The École
New York, New York
Head of School
Start Date: July 1, 2020
theecole.org
OVERVIEW

Offering a fully-integrated, deeply-immersive French-American program, The École is an independent, bilingual school serving an international community of students from Nursery through 8th grade in New York City’s Flatiron District. The school has been designed to cultivate an internationally-minded community of students, instilling in them the lifetime benefits of a bilingual education and empowering them to create and connect to a world filled with possibilities.

At The École, the goal of education is to develop well-informed, well-rounded, responsible, and compassionate students. From Maternelle to Middle School, The École artfully blends the best of the French and American educational systems, gifting students with deep bi-literacy, whole-child skills and knowledge, and an optimistic, multi-cultural perspective. Students at The École grow more flexible and fluid, interested and interesting, and persistent and positive, and move on to high school with agile minds, open hearts, and bright futures.

For the position of Head of School, The École seeks a leader and team builder who embraces the culture and values of the institution, possesses an understanding of and appreciation for both French and American cultures and education, and advances a dynamic and forward-looking vision for the school. Occupying a unique place among New York independent schools and serving a diverse and multinational population, The École offers its next Head an opportunity to grow and develop a prominent school while preserving its essential identity and strengths.
SCHOOL HISTORY

In 2009, the Wood family started their search for the quintessential international academic environment for their youngest child. Multilingual and multicultural themselves, passionate about their vision of global education, and eager to create a diverse, accessible and open learning environment, Jeremy Wood joined forces with Yves Rivaud and Clyde Javois to develop the concept that would become The École, the first school of its kind in Manhattan.

The École—then known as École Internationale de New York—opened its doors nine months later in September of 2009. There were 22 students enrolled in Nursery through 5th grade. Within its first eight years, The École outgrew its entrepreneurial phase to become an established, respected international school designed to welcome over 200 students from Nursery through 8th grade.

In 2017, Philippe and Laurence Roux, parents of two Elementary students, joined The École leadership family. Taking on ownership of the school as it looked to its second decade, they worked with Yves Rivaud to clarify the school’s philosophy, strengthen its capabilities, and expand its community, ensuring The École’s early successes would continue well into the future.

All of the Roux’s efforts have been focused on achieving two core goals: first, to restore the spirit of the school’s initial community, bringing together a diverse group of international families in close bonds of friendship; and second, to reimagine the future of The École as a non-profit entity, ensuring its unique French and American dual learning system can help even more students to grow and broaden their horizons.
In September 2018, the school officially changed its name from the original École Internationale de New York to the shorter, simpler, and more straightforward name it is known by now: The École. The combination of English and French in The École is a nod to the school’s French-American bilingual focus, while also reflecting the fluidity with which students move from one of these languages to the other.

The School

Since its beginnings in 2009, the goal of The École has been to create a bilingual school different than any other in Manhattan, one that reflects a society where the diversity of languages and cultures is omnipresent—the kind of global society children will increasingly need to be able to navigate through and succeed in. Today, the vibrant, international community is made up of students from 20 different countries. Fifty-two percent of students have parents of different nationalities, and 64% have at least one parent who is French.

The illuminating academic journeys that children experience, from Maternelle all the way through Middle School, are guided by a faculty of amazing, passionate, and mission-driven teachers. All French teachers are certified teachers with a French national teacher accreditation. On average, a class is composed of 15 students, and never more than 20 (16 for Nursery and 18 Pre-K), meaning teachers are able to provide personalized learning opportunities to ensure each student’s success.

From the first day of Maternelle to Middle School graduation, The École aspires to build students’ excitement about, capacity for, independence in, and success at learning. Over their years at The École, both French and American standardized tests provide opportunities to honor achievements
relative to a larger body of students, focus activities around personal growth areas, and map long-term educational plans. The strong performance of the growing alumni community is a source of great pride and proof that The École’s unique bilingual program prepares students to both flourish in, and contribute to, the world beyond its walls.

