



Ethical  
Culture  
Fieldston  
School

*to see the world as it might be  
since 1878*

**Fieldston Upper School  
Principal**  
Ethical Culture Fieldston School  
Leadership Opportunity  
July 2012

# Ethical Culture Fieldston School



Carney, Sandoe  Associates

800-225-7986 ▼ [www.carneysandoe.com](http://www.carneysandoe.com)

Bronx, NY  
1,700 students PreK-12  
590 students 9-12  
[www.ECFS.org](http://www.ECFS.org)

## THE POSITION

Ethical Culture Fieldston School (ECFS) in New York City, one of the nation's preeminent progressive schools, seeks a Principal of the Fieldston Upper School to lead a community of approximately 590 students, and 109 faculty and staff. Fieldston Upper is in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, serving students in grades 9-12. With a noteworthy history as one of the finest schools in the New York area, Fieldston Upper is eager for a skilled and inspiring leader who will ensure the continuing excellence of all aspects of the division's operation within the context of the school's mission. It is essential that the Ethical Culture Fieldston School engage a Principal who will embrace the school's values and embody the spirit of the institution moving forward. The Principal of Fieldston Upper reports directly to the Head of School and is a member of the Head's senior administrative team.

## THE SCHOOL

The Ethical Culture Fieldston School was established in 1878 by the visionary Felix Adler, educator, social reformer, and founder of the New York Society for Ethical Culture. A firm believer in the power of education as preparation for life, Adler envisioned a broad curriculum that emphasized non-sectarian moral instruction, respect for the individual, and "learning by doing" – radical notions for the time, and the very cornerstones of progressive education today.

### Mission

*"The ideal of the school is to develop individuals who will be competent to change their environment to greater conformity with moral ideals."*

*-Felix Adler*

Adler began by opening the doors of a free kindergarten to eight children of the working poor in 1878. Elementary grades were added in 1880. From the outset, the Workingman's School emphasized moral education, psychological development, teacher training, and integration of "manual arts" with academics. In 1890, the Workingman's School became The Ethical Culture School and admitted its first paying students. Enrollment increased dramatically over the next 15 years. In 1904, the school moved into a new building at 33 Central Park West and graduated its first official high school class of nine students.



In 1928, on the 50th anniversary of its founding, the school expanded its facilities, relocating the high school to an 18-acre campus in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. "The Fieldston Plan" envisioned an environment for older children in which knowledge and space were connected. The spacious campus of eight interlocking buildings and a central quadrangle was designed to enable students to move indoors and

outdoors, from building to building, and through interdisciplinary areas of inquiry. Fieldston Lower was established on the Fieldston campus in 1932, offering a second elementary school program with a strong child-centered ethos and core curriculum that continues to this day.

Today, committed to academic excellence, ethical learning, and diversity, ECF offers a rich and challenging curriculum in the humanities, sciences and arts. A co-educational, nonsectarian independent school, ECFS serves a diverse community of students from Pre-K through twelfth grade on two campuses.

The two lower schools, Ethical Culture and Fieldston Lower, serve students from Pre-K to 5; Fieldston Middle serves students in grades 6-8 (the Middle School became its own division 5 years ago and shares some faculty and schedule); and Fieldston Upper, grades 9-12. The main entry years for admission are Pre-K, kindergarten, sixth grade, and ninth grade, and both lower schools feed into Fieldston Middle.



Admission at all entry levels is extremely competitive. ECFS is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools.

