting time in its history, St. Christopher’s School seeks a new Head of the Lower School to lead a thriving division of approximately 400 students in Junior Kindergarten through Grade 5.

The School

St. Christopher’s School originated as The Chamberlayne School, founded in 1911 by the educator, historian, author, and Episcopal priest Dr. Churchill Gibson Chamberlayne, whose influence upon the School has proven to be enduring and far-reaching. Dr. Chamberlayne established his school with the aim to educate boys in a strong academic program that was complemented by engaging
athletics and arts as well as a strong moral and spiritual education. This aspiration, now commonly described as “educating the whole boy,” represented an educational vision ahead of its time, and one that has remained the cornerstone of the School’s mission through to the present day. Dr. Chamberlayne’s ability to imagine the future of education is also reflected in his establishment of three traditions that remain foundational to the mission and culture of the School today: the Honor System, the Missionary Society, and the Literary Societies.

The School moved to its present location on St. Christopher’s Road in 1914. In 1920, a system of church schools was established by the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, at which time The Chamberlayne School was renamed St. Christopher’s School. Dr. Chamberlayne was succeeded as Headmaster by Dr. John Page Williams in 1940, Robert Bugg in 1951, Warren P. Elmer in 1964, George J. McVey in 1973, Charles M. Stillwell in 1998, and most recently, D. Mason Lecky in 2016.

Today, St. Christopher’s enrolls nearly 1,000 boys from 61 zip codes in the Richmond metropolitan region. St. Christopher’s School is highly respected in the area, with a strong reputation that is perpetuated under the leadership of the new Head of School, Mason Lecky. The student-teacher ratio is 6:1, and the average class size across the three divisions is approximately 16. The 130 faculty at St. Christopher’s School are deeply passionate about all-boys education and understand the particular developmental needs of boys and young men, setting high standards while also providing support for students that extends beyond the classroom and campus to the community at large. Sixty percent of full-time faculty hold advanced degrees, and the average tenure of faculty members is 12 years.

The School’s operating budget is $32 million, with an endowment valued at approximately $62 million. The School enjoys a committed parent community and alumni cohort and extremely generous support overall. The most recent capital campaign raised $43 million, adding to the School’s endowment and funding the construction of the Luck Leadership Center (LLC) in 2012.
Fully accredited, St. Christopher's School retains membership in the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS), the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), and the International Boys' Schools Coalition (IBSC).

**THE LOWER SCHOOL**

The Lower School serves approximately 400 students in grades JK-5. Junior Kindergarten is a full-day program that prepares four and five-year-old boys for Kindergarten at St. Christopher’s. More than a preschool program, Junior Kindergarten offers boys a modified version of the Kindergarten curriculum that allows the requisite space and flexibility for young boys to develop at their own pace, encouraging them to explore, discover, and make connections to the real world as well as the world of their imaginations.

The Lower School educational program is grounded in the belief that young boys need to be actively engaged in the learning process and that information must be presented to them in real, meaningful, and age-appropriate ways. Lower School faculty understand and recognize the value of integrating physical activity and movement into classroom activities in order to enhance boys’ focus and retention. Hands-on projects, collaborative group activities, and a range of technological tools also bring academic content to life for Lower School students at St. Christopher’s.

Strong academics in the Lower School are paired with robust arts and physical education components as well as the foundation of a deep character and spiritual education. Lower School boys engage in service learning, attend chapel services, and have the opportunity to explore interests in a variety of exciting extracurricular and summer programs offered at the School. The overarching goal is to provide young boys with an educational experience that meets their individual needs and prepares them for the demands of the Middle School.
Academics

One of the defining characteristics of St. Christopher's is its commitment to academic excellence. The quality of the academic program is the primary reason why families choose St. Christopher's for their sons, and surveys of parents and alumni reflect that the academic program is a source of satisfaction and pride for the School community. The Lower School curriculum at St. Christopher's provides young boys with a strong foundation in language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, religion, and Spanish, while also seeking to instill 21st Century skills essential to their future success.

The language arts department aims to inspire each student to take responsibility for the formation of his own mind and imagination via the adventures accessible through reading and writing. Through a balanced and integrated approach, the curriculum builds students’ literacy skills in small group instruction that targets boys’ specific comprehension, fluency, spelling, writing, and vocabulary development. Regular informal screenings help teachers engage the boys with developmentally appropriate materials across genres and subject matter.