The École works with a number of prestigious national and international organizations to ensure it is aligning with the best and latest thinking on academic and cultural curriculum, leadership and governance, professional development, and student and parent support. The École has received full accreditation for all grades from the French Ministry of Education and AEFE (French Agency for the Advancement of French Abroad). The French educational network abroad is made up of 493 schools with nearly 350,000 students in 137 countries, ranging from the nursery to the final year of high school. The École is an important part of this network that has no equivalent on a global scale. The density and networking of the AEFE facilitates the professional mobility of families, both French and foreign, who can count on, in all parts of the world, schools that ensure educational continuity for their children.

The École is also affiliated with or a member of the Mission Laïque Française (MLF), The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), The Parents League of New York, the Association of the French Schools in North America (AFSA), and the French International Schools in North America (FISNA).
The curriculum at The École is a uniquely-designed bilingual program in which students learn not just to speak, read, and write in two languages, but also to think, feel, and act in ways that are informed by two cultures. Artfully integrating the best of the French and American educational systems from Maternelle through Middle School, The École’s students are guided through a rich academic program in the humanities, math, and sciences, as well as character and cultural enrichment. All curricula requirements, for each grade level of the two educational systems, are covered in classes held in either French or English.

As appropriate, and in moderation, the teaching staff integrates a wide variety of digital tools—personal computers and tablets, large format display screens, video projectors, and interactive boards, and high-definition printers and scanners—to support specific in-class activities. At the same time, paper media continues to be a priority in daily instruction, and The École’s Library has a collection of more than 11,000 French- and English-language books. Every class has a dedicated time slot at the library once a week, during which students can participate in story time, search the shelves, or enjoy a quiet moment to read. Occasionally, teachers will bring the library’s resources directly into the classroom, with literacy-based educational activities that support specific coursework.

Success at The École is seeing children become not just great students, but good people. The Character Education program fosters the development of ethical and responsible behavior, teaching students about the values that people should live by in order to be upstanding citizens of the world. Over the years, teachers and staff have worked together to ensure Character Education is as integrated into the curriculum as it is in the community culture.
**Maternelle (Nursery, Pre-K, and Kindergarten)**

The bilingual Maternelle program provides expansive learning experiences as students journey through their first years of school in a discovery-based, early education environment. Surrounded with classmates of wide-ranging nationality and connecting through two shared languages, students discover what it means to be part of a respectful, supportive community.

The Maternelle curriculum blends a play-based approach with a strong scholastic foundation, pulling from the strengths of both the French and U.S. early learning systems. Knowing that the early years of education are when children are most receptive to bilingual learning, the Maternelle program embraces and amplifies this innate capability, asking young students to explore the early “pre-skills” of reading, writing, math, and science, as well as art, music, theater, sports, technology, and even physical education and free play, while moving between the French and English languages. Each classroom is composed of a small, intimate group of students, led by a pair of rigorously trained teachers, one a native English-speaker, the other a native French-speaker. Together, they provide a fully immersive and highly stimulating bilingual experience that engages the whole child.

**Elementary (1st to 5th Grade)**

The Elementary school years are a critical time in a student’s development when they acquire the mindset and toolkit of the lifelong learner. With this in mind, every aspect of the Elementary program is designed to build students’ capacity for and independence in learning.
The Elementary curriculum brings together the content-rich system of the French Ministry of National Education with the inquiry-based approach of the New York State curriculum. Native-speaking teachers guide each class through humanities, math, and science in both English and French, adding in the study of Mandarin in 3rd grade. Personalized programs then take advantage of a high teacher-to-student ratio, allowing students to dig deeper into areas they find challenging, or expand further in those where they display aptitude and interest. Service clubs and programs then give students opportunities to build a strong sense of character.

Middle School (6th to 8th Grade)

In Middle School, the curriculum is designed to encourage students to stretch their advancing skills and acknowledge their full capacity, asking them to acquire the recommended competencies of both the French Ministry of National Education and the U.S. Common Core. Every foundational subject—humanities, math, and science—is taught in both French and English by native-speaking specialists. To ensure students develop a multi-cultural worldview, their study of Mandarin is continued or replaced by Spanish. The unique World of Work career program then connects classroom content to real-life opportunities, inspiring students to think more deeply about their potential future areas of study.