In July, 2011, ECFS welcomed Dr. Damian Fernandez as the new Head of School. He brings a deep grounding in ECFS's values of academic excellence, rigorous progressive education, ethical learning, and diversity. Before ECFS, Dr. Fernandez served three years as the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Purchase College SUNY. He holds a B.A. in International Relations and Latin American Studies from Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs; an M.A. in Latin American Studies (Political Science) from the University of Florida; and a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Miami, Graduate School of International Studies. Dr. Fernandez, who was born in Cuba and raised in Puerto Rico,



speaks Spanish, French, and Portuguese. With the Board of Trustees, Dr. Fernandez will chart a strategic course for the future, to define what progressive education means in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, provide greater access and affordability, and strengthen an even more inclusive community. With his strong background in international and global studies, Dr. Fernandez is committed to making ECFS a leader in educating students for a global economy and society. His 2011-2012 school year welcome message is on the school's website, <http://www.ECFS.org/news.aspx?id=298>.



Carney, Sandoe & Associates

44 Bromfield Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

TEL 800.225.7986 • FAX 617.542.9500

search@carneysandoe.com • www.carneysandoe.com

## FIELDSTON UPPER SCHOOL – 590 STUDENTS, FORMS III-VI (GRADES 9-12)

The upper school curriculum embraces high standards within traditional core subjects, while offering innovative courses, independent work, community service, ethics, and a breadth of electives for upper school students. The abandonment of the Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum in the 2001-2002 school year was the first step in a thoughtful questioning of the traditional curriculum, a commitment to more rigorous intellectual thought, and a rejection of rote “teaching to the test.” Alternative courses explore a variety of disciplines in greater philosophical and technical depth. Several things distinguish Fieldston from other independent schools in New York and across the country:



### *ECFS at a Glance*

*Students of color: 32%*

*Faculty of color: 26%*

*Operating budget: \$61.9 million*

*Endowment: \$65 million*

*Financial Aid budget: \$10.8 million*

*Students receiving need-based aid: 13%*

### *Fieldston Upper*

*Grades: 9-12*

*Enrollment: 590*

*Operating budget: \$10.3 million*

*Full-time faculty & staff: 109*

*56 FT & 4 PT*

*49 FT crossover with middle school*

*Faculty with advanced degree: 82%*

*Student-Teacher ratio: 9:1*

*Students of color: 26%*

*Faculty of color: 22%*

*Current tuition: \$37,825*

- A respectful but informal relationship between students and faculty, and along with it the feeling, widely shared by our students, that their teachers care about them as people and not just as inhabitants of their classes;
- A deeply held commitment on the part of faculty, students, and parents to social justice and to a serious engagement with diversity and other issues related to the community of the Bronx, New York, the United States, and the world;
- Academic and co-curricular programs in ethics and the performing and visual arts that are as robust as and that engage the students as deeply as our programs in the traditional “academic” disciplines;
- A counseling program led by the form deans and the college counseling staff in which our students’ emotional, moral, and social development receive as much attention as their transcripts.



Carney, Sandoe & Associates

44 Bromfield Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

TEL 800.225.7986 • FAX 617.542.9500

search@carneysandoe.com • www.carneysandoe.com

**Based on founder, Felix Adler's educational vision, ECFSS embraces the following ideals:**

**Ethical Learning** -Exploring 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 and economic and racial diversity, and we honor all of our students for their unique contributions, cultural backgrounds, and beliefs. We consider service to be critical to the development of character, so 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, sciences, the arts and physical education. The 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.

Rigorous courses in the Ethics Department from psychology and philosophy to courses in service fieldwork have a strong focus on student leadership and help students understand and compare western and eastern moral thought. They learn to evaluate the issues of the day with an effective vocabulary and an eye toward social justice.

All students take elective courses their junior and senior years rather than a required course program. Though ECFSS does not offer AP courses, some students take AP exams following some senior courses. Many students complete individualized senior projects in the second semester of senior year. Most of these students will drop one class and receive equivalent credit for the project they complete. Most of these projects have both an academic and non-academic component and each is supervised by a faculty member. As one faculty member put it, "things look laid-back but we are a very academic place – we are just more student

centered and give more to kids to take on themselves – with a complex schedule where other kinds of programs outside academics are also very important – like arts, ethics, service learning."