Lower School students continue the work of thinking critically, listening to others, and expressing their ideas orally and through writing in their social studies classes, where age-appropriate activities related to topics of geography, history, economics, culture, and civics help students to make connections with each other and to the world in which they live. Boys build an understanding of their families, school, community, state, country, and world while also becoming aware of their role as responsible citizens in a diverse, interdependent, and changing global community.

The Lower School science program introduces students to an exploration of the world in which we live through an inquiry-based curriculum that covers life, physical, and earth and space science topics. Boys use creative thinking and problem-solving strategies as they learn to think...
and work like scientists. In the primary grades, the curriculum and experiments are incorporated into the regular classroom, advancing to laboratory activities in the upper elementary levels.

Similarly, the Lower School mathematics program develops boys’ number sense by challenging them to create their own processes for solving problems and encourages them to take risks to discover innovative solutions through independent and collaborative work. The mathematics curriculum incorporates computation, geometry, measurement, probability and statistics, and algebraic reasoning at age-appropriate levels. Students develop their skills through the use of manipulatives, investigative technology, and real-world application.

Beginning in junior kindergarten and kindergarten, boys also start learning Spanish. Through storytelling and other communicative activities, students develop their vocabulary and build proficiency in the language. Toward the end of their fifth-grade year, students take the STAMP test to assess their level of proficiency headed into sixth grade.

While formal religion classes do not begin until the third grade, Lower School boys are introduced to the religious life of St. Christopher’s through the Chapel program. Younger grades attend chapel twice weekly, increasing to three services in upper elementary grades. Services are based on the liturgical year and emphasize Judeo-Christian values and morals. (More details about religious education at St. Christopher’s is discussed below in “Spiritual Life.”)

Students also build an important foundation in technology, library, and information literacy skills via the Learning Commons. Through this integrated approach, librarians and technology specialists work collaboratively with classroom and enrichment teachers in the Lower School to support student and teacher learning within the context of the classroom. The program is also designed to foster the development of the qualities outlined in the School’s 2nd Century Vision: creative thinking/problem solving, technological savvy, intellectual risk-taking, global engagement, and empathy and collaboration. There is also an emphasis on honor and integrity as teachers promote responsible technology use and ethical digital citizenship.
**Arts**

The arts program at St. Christopher’s provides boys with the opportunity to discover their individual talents while also fostering an appreciation for the arts. The Lower School arts program is a comprehensive one, with many offerings that enhance boys’ lives both within and outside the academic classroom. Basic skills are introduced in the primary grades and are then expanded as they approach fifth grade, developing both their artistic abilities and appreciation for music, visual arts, and drama. The ultimate aim of the program in the Lower School is to foster the beginnings of a lifelong passion for the fine arts.

**Physical Education**

Boys at St. Christopher’s are encouraged from an early age to be physically active and knowledgeable about healthy lifestyle habits through the Lower School’s physical education program, which emphasizes the importance and benefits of being and remaining physically active throughout one’s entire life. Students are exposed to a variety of physical activities and engage in exercise on a regular basis including daily recess and physical education class four days per week, developing the essential knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to enjoy a lifetime of healthy physical activity.

**Afterschool Programming**

St. Christopher’s School offers a robust Extended Day program, available to all Lower School students. Immediately following the end of the regular school day, the Extended Day program provides theme-based projects to engage the School’s youngest Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten students, as well as special rotating daily activities, outdoor and gym play, and opportunities for quiet time. Boys in Grades 1-5 receive personalized attention in homework help and study hall, after which they are encouraged to engage in special daily activities, play sports and games, or socialize with friends.
In addition to the Extended Day program, St. Christopher's also offers unique and ever-changing extracurricular courses after school. These rotating classes are designed to be fun, and may involve sports, arts, or intellectual games like chess. Offerings vary for students in Grades JK-K, 1-2, and 3-5 to ensure every boy is challenged and engaged. In addition, students have the opportunity to take private music lessons with St. Christopher’s talented music educators beginning in Kindergarten.

**Service Learning**

Given St. Christopher’s Episcopal identity, service learning opportunities are carefully woven into the fabric of the curriculum on a consistent basis—a natural extension of the School’s character education and the expectation that every student understands his ethical obligation to care for others.

