



# SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

517 Columbus Ave. Waco, Texas 76701

254-753-0246

January 26, 2026

Dear Saint Paul's Episcopal School Community,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to announce Saint Paul's new Head of School. After a thoughtful and comprehensive search process, the Board has unanimously approved the selection of Ms. Tresa R. Wilson as the next Head of School, beginning July 1, 2026. This decision reflects the equally enthusiastic and unanimous recommendation of the Search Committee and the full support of the Saint Paul's Church Vestry. We are delighted to welcome her into the Saint Paul's family.

Ms. Wilson will follow Mrs. M'Lissa Howen, who will retire in June 2026 after nine years of devoted and steady leadership. We are deeply grateful for Mrs. Howen's service, and she and her team will partner closely with Ms. Wilson to ensure a smooth and supportive transition.

Ms. Wilson joins us from Trinity Preparatory School of Florida, an independent Episcopal school in Winter Park, where she has served as Assistant Head of School since 2022. Before that, she spent nearly 16 years at The Hockaday School in Dallas, contributing in a wide range of roles, from fourth grade teacher and Lower School Language Arts Coordinator to Travel Program Coordinator and Director of Inclusion and Community.

The selection of Ms. Wilson reflects her broad experience across schools of many sizes and her deep understanding of the Episcopal identity that grounds our mission. She brings a spirit of curiosity and a proven ability to unite communities around a shared vision. Her commitment to whole school growth, including the development of faculty and staff, the flourishing of students and families, and the long-term financial health of the school, stood out throughout the search process.

A native of Tyler, Texas, Ms. Wilson brings a deep appreciation for the strong community ties that define places like Waco. She holds a Journalism degree from UT Tyler and a Master's in Bilingual Education from SMU, along with numerous professional honors and teaching awards.

The Rev. Samantha Smith, Board Chair and Co-Chair of the Search Committee, shared: "We are confident that Tresa is the visionary and gifted leader we need to take Saint Paul's to the next level of excellence. From the start, the Committee appreciated her warmth and sincerity, her

commitment to Episcopal education and spiritual nourishment, her dedication to teacher support and retention, and her student-centered approach to learning.”

Ms. Wilson was selected from a strong and diverse pool of candidates through a national search led by The Education Group. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the six-member Search Committee - representing trustees, church leadership, parents, faculty, and alumni - for their thoughtful work, to the School Board and Vestry for their dedication to leading our community, and to the entire school community for your participation, support, and prayers throughout this process.

Please join me in warmly welcoming Ms. Wilson to Saint Paul’s and to Waco. We look forward to the leadership, energy, and care she will bring to our school.

With gratitude,

Duke Nelson  
Board of Trustees, Chair

*Read more, directly from our next Head of School, below*

Dear Saint Paul’s Community,

It is my honor to be selected as the next Head of School. I am so excited to become a member of the Saint Paul’s community and to have the opportunity to build upon the school’s legacy of excellence. When I visited the school in November, I had the privilege of meeting a close-knit, welcoming community with every interaction at both the church and school campuses. Students greeted me with curiosity and warmth, and adults engaged in heartfelt dialogue. The entire interview process felt more like a conversation amongst my dearest friends and closest colleagues about the future.

The commitment to a nurturing, rigorous, and well-rounded educational environment for students has been a consistent theme throughout my career. I am beyond overjoyed to continue fostering this commitment at Saint Paul’s. My independent school career began at The Hockaday School, an all-girls preschool-12th grade school in Dallas. My career continued at Trinity Preparatory School of Florida, a coeducational 6-12th grade school in Winter Park. I look forward to building upon the remarkable accomplishments of M’Lissa Howen and her nine years of exceptional leadership, during which I will continue to advance the implementation of the mission, educational philosophy, and strategic plan with clear priorities, accountability, and thoughtful leadership. Such endeavors are indispensable for enhancing the Saint Paul’s Experience.

From the church, board of trustees, faculty, staff, and including the students and their parents, I was profoundly impressed by the commitment to Christian values and academic excellence at Saint Paul’s. As a listener and learner, I welcome everyone, from the internal to the external community, to share their knowledge and experiences with me. I look forward to collaborating and leading on the goals ahead. I extend my genuine appreciation to Rev. Samantha Smith and the

Board of Trustees Search Committee for their diligent efforts throughout the selection process and for the opportunity they have given me. Their unwavering commitment to Saint Paul's growth and development was visible from the beginning, and the investment of their time and attention solidified my interest in being a part of the school's future.

I hope and trust that our collective insights will shape and refine Saint Paul's Episcopal School for the years to come. I look forward to embarking on this journey alongside the entire Saint Paul's community upon my arrival in July 2026.

With warmth and gratitude,

Tresa R. Wilson