American School of Paris

Paris, France
Head of School
July 2018
www.asparis.org
The Position

The first K-12 American international school in Europe, the American School of Paris (ASP) offers a unique learning experience to its highly diverse student body of 750. Hailing from 54 countries and speaking 33 different mother tongues, ASP students follow a rigorous college-preparatory program that draws upon the best aspects of American educational practice in an extraordinarily vibrant international setting.

Founded in 1946, ASP has long been one of the most prominent international schools in Europe. ASP sets itself apart by an impressive combination of academics and co-curricular programs, arts and athletics, committed teachers, and an inclusive international community—all amidst the opportunities and resources of Paris, one of the world’s most attractive and cultured cities.

The school’s strategic plan has provided an ambitious blueprint for action, directed toward a future vision for excellence in 21st-century teaching and broadly diversified education. The school has made notable and exciting progress toward a renovated campus in Saint-Cloud—a desirable suburb on the western edge of Paris, just 20 minutes from the 16th Arrondissement in Paris where many ASP families reside.

The American School of Paris has been on the move over the last eight years—striving to improve and align its curriculum; add purpose-built, dynamic education space; and enhance its pedagogical approaches to educate students more intentionally and creatively for the 21st century. Amidst many exciting advancements, ASP finds itself seeking a new Head of School, effective July 2018, due to the retirement of Mark Ulfers. Ulfers has laid a strong foundation for future development at ASP, having elevated the school to a new level during what will be an eight-year tenure as Head.
School History

The American School of Paris was founded in 1946 to educate children of American diplomats and professional expatriates arriving in Paris in the years just after WWII. The school moved to its current location in Saint-Cloud in 1967 to provide for growing enrollment and increased resources. Enrolling a largely American student body in its formative years, ASP today welcomes families from many nationalities, including a growing number of host-country students.

In 2011, ASP successfully acquired ownership of its campus (a former NATO base) and subsequently embarked upon an extensive master plan. Last fall, the school dedicated a marvelous new Upper School building, added a Lower School cafeteria/function space, and renovated the Lower School wing. This summer, ASP will continue construction of the Arts Link, which will house fine arts, music, a black box theater, as well as a portion of the Middle School. Planned additions to the Middle School include a STEAM/innovation lab, maker spaces, and new classrooms, all of which are on track for completion prior to the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

What makes the American School of Paris unique?

- ASP is an American style education focusing on the whole child.
- ASP produces exceptional learning results.
- ASP offers a multi-cultural experience in one of the world’s greatest cities.
- ASP is an intimate student-centered school, which offers big school opportunities on a new state-of-the-art campus.
- ASP is tradition, since 1946, the oldest K-12 American international school in Europe.
The School

The American School of Paris is a leader in the international school community in teaching and learning. ASP’s academic standards are well established within a nurturing, familial environment in which students are challenged to succeed personally as well as academically and supported as individual learners. The current student population is approximately one-third American and one-sixth French, with the remaining half of the student body drawing from a wide range of nationalities across the globe. This diversity adds a dimension to learning and friendship that is highly valued by both students and parents.

A founding school of the International Baccalaureate, ASP has provided Upper School students the opportunity to earn the IB Diploma for more than three decades. The school also offers the Bilingual IB Diploma. In addition, ASP is one of few schools in Europe to offer Advanced Placement courses alongside the IB Diploma Program, providing a uniquely diversified and personalized educational experience. ASP thus offers a broad academic program that emphasizes the individual while at the same time instilling the most essential qualities of global citizenship, namely cultural awareness and inclusion, multilingual communication skills, and a commitment to environmental stewardship and serving communities in need. Additionally, in line with their mission, ASP provides learning support services to all students, recognizing that every child can learn and that the needs of learners are best met when their learning styles and needs are understood.

The faculty and administration at ASP are committed to fostering a nurturing environment in which all students feel supported and challenged. Both current and former students speak of their relationships with their faculty mentors—a hallmark of the ASP student
The school enjoys an impressive 15-year average tenure amongst its 104 faculty, all of whom strive to provide students with the skills as well as the self-confidence to thrive in all aspects of their lives. ASP teachers find that the school’s strong support of professional development allows them to stay abreast of the best practices in teaching and learning.

