HARRISBURG ACADEMY
EARLY CHILDHOOD AND LOWER SCHOOL
When considering the beginning of the educational journey at Harrisburg Academy, we look at where the journey begins rather than when. Everything we plan for our students and implement for them starts first by thinking about our school’s mission. This mission focuses on only one outcome — preparing our students to be successful adults. We accomplish this by differentiating our teaching methods, providing knowledge to prepare them academically for the challenges of the 21st century, and modeling behavior that will enable them to develop their character, built on solid integrity.

Is your child ready for what comes next?
Our Commitment

Our small school community allows for rigorous learning with a teacher-mentor who understands each student’s individual strengths and abilities. At Harrisburg Academy, each student is truly “known.” Additionally, in an educational climate in which local private and public schools are cutting programming, the Academy continues to add academic and co-curricular opportunities for our students. From hands-on lab science starting in Kindergarten to multiple world-language offerings in Middle School and the International Baccalaureate Diploma program in Upper School, the Academy is committed to setting the bar for teaching and learning in Central Pennsylvania.

By the Numbers

• Enrollment for 2016-17: 370
• Nearly 40% of students come from diverse ethnic or international backgrounds
• Enrolled students represent six counties and 27 school districts; 12 school districts provide daily transportation to and from the Academy free of charge
• Over 35% of students receive tuition discounts (based on financial need or merit)
• Male/Female Ratio: Approximately 50/50
• School-wide Student-to-teacher Ratio: 7:1; Average Teaching Class Size: 12 students
• 31 fine and performing arts courses with classes beginning in preschool
• 3 World Languages (French, Latin, and Spanish) taught

Athletics

• Colors - Blue and Gold; Team Name - Spartans
• 21 teams, including PIAA, club, and co-op sports for Middle and Upper School boys and girls

College-Bound Graduates

Academy students apply and are accepted to a variety of colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

• In the Class of 2016, students were accepted to 65 different institutions of higher education.
• National Merit Scholar and National Achievement Programs: For 15 years, Academy seniors have been recognized by these prestigious programs based upon their 11th grade PSAT scores.
• The Class of 2017 has two students recognized for achievement on the PSAT.
• Sixty-nine IB Diplomas have been received by Academy seniors in the past eight academic years.
When students achieve both an understanding of basic learning concepts and are given the freedom to think critically, their desire to learn becomes self-motivated, and they find the “joy in learning.” We form the foundation for early learning in this capacity in our Early Childhood division (3-year-old and 4-year-old preschool, and Kindergarten) and Lower School (elementary school) programs.

In other words, the focus of this 15-year experience is the individual child and the “whole child,” at that. At every point along a student’s journey at the Academy, we want to know each child, what motivates him or her, and what his or her passions and aspirations might be. By understanding who each child is and how he or she develops along the journey, we can best attune our instruction to that student and his or her social and emotional growth. It is for this reason that we continually update and amend our curriculum across all divisions including forward-thinking programs such as lab science in Early Childhood and the Centers for Experiential Learning & Innovation in Upper School.
At Harrisburg Academy, we believe that education is a journey. In our early childhood classrooms, our teachers provide activities that are open-ended and adaptable. Our youngest students can explore and discover the joy of learning as their personal educational journey begins.

Solidifying the foundation for lifelong learning, Lower School builds upon the Early Childhood program. As a globally-focused school, we teach children to care about other people and the world in which we live. We strive to help children contribute to this global group. Our teachers are dedicated to providing individual attention and building strong, nurturing relationships with our students.

Both inside the classrooms and out, our parents are key members in the educational process. Our school community benefits through the partnership between parents, teachers, and students. Our overall size and student-to-teacher ratios give the Academy an advantage in partnering in ways above and beyond other local schooling options.
In each classroom from preschool through 4th grade, parents can expect a curriculum appropriate to their child’s growth and development. The Early Childhood and Lower School programs are further enhanced by physical education, computer science, library, fine and performing arts, Spanish, and lab science. After-school programming includes not only childcare until 6 p.m., but supports non-classroom interests such as LEGO® robotics club, Lower School orchestra or chorus, hands-on laboratory science, and swimming. Summer options include a full-time day camp as well as topic-specific mini-camps.

The Advantages

• The scope of our program both socially and academically provides opportunities for students to explore their curiosity and provide the challenges students are ready to take on.

• The training and quality of our faculty, who are well-versed in the developmental stages and needs of children.

• The community culture of mutual respect and caring we provide support for children to learn how to interact positively with those around them.

• Small class sizes mean individualized attention for all.

• The challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum paired with the opportunities to involve areas outside the core curriculum.

Are your child’s teachers invested in his or her personal growth?
The Responsive Classroom® approach to teaching emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong school community. We believe that how children learn is as important as what they learn, and that academic success is critically linked to building social-emotional skills.

Independent research has found that the Responsive Classroom approach can lead to higher academic achievement in math and reading, an improved environment for teaching and learning, and more effective instruction.

