Since its founding in 1878, Ethical Culture Fieldston School (ECFS) has been a beacon of progressive education in America. Known among New York City independent schools as a place where children are simultaneously encouraged to revel in the joys of childhood and confront the challenges presented by the modern world, ECFS emphasizes ethical thinking, academic excellence, and student-centered learning. Educating more than 1,700 students in grades PK-12 on two campuses, ECFS seeks a Principal for the Fieldston Lower division, which enrolls 270 students (PK-5) at the school’s Riverdale campus in the Bronx.

Founded by philosopher and humanist Felix Adler as a free kindergarten for the children of working people, ECFS has been coeducational and integrated from its inception. Compelled by idealism and an interest in early childhood pedagogy, Adler emphasized moral education, psychological development, and the integration of the creative and manual arts with academics. To this day, the school is committed to ethical instruction and moral activism; starting in prekindergarten, students are taught not just how to learn, but how to live.

Heavily influenced by the ideas of John Dewey and other pioneers of experiential education in the late 19th century, ECFS is notable for its democratic approach to teaching and learning. Relationships among faculty, parents, and students are open and strong, and the school is renowned for its commitment to diversity, access, and equity. The school boasts the largest financial aid budget of any independent school in New York City and has invested heavily in programs dedicated to helping students understand themselves and others.

Fieldston Lower promotes a joyful yet challenging approach to its students’ intellectual and social-emotional development. The division seeks an experienced, collaborative leader who is energized by the unique culture and mission of ECFS. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a forward-thinking educator with a passion for innovation, ethics, diversity, and social justice to join one of New York City’s most storied independent schools and lead the division in pursuit of a common purpose.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 21, 2017
ETHICAL CULTURE FIELDSTON SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

“The ideal of the school is not the adaptation of the individual to the existing social environment; it is to develop individuals who are competent to change their environment to greater conformity with moral ideals.” – Felix Adler, ECFS founder

ECFS IDEALS

- **Ethical Learning**: The exploration of what it means to be an ethical and responsible member of society forms the core of our curriculum and our school community. We value inclusion as well as economic and racial diversity. We honor all of our students for their unique contributions, cultural background, and beliefs. As we consider service to be critical to the development of character, we incorporate community service into the children’s school experience from the earliest grades.

- **Academic Excellence**: Our school achieves academic excellence by challenging students to reach their highest potential in body, mind, and spirit through the humanities, the sciences, the arts, and physical education. Students become active learners and engage in vital discourse in a community of dedicated teachers and an atmosphere of intellectual discipline and creativity.

- **Progressive Education**: Through a curriculum rooted in the tenets of progressive education, students become independent thinkers as they learn that asking their own questions and seeking their own answers provides the key to the deepest kind of understanding. Cooperative, student-centered, discussion-based learning and the freedom to make mistakes are part of our students’ everyday lives.

AFFILIATIONS

**ACCREDITATION**: National Association of Independent Schools; New York State Association of Independent Schools

**ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL AID - ECFS**

- **SCHOOL-WIDE ENROLLMENT**: 1,706 (270 at FL)
- **STUDENTS OF COLOR**: 38% (51% at FL)
- **ANNUAL TUITION**: $48,645
- **FINANCIAL AID**: $15.5 million supporting 22% of students. It’s the largest financial aid budget of any independent school in New York City.

FACULTY AND STAFF – FIELDSTON LOWER

- **TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**: 81
- **FULL-TIME FACULTY**: 38
- **FACULTY W/ ADVANCED DEGREE**: 55%
- **AVERAGE FACULTY TENURE AT FL**: 12 years

LOCATION AND FACILITIES

**LOCATION**: 18-acre campus in the Riverdale section of New York City. Students are drawn from all five boroughs of the city, Westchester County, Connecticut, and New Jersey.

ON THE WEB:

WWW.ECFS.ORG
ABOUT ECFS

For nearly 140 years, ECFS has shown a commitment to developing the intellectual, moral, and artistic potential of its students. With a rigorous curriculum that spans all disciplines, ECFS prepares students for success in a variety of fields and cultivates a lifelong passion for learning. The school has four divisions: Ethical Culture is located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and serves 450 students in grades PK-5. Fieldston Lower, Fieldston Middle, and Fieldston Upper share an 18-acre campus in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, a 15-minute drive from the Upper West Side, with Fieldston Middle serving 390 students and Fieldston Upper serving 600 students.