The school is deeply committed to advancing its curriculum to adequately prepare students to succeed in the 21st century. ASP’s newer technology classes—Coding for the Web and Mobile Applications, 3D Modeling, Design and Innovation, and AP Computer Science—as well as courses in leadership and global citizenship provide a framework for added student development. In addition, ASP’s annual fund—the Excellence Fund—fosters innovation and skill-building by providing year-round funding to support new ideas and programs that enhance teaching and learning.

Beyond the classroom, ASP seeks to instill and nurture a sense of global responsibility through hands-on service learning opportunities. Service Learning begins in Lower School with initiatives such as choral performances at local nursing homes, scaling upwards as students grow and mature. By Upper School, students are wholeheartedly shaping and enacting service programs that include signature outreach trips to Romania, India, and the Kalahari.

The school also cultivates awareness and responsiveness to emerging global situations that call for humanitarian support. Students in both the Middle and Upper Schools are involved in environmental advocacy and conservation projects related to COP21, the 2016 Paris Climate Conference. Upper School students also initiated a club to assist local refugee centers with donations as well as organized social events, such as a collegial, varsity-level soccer match that emphasized the school’s values of sportsmanship and respect.
The Lower School

The Lower School at ASP serves students between the ages of three and ten. Believing that students learn best when engaged academically as well as socially and emotionally, the Lower School program encourages children to proactively explore and guide their own learning in innovative and creative ways. Teaching and learning is differentiated, using a blend of individualized instruction and small and large-group activities. Teachers use benchmark assessments as well as internal and external examinations to gauge student progress and adapt their instruction accordingly.

To further deepen understanding in the Common Core curriculum—which includes a balanced language arts program, social studies, mathematics, French, and English language learning—Lower School teachers use co-curricular themes to draw connections across subject areas. Fine arts are integrated across the Lower School curriculum, whether through students’ self-reflective journaling in a carnet (notebook) or their creative explorations and expression in song, dance, or instrumental music programs. Physical education classes, community service projects, and weekly guidance counseling sessions also foster a holistic balance of physical, social, and intellectual development.

The interdisciplinary approach to instruction in the Lower School is further reinforced with regular field trips and service projects throughout the year, which connect children to the many remarkable resources in and around Paris. The program is enriched with end-of-year visits to other regions of France, including an estuary study in Bordeaux and geo-culinary discovery and sailing in Brittany.
The Middle School

This holistic approach carries over into the Middle School at ASP, where the aim is to guide students to become well-balanced individuals with strong intellectual, social, artistic, and physical skills. The academic program is highly rigorous with a curriculum that is designed to meet and exceed the highest tier of American standards as well as prepare students who aspire to pursue the IB Diploma in the Upper School. Core subjects include English literature, composition, and communication; French; social studies; biological, physical, geological, and technological sciences; and mathematics based upon the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Common Core standards. Sixth graders also take a Writer’s Workshop elective.

The American School of Paris offers dedicated language support to students of all backgrounds. In addition to core English classes, students are required to take French in the Middle School. The French program at ASP uses ACTFL proficiency guidelines and is segmented into four levels (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Francophone), ensuring that every student, from native speaker to novice, is appropriately challenged. ASP also offers a robust English as an Additional Language (EAL) program. Students who are not fluent in English attend grade-level classes while working with EAL specialists in and out of the classroom to develop a mastery of the language.

Beyond core requirements, the Middle School provides students with ample opportunity to explore other interests and uncover new talents. All students take drama, physical education, and health electives, but they can also choose from a diverse selection of other electives ranging from instrumental music and visual arts to robotics, debate, and computer graphics.
The Upper School

With its combined curriculum of IB and AP coursework, in addition to other ASP college-prep courses, the Upper School at ASP offers the most diversified and customizable high school program in France. Upper School students craft the educational experience that best suits their interests and prepares them for their chosen academic path.

ASP’s approach to learning is both demanding and balanced. Core subjects of study in the Upper School include English and the humanities, social studies, mathematics, design and technology, sciences, modern languages, and the fine and performing arts. All Upper School students must take two years of physical education, and can elect to study Spanish or French for their foreign language requirement.

Most impressively, the Upper School has had a 100% pass rate on IB for twelve years running. It recently added the option of the AP International Diploma, which requires successful completion of at least five AP courses from specific categories. The Class of 2016 outperformed peers globally in both programs: 100% of IB diploma students at ASP were successful and 90% of students in AP courses passed their exams.

