



The Foote School

An Independent K-9 School Where Students Love to Learn

Head of Middle School

The Foote School seeks a creative, collaborative, experienced, and forward-thinking leader to develop and implement effective strategies consistent with Foote’s mission to nurture students’ lifelong love of learning and teaching and foster a commitment to excellence in its students and faculty. Reporting to the Head of School, the Head of the Middle School will be the academic and administrative leader for an experienced, joyful, and cohesive faculty and an engaged, diverse student body in Grades 6–9.

The Foote School is a thriving, highly regarded independent day school located in New Haven, Connecticut, that educates 443 students in Kindergarten through 9th Grade. The Foote School has had a long-standing commitment to excellence in academics. Foote is fortunate to have passionate, dedicated, and high-quality faculty and staff. The culture of the Foote School is characterized by engagement and joy in learning and a mature commitment to the value of being a diverse and inclusive community. The School’s motto is: “Gladly will I learn and gladly teach.”

Foote School is a vibrant place where children are valued as individuals, and teachers develop close relationships with students and parents. Students make discoveries—about the world and themselves—through play, inquiry, experiential learning, and daily interaction with the community around them.

ABOUT THE FOOTE SCHOOL

Founded by Martha Babcock Foote in 1916, Foote School has cultivated an atmosphere of excellence and mutual respect through close relationships among teachers, students, and families. The School continues to be inspired by her original vision with “its emphasis on creativity and its focus on the growth of mind and spirit.” As noted in the mission, joy and purpose are evident in each classroom, in the halls, on the playground, on the stage and playing fields, and in daily interactions between community members at Foote.

Located on a bucolic campus adjacent to Yale University and all that New Haven and the central Connecticut coast have to offer, for over a century Foote has educated young people from early childhood through early adolescence.

The Foote School is an intentionally diverse and inclusive community—racially, economically, and culturally. Families come to the School from all over Greater New Haven and around the world, bringing a range of perspectives and life experiences that deepen children’s understanding of other cultures as

well as their own. Foote genuinely values the diversity of its community in every respect as a key strength of the school and strives to be thoughtfully and purposefully inclusive of all.

An outstanding academic program is at the heart of The Foote School experience for students. Project-based learning and differentiation within the classroom are critical tools in the hands of master teachers to leverage their students' natural curiosity, as they build skills and knowledge. Close relationships between teachers and their students foster trust that encourages students to take intellectual risks and to grow as learners and citizens. The guiding spirit that launched the school in 1916—the love of learning and teaching, the thrill of discovery in the classroom—remains evident today.

The Foote School was founded by Martha Babcock Foote, a Bryn Mawr College graduate and trailblazing educator who established that the school's strengths would be "its emphasis on creativity, and its focus on the growth of mind and spirit."

It began as a home-based school in a family's living room on Huntington Street in New Haven, where children—including three of Mrs. Foote's—performed plays based on Greek mythology and learned from travel books and family photo albums in lieu of textbooks. When the school was forced to find a new home in 1917, Mrs. Foote rented a nearby garage using \$100 from the \$250 teaching salary she earned the year before. Though she had little money to run a school, Mrs. Foote had a strong vision grounded in new child-centered theories of education. She believed that learning should be a joyful experience, rich in art, music, drama, and literature.

A century later, The Foote School has grown from a tiny acorn into a great oak with branches that reach across the globe. And yet the guiding spirit that launched the school in 1916—the love of learning and teaching, the thrill of discovery in the classroom—is as evident today as ever. We invite you to explore our history and learn more about our extraordinary journey from that living room on Huntington Street to today's far-reaching Foote School community.

FOOTE BY THE NUMBERS

Enrollment 443

Lower School, K-5 Students 252

Middle School, 6-9 Students 192

Students of color 39%

Students receiving financial aid 25%

Cities and towns where Foote families live 33

Languages spoken in homes of Foote families 19

Student-Teacher ratio 7:1

Full- and part-time Faculty and Staff 120

Full- and part-time Faculty and Staff with advanced degrees 60%

Carrots and potatoes harvested from Foote's garden last year 423

Solar panels that power the Jonathan Milikowsky Science and Technology Building 22

Graphic novels in the Perrine Library's collection 622

MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

The Foote School nurtures a lifelong love of learning and teaching and fosters a commitment to excellence in its students and faculty. Teachers lead children to ask questions and discover connections; to think and work independently, collaboratively and creatively; and to learn by doing. Our community values each child, appreciates differences, and challenges prejudice while giving students the skills to explore the world with joy and purpose.

