



## Principal of Fieldston Middle Opportunity Statement July 1, 2022

Since its founding in 1878, the Ethical Culture Fieldston School (ECFS) has been a beacon of progressive education in America. Educating approximately 1,700 students in Pre-K–12th Grade on two campuses, ECFS seeks a Principal of Fieldston Middle, which encompasses 399 students in 6th–8th Grades, beginning on July 1, 2022. The successful candidate will demonstrate a deep commitment to the founding principles of ethical learning, academic excellence, [progressive education](#), [equity and inclusion](#), and a genuine desire to engage actively on the Bronx campus as the leader of Fieldston Middle.

### About ECFS

The Ethical Culture Fieldston School offers a world-class, progressive education in four divisions at two historic campuses in Manhattan and the Bronx. The core tenets of the educational program include the study and practice of ethics, in which students explore and think critically about what they are learning in order to question and evaluate their own actions, choices, and decisions, as well as those of other individuals and communities. ECFS enthusiastically embraces the ideals, the values, and the methods of progressive education by challenging traditional learning models. At ECFS, learning grows out of curiosity, focusing on the whole child and ensuring that instruction is responsive, relevant, experiential, and playful. ECFS inspires a diverse and joyful community of passionate learners, critical thinkers, empowered citizens, and ethical individuals who aim to make the world more humane and just as agents of positive change.

The Ethical Culture Fieldston School was founded by the visionary leader, educator, and social reformer Felix Adler in 1878 to ensure that all children would have access to a quality education. Then known as the Workingman’s School, it emphasized non-sectarian moral education, respect for the individual, and integration of the creative arts and hands-on “learning by doing” with academics — key components of what we now know as progressive education. In 1895, the Workingman’s School became the Ethical Culture School, and its management passed to the governing board of the Ethical Culture Society. In 1899, the School established a secondary school. In 1904, the Ethical Culture School constructed a new building at 33 Central Park West, which currently houses the Ethical Culture division. By 1928, the School had outgrown its quarters and sought to expand its vision for both primary and secondary education by opening a campus in the Bronx. A second lower school, Fieldston Lower, followed on the Bronx campus in 1932. In 1995, the New York Society for Ethical Culture voted to establish the School as its own legal entity with a self-governing board of trustees. Twenty two years later, in 2007, the Fieldston Middle division opened on the Bronx campus.

### About Fieldston Middle

[Fieldston Middle](#) is ECFS’s newest division. Fieldston Middle welcomes the majority of its students in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade from Fieldston Lower in the Bronx and Ethical Culture in Manhattan, with a small number of students from other schools. Students in the middle division transition from elementary to secondary education with a focus on their social and emotional sense of self and on the ability to look at issues through multiple lenses, explore their own emerging

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belief systems, and grapple with questions they find relevant and engaging. Instructional methods remain rooted in the commitment to academic excellence and ethical learning through a progressive approach to education. Students engage in traditional sports on competitive teams, non-traditional sports, dance, theatre, visual arts, and music with the goal of maintaining a balanced, healthy life.

The 48,000-square-foot Fieldston Middle School building is designed to maximize sustainability and to nurture the educational and developmental needs of 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders with grade-specific agoras and common spaces that encourage collaboration and connection. With flexible furniture, state-of-the-art AV capabilities, air conditioning, and an all-gender restroom, the Student Commons space offers enhanced capacity for presentations, panel discussions, and exhibitions. The new Design Studios added in 2019 facilitate cutting-edge opportunities for Fieldston Middle students in design, robotics, and computer science.

### Diversity, equity, and inclusion

The focus on [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) (DEI) at ECFS creates an environment in which students can truly thrive — and one that prepares them to actively and thoughtfully engage with the world around them. DEI is central to ECFS’s mission of teaching all children to approach the world with empathy, compassion, and understanding. The DEI team at ECFS includes the Director of Community and Inclusion and four full-time DEI Coordinators who work within each division and collaboratively across the institution.

The DEI team is dedicated to promoting four learning goals for anti-bias work for all constituents: identity, diversity, justice, and action. The coordinators serve as leaders in promoting and developing the School’s capacity to create and sustain an inclusive and just community. The entire team is charged with working on a divisional and an all-school level to oversee the development of social and academic programs designed to support all constituents — students, faculty, staff, families, alumni, and trustees.