In the Lower School, projects are thoughtfully designed as service learning components, which are purposefully connected to the academic curriculum at each grade level. These age-appropriate projects increase students’ empathy and ability to affect change while also teaching reflection and laying the foundation for a lifetime of service.

**SPIRITUAL LIFE**

St. Christopher’s is one of six Church Schools in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. The additional five include St. Catherine’s School in Richmond, Christchurch School in Christchurch, St. Margaret’s School in Tappahannock, St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School in Alexandria, and Stuart Hall in Staunton. As a Church School, St. Christopher’s values inclusion, encourages spiritual growth, and seeks to educate for lives of meaningful service. In the Episcopal tradition, members of all faiths and practices are welcomed within a Christian environment. Approximately half of St. Christopher’s boys are Episcopalians, while students of Protestant, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and other faiths are also represented.

St. Christopher’s recognizes every person as a child of God. Boys learn to see themselves as leaders, and to view service to others as their highest calling. Regular attendance at Chapel services, together with participation in school-wide community service projects and fundraisers, foster a spiritual education for St. Christopher’s boys that carries well beyond their years as a student and into their adult lives. Upper School students attend morning chapel every day, a reflection of the School founder’s belief that daily religious reflection was critical to instilling the School’s core values. Dr. Chamberlayne developed a specific form of daily worship, taken from Psalm 111, and authored the school prayer. Both are still used today.

In addition to leading chapel services and designing and guiding each grade’s community service projects in partnership with classroom teachers, each division’s Chaplain provides pastoral support to boys and their families, meeting regularly with parents and occasionally teaching parent education classes.
THE COORDINATE PROGRAM

St. Christopher’s enjoys a close, coordinate relationship with its neighbor, St. Catherine’s School, an all-girls school founded in 1890 that today enrolls 979 girls from age three through Grade 12. The primary feature of this relationship is integrated classes at the Upper School level, though coordinated programming begins in the Lower School and is reinforced through arts, athletics, and other extracurricular engagement at all levels.

While St. Christopher’s believes strongly in the value of all-boys education in the Lower and Middle grades, the School also recognizes that young men must be prepared for a future in which they will live and work productively alongside women. In the Upper School, 94% of boys are enrolled in coeducational classes with students at St. Catherine’s. Students from both Schools travel regularly between the two campuses to attend one of the 370 integrated courses offered, which include 23 Advanced Placement options. Upper School boys also have the opportunity to participate in shared programs for theatre, music, dance, and visual arts with St. Catherine’s, as well as in the Schools’ joint outdoor education program.

Indeed, students, families, and faculty at both Schools enjoy great benefits through the Coordinate program, which enables the Schools to share facilities and programs and thereby provide educational opportunities normally found at much larger (and co-educational) institutions—while at the same time remaining small, intimate communities offering the full benefits of single-sex education.

PHYSICAL CAMPUS

St. Christopher’s School has resided on the same campus just northwest of downtown Richmond since 1914. The 60-contiguous-acre campus is located in an attractive neighborhood setting, near the James River and the University of Richmond. The residential location of the School offers many benefits and cultivates a close feeling of community among its constituencies. The Head of School and numerous other faculty members and administrators live in school-owned housing just a short walk to campus.
Three elegant academic buildings house the School’s three divisions. The Lower School occupies McVey Hall, while the Middle and Upper Schools are housed in Wilton Hall and Chamberlayne Hall, respectively. Students also enjoy a vast array of academic resources at the Gottwald Science Center, Murrell Bookstore, and one of the School’s newest campus additions—the Luck Leadership Center (LLC). The LLC houses a visual and digital arts lab, choral hall, multipurpose playhouse, international and leadership programs, college counseling offices, and dining hall.

St. Christopher’s enjoys a long tradition of success in athletics. Its facilities support the School’s impressive record in both the Virginia Prep League and the Virginia Independent School Athletic Association (VISAA) and reflect the increasing breadth of the athletics program in both the number of teams and sports offered. The School’s athletic center includes a wrestling arena, an extensive weight and fitness center, two basketball courts, a climbing wall, and locker rooms, as well as a field house with a competition size track, four additional basketball courts, and five tennis courts. Boys at St. Christopher’s also have access to a theatre, dance studio, fine arts center, and indoor swimming pool at nearby St. Catherine’s School. Current active campus projects are outlined in detail here on the School website.