At ECFSS, looking for the appropriate college is treated as a continuation of a student's education; each is encouraged to be self-reliant and thoughtful, making choices that are individually suitable and challenging. Choices vary widely but typically include many of the most selective colleges and universities in the world. The caliber of students is reflected clearly in the broad range of excellent schools they choose. Significant numbers of recent ECF graduates have chosen the following schools: Brown University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, George Washington University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Pomona College, Stanford University, University of Pennsylvania, Vanderbilt University, Wesleyan University and Yale University. The talented, diverse college placement staff works closely with each student to find appropriate choices reflecting varied interests. Last year, 137 seniors applied to more than 250 colleges and every year a significant number of students choose schools outside the northeast.



Carney, Sandoe & Associates

44 Bromfield Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

TEL 800.225.7986 • FAX 617.542.9500

search@carneysandoe.com • www.carneysandoe.com

## THE ARTS

ECFS students encounter the arts formally in art, music, drama, and dance classes, as well as across their academic classes; in extracurricular activities and trips; and in festivals and performances. In the upper school, opportunities abound in the arts, from the advanced visual arts curriculum to the photography magazine. Throughout the year, the Fieldston community enjoys musical performances by the chorus, the orchestra, the percussion ensembles, the chamber music groups, and jazz ensembles. Dance students present their work at four concerts during the year, performing works by students and established choreographers. The theater program at Fieldston is vibrant and ambitious, ranging from the fall drama and the student-directed plays to the spring musical.

## THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Extensive physical education and interscholastic athletic programs cultivate the body as well as the mind and spirit. Along with skill development, teachers and coaches promote teamwork and sportsmanship. Over the last eight years, the Fieldston Upper athletic programs have grown considerably, adding six new team sports – boys' and girls' ice hockey, boys' and girls' lacrosse, golf, and ultimate Frisbee. Sixty-five percent of upper school students play at least one sport. In the last ten years, Fieldston Upper teams have won 25 league championships and 12 state championships.



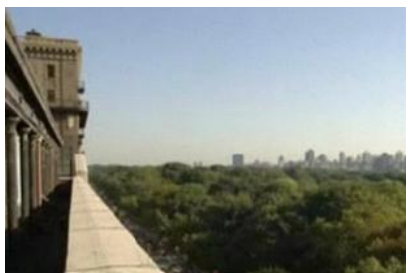
## COMMUNITY SERVICE

At ECF, work in service to others has been a long-held tradition at the school and community service is woven into the daily curriculum of all grades. Through service projects students are engaged in meaningful and challenging tasks that meet community needs in New York City and beyond. Student participation is extremely high and has prompted the recent expansion of the program. In 2010, Fieldston Upper students and faculty staged a memorable talent show for the benefit of victims of the earthquake in Haiti. The show raised more than \$20,000 for the cause, with all of the proceeds going to Partners in Health, an organization that has been working with the people of Haiti for more than 20 years. ECFS students feel connected to local as well as global issues and many initiate activities to address concerns which have awakened their passions. In addition, the school's community service learning program is largely student-run as are the various leadership programs throughout the upper school; both engage a significant number of students volunteers and participants.



## CITY SEMESTER

*City Semester: The Bronx Experience* is a semester program that integrates history, English, science, ethics, language, civic leadership and the arts around the study of New York City through the lens of the Bronx. For V and VI formers, City Semester offers a chance to step outside the everyday routine, have an adventure, challenge assumptions and grow in new ways. In the spring semester, enrolled students spend at least two days a week outside of the classroom doing research, exploring neighborhoods, interviewing residents, working with community groups, presenting in the fields and speaking to policymakers. The academic work is challenging, with teachers teaching in their own disciplines while also working across boundaries to reveal connections that might be



unavailable in a more traditional model. Students work individually and in groups on projects that draw from multiple subjects. The mission of City Semester is to challenge students with a rigorous curriculum that connects student-centered, interdisciplinary, place-based scholarships to leadership, personal growth and engagement in the communal life of the city and the world.