It’s during the Middle School years that students begin to personally recognize and apply the benefits of their bilingual experience. Immersed over their years at The École in not just two languages, but two learning systems, they know there is always another way to look at and solve a problem, no matter the subject. Empowered with multiple approaches and tools, they develop the confidence to select those that work best for them in their day-to-day schoolwork, or that help them embrace and adapt to new cultural experiences, both in the classroom and out in the world. Supplemented by a
formal Character Education program and school- and community-services clubs, they nurture in themselves, each other, and their communities the traits of a truly caring society.

In the final years of The École, the staff works beyond the classroom with students—and their parents—as they increasingly focus on high school planning in New York or abroad, helping them connect with the schools of their choice and navigate through testing and application processes.

ART AND MUSIC

The École is located in the heart of one of the most culturally rich cities in the world, and teachers take every opportunity to integrate New York City’s resources into their annual curriculum. Throughout the year, working artists hold workshops so that even the youngest students have an opportunity to learn about a variety of visual and performance art techniques. Some recent projects have even engaged the entire community, bringing students together to create collaborative works of art.

In the arts program, Middle School students regularly visit galleries in the Chelsea neighborhood just a few blocks from The École, asking questions of gallery owners and staff and discovering such modern and contemporary masters as Andy Warhol, Banksy, and Mr. Brainwash.

The 7th and 8th graders also participate every year in the Multilingual Theater Festival of the Mission Laïque Française in Dallas, presenting a play of their own creation, performing stand-up comedy, and joining improv battles—and connecting through their creativity with a much larger community of bilingual learners.
Music classes take place once a week for students in 1st through 5th grade. Classes encourage awareness of musical culture through active listening to a repertoire of various styles. As with the arts program, students are involved in a variety of musical projects such as the creation of original compositions, meetings with local performers, and outings to New York City’s many performance venues. Traditional vocal practice is deepened by learning songs in different languages.

The entire Elementary student body comes together in a school choir that performs for the rest of the school, family, and friends, at winter and year-end shows, as well as at special performances during the year. In addition, the Elementary choir participates in the recently created “Choralies” festival, which brings together more than 100 students from across New York City’s other French-American schools. To provide students with further opportunities to explore their creative interests, The École offers a wide range of Art & Music activities through the After School program.

**STUDENT LIFE**

The École aspires to fill students’ days beyond regular school hours with as many opportunities as possible to explore their individual interests. Each semester, the school offers a different set of after-school activities, selected based on student and parent interest. Activities fall into one of the following categories: Academic & Character, Art & Music, Sports & Fitness, and Science & Technology. Led either by a faculty member or by a specialist partner organization, each is designed to align with the particular developmental levels of Maternelle, Elementary, and Middle School students. Options include chess, Stock Market Club, Tae Kwon Do, yoga, cooking, musical theater, robotics and coding, and 3D printing, to name a few. For students in the 5th grade and above, there are a few unique options, such as The École Radio, that allow students to explore particular areas of creative and scientific interest.
Students with an interest in sports can participate on The École Falcons, the Elementary and Middle School sports team. The Falcons not only provide students with the opportunity to build their athletic skills and sportsmanship, they also give the entire community a great reason to come out together and cheer.

While The École is dedicated to bilingual French and American learning, the school strives to inspire in its students a multi-cultural perspective. The Elementary and Middle School travel program has included a trip to France and also offers biannual trips to China and Costa Rica. This provides an opportunity for students to put their French language skills, as well as their Mandarin and Spanish, to the test in real-world situations and get immersed in the daily life and customs of cultures very different from their own. In addition to the trips themselves, students participate in cross-curricular projects—such as multi-lingual videos—that integrate their experiences into their classroom learning.