While students in the Upper School excel within the structured environment of the AP and IB programs, they are also empowered to expand their horizons in areas of interest not explicitly met within the Upper School’s curriculum. Juniors and seniors can submit written proposals for independent study, reviewed for academic credit at the end of each term by a subject matter expert on the faculty. The school also offers concentrated learning courses which complement traditional classroom learning with hands-on, experiential activities and projects outside of the classroom and across the globe.
**Student Life**

In general, students feel genuinely appreciative of the opportunities afforded them at ASP—core courses and electives, clubs and activities, college choices as well as the tools and resources needed to succeed in their pursuits. Students (and parents) note how the school’s exceptional location and diverse community provide them with a deeper understanding of the world and different points of view, making them feel more in-tune internationally and connected to learning that will help them in the future.

**Advisory Program**

The Middle School Advisory Program is a unique program that promotes healthy social and emotional development during the formative years of adolescence, in addition to strengthening the overall sense of community and interpersonal connections within the division. Middle School students are welcomed into small advisory groups that meet regularly with a faculty mentor, creating a safe space to discuss relevant social issues. To solidify the advisory groups and grade level teams, Middle School students begin each school year with Outward Bound team-building trips in Savoie, France (6th grade) and the Lake District, England (7th and 8th grades). These experiences continue to be points of reference throughout the year. Activities and field trips during the year provide further opportunities to put into practice the ideas and topics that arise in group discussions, which include self-advocacy and independence, peer pressure, bullying, organizational skills and time management, identity, multiculturalism, and responsible decision-making, among others. Students also participate in academic advising sessions throughout the year.

In the Upper School, the advisory program has recently been restructured to better serve the needs of 21st century high school students. Called GAPS—Global citizenship, Academic and Personal excellence, and Service learning—this program is designed to adapt to students’ needs as they progress from 9th to 12th grade, first guiding the transition from Middle School and then facilitating increased awareness of and progress in key social and emotional skills—from effective collaboration and planning, to taking on new challenges and facing setbacks, to the importance of social engagement and understanding the ethical implications of one’s actions. The GAPS classes are collaboratively led and facilitated by a faculty mentor, guidance counselor, and 11th- and 12th-grade peer mentors, and is fully integrated into the Upper School’s block scheduling.
Athletics

The Athletics Department at ASP embraces an inclusive and developmental philosophy while offering breadth and depth of opportunities for students. Working with professional coaches, educators, and the wider ASP community, the athletics program fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment, whether through improving a personal best, perfecting a skill, or being an exemplary houseguest when visiting other international schools. ASP hopes its athletes have fun, win humbly, and lose graciously.

Beginning in Kindergarten, Lower School students have the option to play team sports during all three seasons: soccer in the fall and spring, and basketball in winter. Teams are co-ed across all grades, with practices on Saturdays for all teams as well as after-school practices on Fridays for grades 3-5. The Lower School Athletics program welcomes active parent participation and emphasizes skill building and qualities of teamwork, humility, and hard work over winning. Middle School students participate in one of six sports—soccer, volleyball, cross-country, basketball, softball, and track and field (soccer is played both in fall and spring). Games are scheduled with local international schools, and students are chosen to participate in games based on attitude, participation and effort. Seventh and eighth graders are welcome to try out for JV and Varsity teams of selective sports as well.

The athletics program in the Upper School is fully integrated into the educational curriculum. Eleven junior varsity (JV) and varsity sports are offered across three seasons at ASP. Families of student athletes are expected to host players from visiting teams for weekend meets, fostering a very collaborative and familial sense of community and hospitality across the Athletics Department. Each season culminates with the International School Sports Tournament (ISST). Held in a different European city each year, the ISST draws between eight and 12 of Europe’s largest American and international schools and provides extraordinary opportunities for student athletes to showcase their talents and build camaraderie amongst their own teams as well as with players from other schools across the continent.
The Arts

The arts program is highly diversified, providing students with creative outlets within and beyond the classroom. From their film laboratory and state-of-the-art theater to ensemble rooms and an electronic music studio, ASP provides resources to students across all grades and divisions, enabling them to engage fully in the creative process and develop a wide range of aesthetic and artistic skills. The arts program will be greatly enhanced by the addition of the new Arts Link, scheduled to open by next year.

The ultimate goal of the arts program is to instill an enduring appreciation and enthusiasm for the arts. Music is integrated into the academic curriculum beginning in the Lower School and carries over through Grade 12, and the school offers many opportunities for students to showcase their instrumental and vocal talents at school concerts as well as international music festivals throughout the year.