## LOCATION AND SETTING

The Fieldston campus is located in one of the greenest parts of New York City, in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, the northernmost area of New York City. Students enjoy the benefits of a small and comfortable campus environment that is a 15-minute drive from the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The neighborhood maintains its nineteenth century character as an affluent enclave of Tudor-revival and Georgian estates and mansions.

The recently completed expansion of the Fieldston campus supports excellence at every level. The new middle school opened in September 2007. The 48,000 square-foot LEED-certified academic building incorporates many environmentally friendly features including a “green” or vegetative roof that is utilized in many curricular programs. Renovated spaces include new performing arts and music spaces, a new dining hall and kitchen, student commons, and an all-school admissions suite.



A new athletic facility, opened in January 2007, supports an exciting physical education program for both middle and upper school students. The 38,000-square-foot facility includes a double gymnasium allowing for two simultaneous full-court basketball games, a fitness center, training rooms and two physical education classrooms; the six-lane competitive length pool is housed in an adjacent 12,000-square-foot building.



Carney, Sandoe & Associates

44 Bromfield Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

TEL 800.225.7986 • FAX 617.542.9500

search@carneysandoe.com • www.carneysandoe.com

## COMMUNITY

ECF is proud to be one of the most diverse independent schools of its size in the country with a long history of seeking a diverse student body in the broadest sense: racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and otherwise. Consistent with the school's mission, the student body includes a broad representation of diversity drawn from throughout the New York City metropolitan area. Close to two-thirds of students live in Manhattan; of the others, most are either from the Bronx or Westchester County. Students of color represent 29% of the student body: 70.02% of students self-identify as Caucasian; the remaining students self-identify as African-American (7.94%), multiracial (9.94%), Latino (4.7%), Asian (6%), and Middle Eastern (.59%). The talented student body is engaged in a broad range of academic and extracurricular pursuits. As two students remarked, "I appreciate being at a school which encourages you to do so many different things and gives students lots of responsibility," and "Fieldston really tries to balance academics and the community; students take action here – they are willing to participate and to do their best."



In keeping with Fieldston's mission to promote ethical citizenship, and to encourage students to become leaders and activists, Fieldston Upper has a vibrant and extensive student life program. This area of the community includes over 50 student-run clubs; a full slate of regular assemblies that focus on culture, social justice and identity and are organized almost exclusively by students; Modified Awareness Days (MADs), Fieldston Awareness Days (FADs), and Community Days, which are special days that allow the community to closely examine issues of local, national or global importance; an annual summer book that is selected by a student-faculty and read by the entire Upper School and is followed by a MAD; an active student government that comprises both grade level representatives and a cabinet; and Alternative Learning Period (ALP), which is a two-day experiential learning program that takes place once every two years and features workshops and classes run by students, faculty, parents and alumni. This year, a new project called the Progressive Study Action Initiative (PSAI), comprised of both students and faculty, has been meeting regularly to examine progressive education and incubate ideas and proposals that relate to the school's core mission.



Teachers are the heart and soul of ECF, and the extraordinary quality of teaching continues to shape the education and moral mission of the school. Students enjoy a respectful but informal relationship with faculty and strongly believe that their teachers

care about them as people and not just inhabitants of their classrooms. At Fieldston Upper, form deans and advisors focus on the emotional, moral, social, and academic development of each student. Students who met with the search consultants spoke eloquently of the educational/personal benefits of the student/teacher relationship. Teachers speak to the “genuine interest that students have in learning and in the world around them” as one of the benefits of working there, resulting in a teachers “highly invested in the development of students and care for them.”

Recruiting, supporting and retaining the highest quality, diverse faculty committed to the mission are critical to the future of ECF. In addition to a mentoring program for faculty new to the school, there are a variety of opportunities for professional development and support including an ambitious venture grant program, established in 1992.