ECFS IS DEDICATED TO

• Engaging the whole child in learning as a full self and as part of a community and enabling him or her to understand the relevance of his or her learning to the world beyond the classroom.
• Creating safe opportunities for open debate, critical thinking, and multiple perspectives and voices.
• Encouraging resiliency in the face of obstacles and errors.
• Developing in students the capacity for wonder, self-expression, risk-taking, and self-awareness through academic, ethical, artistic, and athletic pursuits.

ECFS BELIEVES...

• …that all knowledge and mastery of content are essential and must be coupled with a lifelong passion for learning and for nuanced understanding.
• …that meaningful learning requires dedication, perseverance, and resilience in the face of challenges.
• …that the best teaching should support, stimulate, and celebrate multiple intelligences and learning styles.
• …that all members of our community should value and learn from “difference” in all its forms and always recognize the “other” in oneself.
• …that the problems in today’s complex, global society will require nimble, inventive critical thinkers.
• …that we have a moral obligation to leave the world better than we find it.

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

ECFS’s educational philosophy is rooted in experiential, hands-on learning; the classroom serves as a laboratory, and New York City as a classroom. The curriculum cultivates higher-order thinking skills and an intrinsic motivation for learning and focuses on each student’s inherent, positive characteristics, rather than solely the quality of their academic work. ECFS celebrates critical thinking and inquiry and emphasizes the importance of learning-by-doing for students of all levels. The ECFS community strives for distinction in all that it does and emphasizes mastery of subjects and skills. The school’s process-oriented philosophy encourages students to challenge themselves and others in original and innovative ways to reach their highest capacity in mind, body, and spirit.
FIELDSTON LOWER

Envisioned at its founding to be a model school for self-directed learning, Fieldston Lower engages all aspects of a child’s development: intellectual, creative, artistic, physical, emotional, and social. Since it opened its doors, Fieldston Lower has been an example of progressive education in action. The division cultivates a student and faculty body that is diverse in terms of race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and family makeup. Fifty-one percent of students in the division identify as students of color, and 30 percent receive financial aid. Fieldston Lower is an exemplar of a school that educates the whole child and empowers its students to become the reformers of tomorrow.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIELDSTON LOWER PROGRAM

Fieldston Lower’s 270 students progress through a PK-5 program that respects each student’s developmental, academic, and social needs. From PK to second grade, students learn in a flexible, play-based environment that acknowledges young students’ need for frequent physical activity. In the third through fifth grades, students benefit from a more structured program that prepares them for middle school. Parents and faculty love the school’s diversity and intimate, laid-back feel. Teachers and administrators are approachable and interact on a first-name basis. For more on the academic program at Fieldston Lower, visit http://www.ecfs.org/program/fieldston-lower.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Fieldston Lower emphasizes that real learning requires risk-taking and flexibility. With a curriculum centered on social studies and science, students are exposed to a variety of subjects, and in the lower grades, teachers make an effort to cater the topics their classes explore to the students’ expressed interests.

MATH, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Fieldston Lower’s math sequence works in concert with its other programming. In the younger grades, students are immersed in mathematical thinking through intentional and well-crafted curriculum that focuses on building the solid foundation necessary to be a successful mathematician. Starting in 4th grade, students self-select into “comfort groups,” which allow them to collaborate with students of similar skill levels and develop self-reflective and self-assessment skills. Fieldston Lower provides a number of opportunities for learning support including after school math help, which begins in first grade. The science curriculum is designed around the individual, family, and community, as well as the easily observable components of the natural world. History and more complex natural phenomena are introduced in later grades. Students learn from firsthand experience and gather information from a wide variety of sources as they learn to think critically about the social and natural worlds.

Technology is integrated with every aspect of the curriculum at Fieldston Lower – including the ethics program. A technology integrator and technology specialist collaborate closely with teachers and work directly with students to ensure that young learners have access to the tools and training they need to be
responsible digital citizens and effective students in the internet age.

The division’s interdisciplinary programs received a boost this year when Fieldston Lower unveiled 8,500 square feet of renovated third-floor space, including new classrooms and a central makerspace known as the “Adler Lab” that allows students to innovate and collaborate in new ways.