The Foote School believes that . . .

A positive learning environment takes shape when students, parents and teachers know and respect one another, and work together to uphold the values and expectations of the community.

Learning together builds community, and yet each student is responsible for engaging in his or her own learning experience. Learning takes time, practice and reflection.

Authentic interactions within the campus environment and with the world encourage students to build upon their knowledge and explore their natural curiosity, imagination and passions.

Providing children with many avenues for self-expression builds confidence and fosters a willingness to take on further intellectual and creative challenges.

It is a part of a global community. Foote is at its best when it embraces and celebrates its diversity and when it actively seeks opportunities to serve and lead.

Life is interdisciplinary. Meaningful experiences lead students to discover themselves as scholars and thinkers, as artists and athletes, and as citizens and human beings.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

In Foote's Middle School, students are afforded more independence and responsibility. Teachers share a deep interest in working with each student to bring out the passions and talents that will allow them to find success in secondary school and beyond. The program in each grade from 6 through 9 is designed to challenge students during that specific stage of their development, and it ties into a larger curricular arc that supports their academic and emotional growth and prepares them for high school. Advisory time at the beginning and end of each day helps students learn to balance their many responsibilities. The faculty are specialists in developing in adolescents the skills and attitudes that support them to thrive in school and in life.

Interscholastic athletics at Foote emphasize teamwork, skill-building, sportsmanship, confidence, and perseverance. While optional, most students play at least one season each year.

Ninth grade is the capstone year of the Foote experience. It affords students a series of exceptional leadership opportunities for academic and personal growth and enables them to enter high school with

greater confidence and academic readiness than many of their peers. Without a doubt, the highlight of this special year is the exchange program with a school in China. Foote students host their counterparts in the fall and take a two-week trip to China in the spring.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to The Foote School culture. The School provides a safe space for children to explore identity and diversity in all its forms. The curriculum teaches students to respect and celebrate differences by introducing them to a broad range of cultures and perspectives through literature, visiting speakers, service-learning projects, and special events. From Body Mapping in Kindergarten to the ninth grade Comparative Cultures course, students have opportunities to learn about other backgrounds and values, while at the same time exploring their own identities. In doing so, students learn to collaborate across cultural boundaries, preparing them to meet the challenges of a globalized world.

Foote teachers embrace the diversity within their classrooms and take part in numerous professional development opportunities focused on fostering respectful classrooms where students appreciate one another's differences. Teachers engage students in courageous conversations around race, religion, gender and identity, as young learners navigate these challenging topics. These conversations are built into the curriculum in thoughtful and developmentally appropriate ways. In addition, teachers respond to children's questions and concerns in an age-appropriate manner.

Parents play a central role in supporting Foote's diversity efforts. Whether sharing family traditions in classrooms, volunteering with the Parent Teacher Council or serving on the Board of Directors, parents are integral to making Foote a welcoming and inclusive community.

The Foote School values the diversity of its community in every respect—ethnicity, religion, gender identity, family structure and economic situation—as the strength of our school. Families come to Foote from greater New Haven and around the world, bringing a range of perspectives and life experiences that deepen children's understanding about other cultures, as well as their own.

The Foote School understands that academic success and emotional well-being are inextricably linked. Teachers at Foote create inclusive classrooms that foster respect for differences, break down stereotypes, and support each student's individual identity, giving children a sense of belonging.

As a school, Foote is committed to listening, to understanding others' lived experiences, and to working toward greater equity in our community and academic program.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The faculty and staff at Foote deliver on the promise of the School's mission. They leverage the power of close relationships to instill a joy of learning by encouraging questions that lead students on an exciting journey of discovery. Project-based curricula ensure that learning is not a one-way street; teachers value each child's input, thoughts, and ideas. Their commitment to children and to Foote's mission is unquestioned, and teachers enjoy both the autonomy to bring their expertise to bear with the

accountability of being part of an inspiring and cohesive K-9 program. Two-thirds of Foote faculty members hold advanced degrees and almost half have been at the school for more than 10 years.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

[Aléwa Cooper](#) became The Foote School's Head of School on July 1, 2020. Aléwa is Foote's 10th Head of School and the first person of color to serve in this role.