The arrival of Dr. Fernandez has raised the level of excitement as a great school continues to find important opportunities for growth. Throughout the 2011-2012 school year, ECFS will be preparing for the New York Association of Independent Schools’ 10-year accreditation self-study. Fernandez notes the self-study “will serve as the basis for collective learning about our school—where we excel and where we must improve.”

#### **OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The new Principal of Fieldston Upper School will arrive in 2012 at a propitious time. The school’s leadership team will be deeply engaged in ensuring that ECFS remains positioned as a leading, nationally known K-12 school known for the breadth and depth of its curriculum and program, for the quality of its instruction, and confidence and life-long learning of its graduates. The self-study and evaluation will present new opportunities for growth, development and refinement in strategy, program, curriculum and operations. The new Principal will need to take charge deliberately of the academic program and work closely with a strong, autonomous faculty to continue to shape and deliver a high-caliber program.



As one of the few independent schools in the US with a faculty union, the Principal will need to fully understand how to work meaningfully and positively in this context. It creates a kind of definition to the Principal-Faculty relationship requiring mutual respect, honesty, trust, and professionalism. The leadership of Fieldston Upper carries with it multiple opportunities. The new Principal will likely:

- ◆ Develop closer coordination and transition with the middle school
- ◆ Implement a more formal and structured assessment process for faculty
- ◆ Enhance student programs and nurture new academic initiatives which both foster independence and feel cohesive and grounded
- ◆ Discover opportunities for the schedule
- ◆ Play a greater role in admissions
- ◆ Maintain a transparent, supportive, and open relationship with faculty
- ◆ Tap the collective power and talent of a faculty to create change

The Principal will need to be a visible, active leader of the school's experienced, engaged, and vocal faculty and student body. S/he will be principled, fair and strong-minded, with the temperament, intelligence and instincts to manage a large, complex and vibrant division adroitly and consistently. Effective leadership at ECFS has typically originated from clear communication and process which includes faculty, student and parent input, avoids presenting top-down mandates, and stays faithful to the school's mission.



ECFS seeks a Principal for Fieldston Upper with strong school administrative leadership experience, who can achieve the right balance between the school's tradition of reduced structure with an appropriate use of helpful systems and orderliness. The Principal must have vision for the academic program, student life, and the healthy discussion from faculty, parents and students in decision-making – permitting creativity and ownership while ensuring collegial idea development, implementation and follow-through. The appointee will likely be a leader whose style encourages both independence and accountability from faculty; who unifies people and ideas, sees the larger picture, and has a global outlook.

The successful candidate will also likely exhibit a set of the following qualities and strengths:

- Excellent communicator (verbal & written)
- Manages confidently and well
- Team player; collaborative
- Anticipates and solves problems well
- Personable, straightforward
- Energetic, handles a fast-paced environment and setting
- Visible, thorough, and efficient

## HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates submit these materials confidentially as separate (PDF preferred) attachments:

- cover letter expressing interest in the Fieldston Upper School position
- current résumé
- statement of educational philosophy and practice
- list of 5 references with name, phone number, and email address of each  
*(references will be contacted only with the candidate's permission)*

### **Benjamin Bolté & Sherry Coleman, Ed.D.**

Senior Search Associates

**CARNEY, SANDOE & ASSOCIATES**

44 Bromfield Street, Boston, MA 02108

[bbolte@carneysandoe.com](mailto:bbolte@carneysandoe.com) / [sherry.coleman@carneysandoe.com](mailto:sherry.coleman@carneysandoe.com)

617-933-3430 (dir) / 302-354-0043 (dir)



*~ Ethical Culture Fieldston School is an Equal Opportunity Employer ~*



Carney, Sandoe & Associates

44 Bromfield Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

TEL 800.225.7986 • FAX 617.542.9500

[search@carneysandoe.com](mailto:search@carneysandoe.com) • [www.carneysandoe.com](http://www.carneysandoe.com)