**LANGUAGE STUDY**

Students begin studying Spanish in PK, and continue through fifth grade, using the Foreign Language in Elementary Schools program. They have Spanish instruction three to four times a week during specific Spanish times, as well as morning meetings. In PK and kindergarten, teachers focus on exposure and in first and second grades, on cultural context. By third grade, students are ready to focus on conversation, reading and writing.

**ETHICS**

The approach to ethics at ECFS is comprehensive and fully integrated. The school encourages the discussion and practice of ethical thinking in every possible context – in the classroom, on the playground, at home, and beyond. Fieldston Lower’s ethics curriculum is integrated into students’ daily class work, and a dedicated ethics teacher supports the work of classroom teachers once a week in grades 1 through 5. The curriculum is organized around four central themes: identity, community, family, diversity, and social justice.

Students explore communities and identities outside their own and develop skills in cooperation, communication, and negotiation. In keeping with the core mission and values of ECFS, the school aims to promote a deep understanding of identity and diversity, and inspire students to new levels of empathy, compassion, and understanding.

**THE ARTS**

The visual arts program at Fieldston Lower focuses on building interpretive and technical skills across a variety of media. The curriculum is rich with opportunities at each grade level for ceramics, painting, drawing, and multimedia work. Students work on individual and collaborative projects and explore their own identities and aesthetics. Classes often travel to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, Dia:Chelsea, the Whitney, and various art galleries.

The Lower School music program emphasizes joy and hands on learning while teaching music fundamentals. The curriculum includes assemblies, pitched percussion, introduction of instruments of the orchestra, and interdisciplinary work within the social studies curriculum. Students leave the Lower School with a working knowledge of musical notation.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION & MOVEMENT**

For students in PK through second grade at Fieldston Lower, the physical education program emphasizes movement and exploration. Students develop spatial awareness and interact with their peers using games, rhythms, and other movement concepts. In third through fifth grade, the curriculum explores personal fitness, sports, and games. In each unit, game rules are introduced with a focus on sportsmanship, teamwork, skill development, and strategy. Non-traditional physical education units such as yoga, juggling, cup-stacking, circus arts, and ballroom-dancing enhance the program and expose students to a variety of ways to engage their bodies and keep fit.

**AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING**

Fieldston Lower offers after school courses, Monday through Friday until 5:00pm, along with an additional hour of extended stay programming until six. Courses include Chess, Tennis, Creative Writing,
Legos, Fencing, Group Violin, Robotics, and Dance. These programs are offered at an additional fee and are eligible for financial aid. There are also free after school Math and Language Arts support programs available to those who need them.

**FACULTY**

The close relationships between students and teachers form the core of Fieldston Lower’s identity. The experienced, caring, and engaged faculty body is responsible for putting the school’s mission into action and ensuring that each student is given the opportunity to reach his/her/their full potential. Fifty-one percent of Fieldston Lower faculty members hold master’s degrees or higher, and there is significant professional development funding available for degree programs, along with conferences and workshops. New faculty members are expected to take part in ECFS’ annual Progressive Teaching Institute (PTI), while current faculty members are also invited. PTI offers seminars and conferences that delve deeply into forward-thinking pedagogies, co-curricular education, and new innovations in the field. The division also offers a structured, three-year mentorship program aimed at growing associate teachers into confident and capable educators who are prepared to lead their own classrooms. The program is currently overseen by an Assistant Principal.

**THE OPPORTUNITY: PRINCIPAL OF FIELDSTON LOWER**

The chance to lead Fieldston Lower is an enticing opportunity for a strong, dynamic lower school teacher and administrator who is drawn to the progressive vision and values that have defined ECFS from its earliest days. The next Principal will join a celebrated institution with substantial resources and a 139-year history of educating young people to be joyful learners and champions of social justice.

The Principal of Fieldston Lower leads the division and reports directly to the Head of School. The Principal’s direct reports include two Assistant Principals (one overseeing grades PK-2 and the other responsible for grades 3-5), a Language Arts Coordinator, an Administrative Assistant, and a Transportation Coordinator. The Principal also supervises the division’s counselor/psychologist and a handful of special faculty who work with students across all grade levels. The Principal of Fieldston Lower sits on the Administrative Council of ECFS, which is chaired by the Head of School and comprised of the other three Principals and eight other senior administrators, including three Assistant Heads (overseeing advancement, educational programs, and social impact), the CFO, and the COO.