Academy teachers throughout the Early Childhood and Lower School programs are trained on Responsive Classroom methods and resources to help create safe and joyful classrooms. Harrisburg Academy is a school where young children thrive.

“EDP and Summer Camp programs not only provide a solution for covering gaps in complex family schedules, but also a natural extension of the school day that engages and challenges our child both cognitively and socio-emotionally. The opportunities afforded to her take many forms, from field trips to fun and fabulous places, to new adventures with favorite staff, ‘old’ friends, and classmates.”

- Kristine Koontz
Parent of Julia Toyer ’23
COMPUTER SCIENCE

In computer science class, Early Childhood and Lower School students are learning to navigate computer programs that increase their skill level and expand on ideas that are being taught in the classroom. For example, technology supports the study of germs (in science class) and the Pennsylvania scrapbook project (in social studies).

THE DAILY 5™

The Daily 5™ is a classroom approach used to implement a language arts curriculum while fostering literacy independence and a love of reading and writing. Daily choices of “read to self,” “read to someone,” “word work,” “work on writing,” and “listen to read” allow for student differentiation to guide them in becoming lifelong learners. Individual goals are set in the areas of comprehension, accuracy, fluency and vocabulary. Kindergarten through 4th grade is teaching the Daily 5™ approach. Use of The Daily 5™ is another effective way for teachers at the Academy to capitalize on how well they know their students to customize the instruction to maximize each student’s opportunity to reach his or her potential.
FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

Harrisburg Academy students in preschool through 8th grade take required core courses in various fine and performing arts. Upper School students have a multitude of opportunities to engage in these areas of focus. Vocal music is a required class at each level from preschool to 5th grade. Our Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten students participate in a strings program, and Lower School students have the option to participate in the after-school orchestra ensemble. Even our youngest students have the opportunity to perform for their classmates, parents, and grandparents at concerts and theater performances during the academic year.

Building confidence through opportunity.
“Without the Academy’s arts program, we never would have discovered our son’s artistic talents. While other schools are cutting back these programs, the Academy remains committed to nurturing students in all areas of fine and performing arts. This program is an integral part of our son’s overall education.”

– Phil and Sharon DePamphilis

Parents of Devin ’19

Each grade from Kindergarten through 4th grade performs a short musical, complete with lines, songs, costumes, scenery, and lighting. In Lower School, students participate in fine arts and instrumental music classes. Extra opportunities for enrichment are available after school. Art Club is offered weekly for eight weeks at a time. This club is especially valuable to those fledgling Picassos looking for even more guided instruction time in the art studio. Lower School Orchestra is available for strings musicians (violin, viola, cello, and string bass) who are also taking private lessons outside of school and have the ability to read music. This ensemble meets twice per week during the academic year and also performs at all Lower School concerts.

Does your school build confidence through opportunity?
The department of world languages seeks to deepen students’ appreciation of world cultures and develop students’ proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing a foreign language. Such proficiency has become increasingly important as our global community shrinks through advances in communications and transportation technologies.

“When planning for our son’s education, we had concerns about the effect of program cuts in school districts and decided to consider Harrisburg Academy. The opportunity for foreign language instruction, music and strings, art, and a true liberal arts education rather than “teaching to the test” is priceless to us. We have made sacrifices to make it work and will continue to do so because it is the right place for our son to grow.”

- Jennifer Haas
Parent of Brian ’29

Inspiring children to learn.
“The dedicated and enthusiastic faculty provides a nurturing and stimulating environment for all Lower School children. This environment encourages the development of each child’s individual strengths and allows them to shine.”

– Ellen Caldwell ’80
Mother of Paige ’21

The small class sizes at Harrisburg Academy give students in modern language classes an exceptional opportunity to speak the target languages every day, with constant feedback from one another and the teacher. Students are first exposed to Spanish in preschool (Junior Kindergarten, specifically), and they continue expanding their knowledge of Spanish throughout their elementary school years in our Lower School. Beginning in Middle School, students gain a deeper understanding of the English language through the study of Latin, as they continue to improve their communication skills in Spanish and/or French. Those who choose to continue their language study after graduation will find that the successful completion of the world languages curriculum has given them a solid preparation for study in college or abroad.
A welcoming and engaging school community.

TECHNOLOGY AND LAB SCIENCE

Hands-on lab science experiences are designed to motivate and increase student interest and ability, and introduce them to new concepts. We enjoy activities that can be replicated or expanded upon at home, which keeps science and science exploration well within the reach of each child. In computer science class, Early Childhood and Lower School students are learning to navigate computer programs that increase their skill level and expand on ideas that are being taught in the classroom.
“Harrisburg Academy has been a great fit for our family. Our children are becoming knowledgeable, well-spoken, and caring young citizens, excited every day!

— Meghann Connor
Parent of Vivienne ’25 & Cullen ’27