Given the many opportunities to engage with the arts at ASP, and the array of media and forms available to them, students are encouraged to engage fully and pursue their artistic interests regardless of prior experience.
Clubs & Co-Curricular Activities

Student participation in co-curricular activities is highly supported and encouraged at ASP. The school offers co-curricular activities as early as the second grade. Whether athletic, artistic, leadership-focused, community-minded, or geared toward a specific hobby or interest, all clubs supplement the robust athletics, arts and service learning activities that are a part of the core curriculum. The intent is to provide students of all ages with alternative pathways to pursue self-expression, personal growth, and social and global awareness.

The Lower School’s after-school activities vary depending upon expressed student interest, but these offerings typically fill up quickly. Recent activities have included arts and crafts, tennis, circus fitness, acroyoga, and Lego™ engineering. Middle School clubs also vary each semester. Popular ones include hip-hop dance, improv, Model UN, Yearbook, Debate Club, and Student Council, among many others. Options expand further in the Upper School, where ASP students participated in 16 clubs last year. These organizations are largely student-led in the Upper School, meeting either during lunch period or after school. Of particular note is the successful ASP Robotics Team, who placed second in the first Tech Challenge Competition, held in Grenoble in 2015-16 and included teams from across France.
Physical Campus

ASP is located in Saint-Cloud, an historic bustling suburb with easy access to Paris by train or car. Three-quarters of ASP students (K-12) take advantage of the school's extensive bus network, which provides transportation to the school via 17 routes and a total of 308 bus stops in and around Paris.

The campus features two full-size gymnasiums and training facilities, a large outdoor sports field, two recently redesigned libraries, a media lab, world-class performing arts center, and two modern cafeterias that serve an assortment of French cuisine and conscientiously healthy, organic offerings. Campus development plans are available in this edition of ASPect Magazine and a video summary of the project is accessible on the school’s website.

Governance Structure

The American School of Paris is organized under French law as a legal entity known as an Association (in accordance with the Law of July 1, 1901 and the Decree of August 18, 1901). The School is owned and managed under the terms of the “Statuts del'Ecole Américaine de Paris” (the “Statutes”). The Association is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, which exercises authority pursuant to the Statutes, bylaws, and well-established policies and administrative regulations.

Currently there are fourteen trustees, with an active Trustees Committee that reviews potential Board candidates, strategically chosen for needed expertise in support of key initiatives and to ensure a future-leaning approach to governance. The work of the ASP Board is largely conducted within standing committees, where trustees, administrators, and faculty collaborate together. In this way the American School of Paris Board of Trustees can best be characterized as generative in nature where the first priority is the fiduciary responsibility, in which the Board exercises its legal responsibilities of oversight and stewardship. The second is strategic, in which trustees in cooperation with the administrative team make major decisions about resources, programs and services. The third is the “generative” mode, in which the Board engages in deeper inquiry, exploring innovative opportunities, values, and new ideas. The ASP Board of Trustees may also be described as governing through policy where roles and responsibilities are both clearly understood and honored.
Paris

Paris is widely recognized as one of the world’s most cosmopolitan and international cities. From haute cuisine to high fashion and the arts, Paris has long set the standards for modern style and aesthetics. This sophistication, coupled with a strong and diversified economy, makes Paris attractive for permanent residents as well as tourists from around the world.

The capital of France and the country’s most populous city, “Grand Paris”—which refers to the commune as well as its nearest suburbs—is the economic hub of France, producing 30% of the nation’s gross domestic product. In addition to serving as the epicenter for banking and finance in France, Paris has seen recent growth in high-value IT and financial services as high-tech research and manufacturing (in particular, aeronautics, automobiles, and “eco” industries) have taken hold.

The city is a major transportation hub, with two international airports and the second-largest subway system in Europe carrying over 5 million passengers daily. Parisians and expats alike remark that the city is a truly extraordinary place to call home.
Opportunities and Challenges

For 70 years, the American School of Paris has delivered an American approach to education for an international community. With a mission to inspire and prepare each student to achieve personal and academic excellence, ASP empowers its students to become their very best, both as individuals and as engaged global citizens. The American School of Paris is an exciting prospect for a proven educational leader who is energized by the opportunity to lead a dynamic and successful school toward its robust future.