At Ethical Culture, 37% of students identify as people of color, 46% identify as white, and 17% did not report. At Fieldston Lower, 48% of students identify as people of color, 37% identify as white, and 15% did not report. At Fieldston Middle, 40% of students identify as people of color, 52% identify as white, and 8% did not report. And, at Fieldston Upper, 36% of students identify as people of color, 55% identify as white, and 9% did not report. Thirty-three percent of all faculty and staff identify as people of color, 60% identify as white, and 7% did not report.

### Endowment, expenses, and facilities

#### Financial snapshot (2020–2021)

Total Enrollment, PK-12	1,700 students
Tuition for all Grades, PK-12	\$55,510
Financial Aid Awarded	>\$18,000,000
Percentage of Students Receiving Need-based Aid	25%
Annual Operating Expenses	\$ 91,500,000
Total Endowment Value	\$ 125,000,000
Endowment per Student	\$ 73,500
Endowment Draw	5%
Annual Fund and Other Operating Gifts	\$4,500,000
Other Income (summer programs, etc.)	\$1,500,000



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### Campus facilities

The two campuses housing ECFS include 16 buildings with a total 407,000 square feet.

Campus additions over the last 15 years include:

- **Ethical Culture renovations — Phase II (upcoming):** Renovating the historic Manhattan building is critical to the ECFS vision. Upcoming projects include a refurbished gym and rooftop playground that allow for more varied physical education, an expanded cafeteria, and a STEAM hub that encourages connections across disciplines. Improved environmental features, including air conditioning, will be incorporated throughout.
- **Fieldston Middle and Fieldston Upper Student Commons (2019):** Outfitted with flexible furniture, state-of-the-art audiovisual capabilities, air conditioning, and an all-gender restroom, the Student Commons now accommodates enhanced capacity for presentations, panel discussions, and exhibitions while retaining its architectural beauty.
- **Ethical Culture renovations — Phase I (2019):** Since the Ethical Culture building opened in 1904, thousands of students have passed through the halls to engage in hands-on, progressive learning. Over the summer, designers reimaged interdisciplinary program spaces for music, art, science, and wood shop in the basement for lower grades.
- **Fieldston Middle and Fieldston Upper Design Studios (2019):** The new Design Studios facilitate cutting-edge opportunities for Fieldston Middle and Fieldston Upper students in design, robotics, and computer science. Here, students can create, test, dissect, reassemble, and experience the camaraderie of tackling new challenges as a team.
- **Tate Library (2018):** This epicenter of Fieldston Middle and Fieldston Upper life is an energetic, 21st-century learning hub. The Tate Library binds the Fieldston campus together through collaborative learning, student art, and abundant resources for academic growth and exploration.
- **Fieldston Lower Adler Lab (2018):** Expanding the third floor of Fieldston Lower School added 4,200 square feet to the building, creating a dynamic wing for interdisciplinary work. Students imagine, collaborate, create, and engineer hands-on projects that enhance the authenticity and relevance of the curriculum.
- **Fieldston Middle (2007):** The 48,000-square-foot Fieldston Middle building, designed to maximize sustainability, nurtures the educational and developmental needs of 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders with grade-specific agoras and common spaces that encourage collaboration and connection.

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- **Varsity gym and pool (2007):** The 38,000-square-foot athletics facility and 12,000-square-foot pool building support over 60 teams. Beyond its daily use for physical education and sports, the gym is easily transformed into a banquet area for over 400 people, or an auditorium for an all-school assembly.

### Location and local culture

Located on two campuses in the New York City boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx, ECFS makes the city its [classroom](#) to explore, as well. New York is home to numerous historic, artistic, musical, and cultural sites, professional and amateur sports teams, Broadway and independent theater houses, and more. Each borough is distinct and vibrant, and the city is surrounded by thriving suburban communities in New York State, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

### Working at ECFS

The faculty at ECFS commit to an intentional community focused on ethics and progressive education, collaboration, activism, and civic engagement. Of the 375 faculty with teaching responsibilities, 46.5% have advanced degrees. ECFS offers a generous benefits package to eligible employees that includes medical and dental insurance, flexible spending accounts, life insurance, disability insurance, membership in the Academic Federal Credit Union, a retirement plan, and commuter benefits. An independent union that is a party to a collective bargaining agreement represents faculty at ECFS.