CAMPUS

Foote's 18-acre campus is like a neighborhood where every child is known, and all students learn what it means to be a responsible member of a larger community. Wooded pathways connect classroom buildings with art studios, science labs, and teaching gardens to create an interconnected web of engaging learning spaces. All students spend ample time outdoors, rain or shine, building resilience and appreciation for the natural world. As one teacher put it, "an urban setting with a rural feel." It is a peaceful place in a bustling city.

There are eleven classroom buildings and five art and music classrooms on campus. At the heart of campus is the Perrine Library, where children discover the joy of reading while browsing among its unparalleled collection of 48,000 print volumes, audiobooks, periodicals, and digital resources. Art is omnipresent on campus, with student art lining the walls of classrooms and hallways and public art installations around the grounds. Foote's commitment to environmental sustainability is apparent with a large composting area right in the middle of campus where all can deposit food waste that is then used as fertilizer for the grounds. Facilities also include a large gym, black box theater, science labs, and two regulation fields.

HEAD OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Head of the Middle School will report to the Head of School. The Head of the Middle School will be expected to have significant experience in educational leadership and should hold strong educational credentials with an advanced degree in a relevant field.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

As The Foote School continues to grow and evolve, the new Head of the Middle School will have the opportunity to address the following priorities within the school:

- Collaborate closely with the Head of School to support The Foote School's mission that promotes excellence in teaching and learning consistent with an outstanding independent school where students love to learn. The next Head of the Middle School will continue to strengthen Foote's long-standing commitment to excellence in academics by continuing to support a dynamic, healthy, and engaging curriculum that leverages the resources available through the School's unique location in New Haven and adjacent to Yale University. The Next Head of Middle School will champion the innovation and

introduce new, capstone programs that advance The Foote School's ability to provide an outstanding education to its students.

- Collaborate with the Head of School and Head of the Lower School to build trust between the administration and faculty to provide a caring learning environment for the students. The next Head of Middle School will promote a culture of transparency and work to establish coherent, consistent decision-making while prioritizing transparency and appropriate feedback to all constituencies. The next Head of Middle School will support faculty in their vocation with the essential work they do with the parents of Foote students.

- Strengthen and implement a constructive, collaborative, and meaningful faculty assessment system consistent with Foote's commitment to excellence in education and joyful learning.

- While respecting Foote's traditions, assess Foote's current academic program and advance its opportunities around innovation by developing new programs to address the changing needs of its students. The Head of Middle School will oversee curriculum development and coordinate with the Head of the Lower School to enhance the continuity of the student experience moving through the School's two divisions. The next Head of the Middle School will work to re-establish service learning and servant leadership as they are essential pieces of the Foote Middle School curriculum.

- Strengthen even further Foote's wonderfully diverse, inclusive, positive, and supportive climate. The new Head of the Middle School will promote diversity and social justice across the curriculum in all divisions and develop new models for engaging with the surrounding community as an integral part of its educational model. One way this will be done is by leveraging the New Haven community and its diversity and resources.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Given The Foote School's distinctive focus and mission, the Head of Middle School must possess an appreciation for inquiry-based student-centered learning, a willingness to collaborate, and a positive outlook. The next Head of the Middle School must have a genuine passion for working with children and supporting a mission of providing educational opportunities that treat each student as an individual. In addition to being an imaginative and collegial leader, strong candidates will also bring many of the following qualities, skills, and experiences to the role:

The ideal candidate will have a demonstrated track record of leading collaboratively in an elementary and/or middle school with a similar mission and population as The Foote School.

- Teaching experience, preferably at different age levels;
- An advanced degree in a relevant field;
- A teacher at heart with energy and enthusiasm to work with middle-school-age students;
- A successful track record of curriculum planning and student assessment;
- A strong foundation in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work;
- Experience hiring, evaluating, and mentoring faculty;
- The ability to thrive in a collaborative environment and enjoy working with teams;
- The ability to appreciate the opportunities and challenges of working at an independent school in New Haven;

- Intellectual nimbleness, resourcefulness, entrepreneurship, and adaptability; and
- Strong communication skills and a good sense of humor.

For best consideration, please send all nominations and applications to:



Nishant Mehta, Partner
Sherry Coleman, Partner
Mark Halligan, Associate
Storbeck Search

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For more information, please visit The Foote School's home page at <https://www.footeschool.org/>

The Foote School complies with all applicable civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristics in any of its educational programs or activities, including employment. Protected characteristics (or protected classes) include race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, alienage, disability, pregnancy, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law. The School is specifically required by Title IX and other applicable federal and state laws not to discriminate in such a manner.