Under the leadership of Mark Ulfers, ASP has introduced standards-based approaches to instruction, completed the purchase of its Saint-Cloud campus, constructed new purpose-built facilities, initiated a process of articulating and mapping its K-12 curriculum, developed a more comprehensive advancement program, and begun to reshape its identity and market position.

Opportunities

The new Head of School will be leading a strong school with an excellent reputation in one of the culture capitals of the world. ASP encompasses a diverse student body hailing from 54 countries (33% American and 17% French), encouraged and motivated by an experienced, well-established faculty and supported by a caring and inclusive community providing a sense of family. The Board of Trustees is engaged, committed and supportive.

ASP’s strong, comprehensive academic program includes IB and AP curricula and daily French language instruction at every grade level. Embracing its American values, students are encouraged to partake in athletics, music, arts, and service-learning activities and clubs. For decades, multinational firms seeking to attract talent to Paris have relied on ASP to ensure the highest quality and fully transportable education for their children.

In autumn 2017, ASP will complete a €36 million building project offering a 21st century campus with state-of-the-art facilities, collaborative learning spaces, sports fields, libraries, laboratories and STEM studios. The renewal of ASP’s campus is a confirmation of the school’s vision and enthusiasm for building on its long-term presence in France and a firm commitment to offering world-class international education to expatriate and local youth.
for years to come. There is real opportunity to harness ASP’s “whole child” approach with its rich curriculum and valued amenities, and to keep ASP’s leadership position in the growing international school market of Paris. At the same time, ASP, like most schools, faces challenges that need to be addressed by its next Head of School, in collaboration with Board and faculty.

**Challenges** facing the next Head are focused in three areas:

- **Consolidation after a period of rapid growth:** The last five years have been a period of rapid growth for ASP in terms of curriculum, programming, and professional development, compounded by an extensive building project. The next leader will be charged with consolidating ASP’s many strengths while creating a sustainable pace and sense of priority for further progress.

- **Ongoing change management:** In the coming years, ASP will work to build upon recent progress in school-wide alignment, with the goal of achieving a cohesive, consistently aligned, whole-school academic program. ASP has an opportunity to further leverage curriculum investments and foster innovation with increased faculty collaboration between both departments and divisions. Change management in France includes navigating regulations and labor laws.

- **Designing the next chapter:** The American School of Paris sits at an interesting crossroads in terms of school identity. Having completed its most recent 5-year strategic plan and an extensive building project, the school’s next leader has an opportunity to define the school’s vision and strategic plan. One key objective will be to lead a strategic approach to shifts in enrollment patterns and changing demographics. Another will be to define the ultimate goal and near-term plan related to inclusion and support for students with learning differences.
Qualifications Sought in the next Head of School

As the leader for 200 faculty and staff, a diverse student body, a large, suburban campus, and broad campus programs in a school that appreciates the host French culture, the next Head of ASP will need to be a deft administrator, acting as the articulate and dynamic face of the school, and a relational yet practical architect of the future. Experience at an international school or an American school with a significant global approach is preferred, and strategic and creative leadership demonstrated in a different institutional context is also welcome. A successful candidate will have worked with highly motivated students, a committed faculty and administrative team, an engaged Board of Trustees, and an involved parent community.

Other desired qualifications of the next Head of School include:

• Educational innovator and implementer – inspiring continual innovation and creativity, and connecting student learning beyond the classroom;
• Navigator of diverse constituencies through collaboration, team-building, and diplomacy;
• Management experience / strong leadership skills—someone able to hone strategic priorities, attract talent, delegate effectively, motivate others to grow, and solve problems effectually, mixing collaboration and decisiveness as needed;
• Marketing, financial and fundraising interest, experience, and acumen;
• Community-minded, involved and inclusive;
• Visible and vibrant, approachable, and accessible to students and adult constituencies;
• Strong written/verbal communication skills as internal and external communicator;
• International experience preferred, cultural competence required;
• Working knowledge of French language or willingness to learn (preferred).
How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit the following materials as separate PDF documents to Ben Bolte, John Chandler, and Art Charles. Anyone interested is invited to contact any one of the consultants before or during application to discuss this most attractive opportunity.

- Cover letter aligning your skills, experiences, and values with the leadership needs of the American School of Paris.
- Current résumé with all appropriate dates.
- Statement of educational or leadership philosophy.
- List of five (5) references with all contact information.

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