Richmond, Virginia

The capital of Virginia, Richmond is one of America’s oldest major cities. The role Richmond played in both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars makes it a hub of historical tradition. With its long legacy, significance in the American historical landscape, and growing population, Richmond
remains a welcoming mid-sized metropolitan area.

Sometimes called “The River City,” Richmond is located on the fall line of the James River. The capital city’s sound economy, appealing climate, and low crime rate in recent years makes it an ideal place for young professionals and families. Forbes named Richmond “One of 10 Up and Coming Cities for Entrepreneurs” in the world, describing it as a “thriving arts and cultural mecca.” The Huffington Post named Richmond as “One of the Top 10 Cities to Relocate to in the U.S.” in 2015, and CNN Money put Richmond at #5 on its 2016 list of “10 Least Stressed Out Cities.”

History buffs will enjoy visits to St. John’s Church, where Patrick Henry made his famous “Give me liberty or give me death” declaration in 1775, as well as other historically significant sites and structures from the 18th and 19th centuries. Noteworthy museums include the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Virginia Historical Society, Children’s Museum of Richmond, and the Virginia Holocaust Museum.

Foodies will be glad to hear that National Geographic recently called attention to the Southern dining scene in Richmond when rounding up its list of “Where to Travel for Food in 2016”, and the New York Times recently featured Richmond’s eclectic and dynamic dining scene, as well as its many cultural attractions. New microbreweries have also elevated Richmond’s status as a destination for craft beer aficionados.

Other cultural amenities worth experiencing include the Virginia Repertory Theatre, Richmond Ballet, Richmond Symphony, Virginia Opera, and the historic Agecroft Hall. The University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University, among several other higher education institutions located in the city, infuse the area with a youthful energy and provide various opportunities for theatre, music, and culture throughout the year.
Strengths of the School

The next Head of the Lower School of St. Christopher’s will benefit from the division’s notable strengths, which include:

• A warm and collaborative learning environment dedicated to the holistic development of all boys;
• A joyful Lower School faculty committed to meeting the needs of all students;
• A strong Episcopal identity in a community welcoming of people of all faiths;
• Partnership with the St. Christopher’s Center for the Study of Boys, providing real-time, research-based best practices focused solely on the educational needs of boys;
• A well-balanced program of academics, arts, spiritual development and physical activity to support the whole boy and meet individual student needs;
• A technology program in which all students have frequent learning experiences utilizing Chromebooks, iPads, and robotics and coding tools;
• A commitment to educating global citizens with Spanish instruction beginning in Kindergarten;
• A comprehensive system of support for students that includes a counselor, learning specialists, and a chaplain.

Challenges & Opportunities

With the support of the Head of School, the next Head of the Lower School of St. Christopher’s will be charged with the following:

• Provide a nurturing and safe learning environment that celebrates boys and prepares them for lifelong learning and spiritual development;
• Ensures that the Lower School curriculum continues to align with 21st Century skill development that will serve boys well into the future, is reviewed and strengthened regularly with innovative initiatives, and prepares the students for success in the Middle and Upper School divisions;
• Partner with the Head of School and the Admissions team to strengthen enrollment and define the Lower School’s distinctive place in the Richmond marketplace;
• Build upon the School’s commitment to providing a diverse and inclusive educational experience for all boys;
• Contribute to a schoolwide leadership team to represent and be responsive to the needs of the Lower School.
Desired Qualities & Qualifications

The successful candidate for Head of the Lower School of St. Christopher’s will be:

• A warm and relational educator with a deep appreciation for boys’ education;
• A visionary who can lead strategically and encourage innovation and creativity in programs and pedagogy;
• An educator committed to the spiritual development of all students of varied faith backgrounds, and who respects and understands the Episcopal culture in schools;
• An articulate communicator who can promote the Lower School program in admissions and development;
• A person with experience teaching elementary school students and who truly enjoys working with boys;
• A decisive leader who will work to build a collaborative culture among the faculty and across division lines;
• An empathetic leader who will cultivate a welcoming, caring, and inclusive community.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit the following materials as separate PDF attachments in one email:

• Cover letter expressing interest in the Head of the Lower School position at St. Christopher’s School;
• Current résumé;
• Statement of educational philosophy and practice;
• List of 5 references with name, phone number, and e-mail address of each to:

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