### The role of Principal of Fieldston Middle

Fieldston Middle seeks a collaborative, mission-driven leader who inspires vision, fosters trust, and promotes transparency, overseeing all day-to-day aspects of the division serving 6th–8th grades. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced administrator whose roots are in progressive teaching — someone passionate about the School's ethos and culture and eager to work with talented students and a dedicated faculty. The Principal will work in a highly relational, visible, and authentic way with students, faculty, staff, and families to support their experience in and beyond the classroom. The Principal will embrace and communicate a vision established by the founder for progressive pedagogy, ethical learning, and academic excellence, and demonstrate a keen understanding and track record of supporting the unique developmental, social, emotional, and learning needs of pre- and early adolescents in middle school.

The Principal leads the division and reports to the Head of School. The Principal leads four direct reports, including the Assistant Principal for Academic Life, Assistant Principal for Student Life, School Psychologist, and School Counselor, as well as three direct reports who report to other ECFS administrators: the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator, Ethics and Technology Coordinator, and Director of Health and Wellness. To lead the dozens of crossover faculty and staff, as well as ongoing curricular alignment initiatives, the Principal of Fieldston Middle also works closely with the Principal of Fieldston Upper. Together, they collaborate with faculty to ensure that

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students, faculty, staff, and families experience and embrace the breadth, depth, and possibilities of Fieldston Middle.

The Principal of Fieldston Middle sits on the Administrative Council of ECFS, which is chaired by the Head of School and composed of the other three Principals (Ethical Culture, Fieldston Lower, and Fieldston Upper), and eight other senior administrators, including the Chief Philanthropy Officer, the Director of Athletics, the Director of Communications, the Director of Community and Inclusion, the Director of Enrollment Management, the Director of Finance/ Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Human Resources/ Chief Human Resources Officer, and the Director of Technology.

### **Opportunities and challenges**

The Principal of Fieldston Middle will work with a group of talented, seasoned, and devoted teachers who are uniquely committed to the needs of students in the middle grades at ECFS. Students come from ECFS's two lower schools and other schools to create community in new and meaningful ways. The middle school years are not placeholders between the elementary and upper school years; rather, they exist to foster individual development, deepen social and emotional learning, encourage creativity, joy, and intellectual exploration, and to strengthen and build ethical learning and principles.

Throughout ECFS's history, there have been a number of administrators in each of the divisions. Faculty turnover is far less common. A new strategic plan will guide each division in developmentally appropriate ways to achieve the following: champion student-centered learning grounded in ethical education and progressive practice, center student health and well-being supported by the ECFS program and schedule, and foster a culture of care and accountability rooted in civility and respect for ideas and one another.

### **Desired qualifications and characteristics**

The most successful candidates will:

- embrace the values of progressive and ethical education
- demonstrate empathetic and courageous leadership with a track record of bringing diverse constituents together around a common vision
- demonstrate excellent communication, writing, and presentation skills
- encourage and demonstrate deep, responsive listening and open, proactive communication
- demonstrate experience with and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in all areas of school life

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- display curiosity and an unabashed love of learning, and interest in the developmental stages of middle school students
- demonstrate collaboration and transparency by communicating with authenticity in decisions and decision-making processes
- demonstrate understanding of leading, supporting, and developing a rapport with unionized faculty and staff
- demonstrate capacity to lead and advocate for Fieldston Middle *and* collaborate with other divisions and schoolwide
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge and skill set of the full range of educational and social experiences in middle school and independent school environments, including direct experience in classroom teaching and learning

### Application process

Evaluation of candidate materials will begin immediately and continue until a Principal of Fieldston Middle is named. The review of candidates' materials will begin on December 15, 2021. The start date for this opportunity is July 1, 2022. Inquiries, nominations, and letters of interest with a résumé may be sent in confidence to:

Nishant Mehta, Managing Director  
Staci Williams Seeley, Managing Associate  
[ECFSMSPrincipal@storbecksearch.com](mailto:ECFSMSPrincipal@storbecksearch.com)



For more information, please visit ECFS at [ecfs.org](http://ecfs.org).

ECFS is an equal opportunity employer. Our goal is to be a diverse community of professionals that broadly reflects the people of the metropolitan New York City area, our students, and families. We aim to align our hiring process with our mission and institutional goals. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion or religious practices, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, citizenship status, national origin, age, ability status, military status, unemployment status or any other category protected by applicable local, state, or federal laws. ECFS takes affirmative action in support of its policy to employ and advance all qualified candidates.

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