The 18-year Principal of Fieldston Lower departed in the summer of 2017, and Head of School Jessica Bagby appointed Noni Thomas López, the Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning at ECFS, as Interim Principal for the 2017-18 school year. Fieldston Lower is looking for a sensitive, diplomatic leader with the grit and gravitas to quickly earn the trust and respect of all constituents.
WHO SHOULD APPLY?

The incoming Principal should be an exceptional communicator who will celebrate the division’s remarkable diversity while working to unify the community around a shared vision for the school. Although many schools wrestle with the tensions inherent to any collective, long-term educational project – community vs. individual, autonomy vs. cohesion, organic vs. structured – the guiding ideals of ECFS invite an open, ongoing discussion about these issues. The school’s Faculty Interest Committee (a teachers’ union) and the divisional Faculty Councils along with the Parent & Teachers Association are vocal advocates for their constituents both school-wide and at the divisional level. The leaders of these groups meet regularly with the Principal of Fieldston Lower (and other ECFS administrators) to ensure everyone is heard and enfranchised to help determine the fate of the school. The next Principal must support the school’s enduring commitment to democratic ideals while focusing the division’s energy, advancing institutional priorities, and harmonizing with Ethical Culture, Fieldston Middle, and Fieldston Upper.

Fieldston Lower’s next Principal should be an innovative, experienced educator who is well versed in emergent curricula, experiential learning, and other progressive pedagogies. The division’s next leader will have the opportunity to work with faculty to evaluate the existing schedule and programs to make sure they are optimized to support the division’s educational goals. In particular, Fieldston Lower hopes to fine-tune the scope and sequence of its curriculum so that students are well prepared for a confident transition to Fieldston Middle along with their classmates from the Ethical Culture campus. Ideally, the next Principal will be a tested classroom teacher and proven instructional leader at the PK-5 level.

Fieldston Lower is the most diverse of the four divisions at ECFS. The next Principal will need to be an engaging, outgoing ambassador for the division, collaborating closely with the admissions and financial aid team to ensure that the school continues to enroll a diverse and promising student body. The division’s remarkable diversity is a strength that reflects the school’s principles and generates opportunities for meaningful conversations about identity and difference; however, the diversity also poses a challenge as the school strives to help students and parents connect across religious, economic, ethnic, cultural, political, and geographic differences. ECFS - and Fieldston Lower in particular - has led New York independent schools in its effort to meet this challenge head on. Third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students are required to participate in the school’s trailblazing - and much discussed - Conversations About Race (CARe) program. The Principal will need to be comfortable stepping into a community that does not shy away from candid, nuanced conversations about a wide range of socially and politically charged topics - race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and so on - with both adults and young people.
ANTICIPATED SEARCH CALENDAR

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application deadline</td>
<td>November 21, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of candidates</td>
<td>December 5, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidate interviews</td>
<td>December 16–17, 2017</td>
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<td>Finalist visits</td>
<td>January, 2018</td>
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<td>Appointment</td>
<td>January/February, 2018</td>
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APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND SEARCH PROCESS

Acting on behalf of Ethical Culture Fieldston School, Wickenden Associates is actively recruiting exceptional leaders for this compelling opportunity. ECFS is dedicated to the goal of building a culturally diverse and pluralistic community and strongly encourages applications from people of color, LGBTQ candidates, and women. The lead consultants are Laura Hansen (lhansen@wickenden.com) and Jim Wickenden (jwickenden@wickenden.com). Both may be reached at (609) 683-1355.

Candidates should submit no later than Tuesday, November 21st, 2017, an application package including the following:

- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position.
- A current résumé.
- A statement of educational philosophy.
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references. (We will obtain permission from candidates before contacting references.)
- Other supporting material (e.g. articles, speeches, or letters of recommendation) that would be useful to the Search Committee.

These materials should be sent via email attachment to searches@wickenden.com.

After an initial review of applicants, the Search Committee will interview selected candidates over the weekend of December 16-17. Shortly thereafter, finalists will be invited to Fieldston Lower for a more comprehensive series of interviews. An appointment is anticipated in late January or early February of 2018. Wickenden Associates will keep all applicants informed of their status throughout the process.