**CAMPUS**

The École’s two buildings are located within a few blocks of New York City’s historic Flatiron Building. The District that carries its name is a vibrant neighborhood, a mix of quiet residential streets and lively commercial avenues, featuring exceptional architectural examples that reach from pre-war classics to today’s most cutting-edge designs. Along with beautifully-kept parks and public spaces, the environment around The École has attracted a cosmopolitan community that perfectly reflects the ethos of the school and provides wonderful opportunities for students and their families to experience the best of urban life.
The École’s five-story Fifth Avenue building, overlooking Broadway to the west and Madison Square Park to the east, houses seven light-filled classrooms for the school’s younger students. Common multi-purpose rooms shared by each grade, plus a full-floor space that serves as gym, auditorium, and cafeteria, and an outdoor playground and garden on the roof, provide ample opportunity both to stretch and study.

The four-story Main building, with its brand new expansion, located on a quiet, tree-lined residential block around the corner from Gramercy Park, houses 12 classrooms for older students, with dedicated spaces for each grade and subject. The library, student counselor’s office, a large multi-purpose room that serves as auditorium, a recess area, a cafeteria, a science lab, an art room, a music room, and a maker room, as well as administrative offices and a large lobby for the community fill the remaining spaces. When weather permits, students spend their after-lunch recesses at Peter’s Field and Augustus St. Gaudens Playground located just a few minutes’ walk from The École’s Main Building.

The École also partners with nearby Baruch College so students can benefit from state-of-the-art sports facilities and equipment as part of their physical education classes.

**New York, New York**

New York City, with an estimated population over 8.5 million, is the most populous city in the United States and boasts a land area of approximately 300 square miles. Situated on a massive natural harbor, New York City today consists of five boroughs, each of which is a separate county of the State of New York. At its core, New York City is an international city; it was once the primary gateway for immigration into the United States and current estimates suggest that hundreds of languages are spoken in New York, making it one of the most linguistically diverse cities in the world.
Any resident or visitor will attest that the attractions offered by New York City are, quite literally, unparalleled. The City offers stunning views from the Top of the Rock, the Empire State Building, and One World Observatory. For those who prefer to keep sightseeing at ground-level, the City has an ever-changing rotation of shows and a breathtaking range of permanent exhibits at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Museum, and New York Hall of Science (the list goes on!), as well as at countless small-scale galleries. Additionally, adults and children alike can enjoy thrilling performances on Broadway, and at Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Barclays Center, among other venues.

STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

• Equally valued French and American curricula.
• The school community: a French village within the city.
• A school where collaboration and teamwork are encouraged (parents, faculty, staff, students).
• Passionate and effective teachers who care about children.
• Faculty and staff development.
• Pedagogy rooted in innovation and best-practice.
• Small school and small class size.
• Multi-cultural experience.
• A truly bilingual community.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Faculty turnover (teachers from France are “détachés” for a few years).
- School is transitioning to non-profit status.
- The school is continuing to grow to two classes per grade level.
- Possible opening of a 2-year-old class for 2020/21.
- The Middle School will need to really “take off.”
- Managing two campuses at separate locations, although only a few blocks apart.
- Leveraging the expanded main building.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Bilingual (French/English) and multicultural with the ability to develop and push the boundaries of bilingual education.
- A strong, effective communicator; someone who can speak to target audiences (including especially American and International families living in NYC on a permanent basis) and is able to drive outreach efforts.
- Someone who can effectively integrate U.S. and New York State requirements and methods into the school’s innovative pedagogy and can hire and manage teachers familiar with these curricula (often American or Canadian).
- Someone who understands the French National Curriculum in detail, for both the school’s innovative pedagogy and accreditation, as well as when hiring and managing French teachers.
- Approachable and inspirational.
- Able to work with the owners and board of the school to promote the future growth of the school and develop a strategic plan for the next 10 years.
- A leader who is experienced and confident yet able to build a mutually respectful relationship with the faculty and staff as well as the students and school community.
- Prior experience as a Head of School or Deputy to Head of School is much preferred.
- A strong ambassador of the school in the local community and at an international level.

TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A statement of educational or leadership philosophy and practice;
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

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