

# CATHERINE COOK SCHOOL

Head of School for July 2019

Chicago, Illinois

Co-educational Independent Day School, 591 Students, EC – Grade 8

[www.catherinecookschool.org](http://www.catherinecookschool.org)

## *Book Smart & Life Smart*

*(Please follow the hyperlinks within the prospectus for more information)*

Catherine Cook School (Cook) seeks an experienced Early Childhood leader to succeed Dr. Jean Robbins who has led the division since 2007. Dr. Robbins will retire at the end of the 2018-2019 school year, and the new Head of Early Childhood will start on July 1, 2019.

Founded as a cooperative nursery, Catherine Cook School was established in 1975 and moved to an independent school model in 1997. As with many nurseries, the school began in the basement of a neighborhood church, and in 1990, when their lease expired, the school purchased and renovated the [B & B Shoe Company](#) building at 226 West Schiller Street, adjacent to the church. Alex Anagnost, the owner of the building, agreed to sell the property to the school if the trustees would rename the school after his deceased mother, Catherine Anagnost Cook, a Greek immigrant who became the first woman in Illinois to pass the bar without attending law school. She was well known in the community as an attorney and civic leader.

Today, Cook is a [thriving Preschool through 8th Grade school](#) with 577 students enrolled for the 2018 – 2019 school year. The spirit of Catherine Anagnost Cook endures with a strong progressive practice of cultivating the unique nature and potential of each student and a commitment to build and nurture a vibrant learning community. The next Head of Early Childhood will be visible and devoted to a child-centered, holistic education that celebrates academic excellence through character, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and cultural competency.



**Enrollment** (2018-2019)

577 Students (36 ZIP Codes)  
 PS – SK: 159 Students  
 Grades 1 – 4: 221 Students  
 Grades 5 – 8: 197 Students  
 Girls: 284, Boys: 293  
 Students of color: 25%

**Faculty & Staff**

109 Faculty & Staff  
 55 Teachers  
 23 Teaching Assistants  
 11 Administrators  
 77% hold an advanced degree  
 11% People of Color

**Campus**

IDEA Lab & Tinker Lab  
 A/V Studio  
 Gymnasium & Track & Drama  
 “The Studio” a space for performing arts with state-of-the-art lighting & sound  
 2 New Rooftop Playgrounds  
 Library  
 Cafeteria  
 Art Gallery

**Financial**

Operating Income: \$16.5m  
 Operating Expenses: \$14.8m  
 Financial Aid: \$1.1m  
 Debt: 5.8m Bond

**Development**

REACH Capital Campaign: \$6.5m  
 Annual Giving:  
 2017-18: \$931,600 (unaudited)  
 2016-17: \$872,726  
 2015-16: \$799,081

Faculty/Staff Participation: 91%  
 Parents Participation: 68%  
 Board Participation: 100%

**Philosophy and Program**

[Catherine Cook School believes that education is an evolving, dynamic, and lifelong process.](#) In a rapidly changing society, it is not sufficient merely to pass on the wisdom of the ages. Cook carefully selects from older literacies, preserving what is best from the approaches of the past, while at the same time reimagining education with all the tools and capacities of the current educational research. Cook faculty cultivate proficiency in the “Three Rs,” while helping children develop “The Five Cs” – Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking, and Character. Faculty take seriously their responsibility to develop students as curious, smart, and adaptive learners in order to prepare them for an unknown future. At Cook, teachers teach children, not subjects. They guide inquiry, encourage innovative thinking, acknowledge perseverance, celebrate success, turn frustration into learning opportunities, awaken social responsibility, model fairness and justice—all while building and valuing relationships. The faculty at Cook rely on [partnerships with parents and guardians](#) to enrich the school’s understanding of their children, to share their unique knowledge and experiences, and to help Cook maintain a healthy and ever-growing learning community.

Catherine Cook School has three divisions: Early Childhood (PS-SK), Lower School (1-4), and Middle School (5-8). Each division has a dedicated head. Cook’s program is holistic and developmentally appropriate, blending traditional learning approaches with developmental research and practice, and the curriculum emphasizes hands-on learning activities. Parents are invited to be partners in education, working cooperatively with faculty to enhance the learning experience for each child.



[In Early Childhood](#), the curriculum builds critical thinking, social-emotional, and cultural competence skills along with literacy, art, mathematics, music, science, movement, social studies, and world languages (French & Spanish). Projects and play-based activities integrate content across the curricula for meaningful and authentic learning.

**Mission**

Catherine Cook empowers students from preschool through eighth grade to be adaptive, confident and productive stewards of an evolving world. Our community engages with ideals of cultural competence, progressive academics, ethical literacy, and innovation designed to inspire personal excellence and compassionate leadership.

**Diversity**

Catherine Cook School is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and compassionate community grounded in a culture of integrity.

**Core Values**

MS: Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, Integrity, and Diversity  
 EC & LS: ROARS (Respect, Ownership, Appreciation, Responsibility, and Safety)

**Memberships**

NAIS  
 ISACS  
 LMAIS

**School Placement (Partial list)**

British School of Chicago  
 Francis W. Parker School Jones  
 College Prep  
 Lane Technical High School  
 Latin School of Chicago  
 Lincoln Park IB Programme  
 St. Ignatius College Prep  
 University of Chicago Lab School  
 Walter Payton High School  
 Whitney Young Magnet High School

[In the Lower School](#), students move from being concrete thinkers to incorporating more conceptual and abstract thinking strategies. Lower School students open up to new possibilities through friendships and collaborative partnerships with hands-on activities. Students engage in authentic literary, mathematical, scientific, and research experiences within and beyond the classroom. World languages and various lessons within the curriculum are used to build empathy and celebrate diversity of the students and in other communities as the program integrates issues of difference into a variety of classroom experiences.

[In the Middle School](#), the course of studies seeks to stimulate creativity, hone critical thinking, and develop students' solid judgment and analytical skills. Along with the integrated humanities program, math, laboratory science, and world languages are complemented by art, music, physical education, and public speaking. Twice-weekly elective periods, service learning and signature experiences provide an exceptional experience for students, as does the completely paperless environment, with students working on individual laptop computers integrated with interactive Smart Boards through a one-to-one laptop program. Cook graduates are thoroughly prepared for entry into [competitive college preparatory high schools](#).

Technology is integrated to support student inquiry and collaboration beyond the classroom, encouraging confidence and instilling lifelong learning.

[Innovation and Design –Educational Technology and IDEA \(Innovation, Design, Engineering and Arts\)](#) are school-wide and cross-divisional programs that promote design and computational thinking and doing. Students are producers of digital media; they are fully immersed in coding, programing, and robotics using the Tinker Lab, IDEA Lab and [AV Studio](#) to create meaningful experiences and bring their creative thinking to reality.



**Global Citizenship** – Cook strives to cultivate a diverse and vibrant school community. Utilizing the many resources of the city, students develop a personal sense of stewardship and social responsibility. Cook partners with The American School of Guadalajara, along with addressing global issues interwoven into the curriculum. Middle School students can participate in the Global Issues Network Conference.



**Diversity** – Catherine Cook School faculty, staff, and middle school students have chosen diversity as one of the five core values that characterizes the culture of the school. The term diversity has a range of connotations and meanings, but in the context of this initiative, Cook defines diversity as the range of differences between people, but most commonly: racial; socio-economic; cultural or ethnic/language; physical ability; age; gender and gender identity; sexual identity; and religious differences. Cook will enhance the diversity of the school by intentionally cultivating an empathic and open climate to foster relationships of integrity between the children and families in the school community.

**Catherine Cook School offers an extensive co-curricular program** that includes: Before School and Extended Day; After School Adventures; Middle School Clubs and Academic Teams; Interscholastic Athletics;

Concert Band and private music lessons; and various summer programs.

### **Expectations for the Head of Early Childhood**

Among the priorities to which the Head of Early Childhood will be expected to bring leadership and focus are the following:

**Faculty:** The Head of Early Childhood must be ready to engage in a truly collaborative partnership with the faculty in promoting a robust child-centered program.

**Teaching and Learning:** Cook has an exceptional reputation for academic excellence, character development, community, diversity, equity, inclusion, technology and innovation. The Head of Early Childhood must be committed to excellence and support a strong academic culture by engaging the faculty in thoughtful discussions about teaching and learning, while promoting a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

**Diversity and Social Justice:** Diversity and inclusion have been an important aspect of the current strategic plan, and there is still work that needs to be done and conversations waiting to be led. The Head of Early Childhood needs to be a strong advocate for diversity and social justice and be ready to lead by example.

**Leadership:** With its roots as a parent cooperative organization, the Head should lead in a

manner that distributes leadership responsibilities clearly when appropriate and act decisively in an open fashion that truly develops a shared sense of purpose and vision. The Head will find the faculty and parents ready to contribute to this exceptional school that is truly a transformational experience for children.

As Cook comes to the conclusion of the current strategic plan and is in the beginning stages of the ISACS Reaccreditation process, there will be an opportunity to reflect on all of the great work that has been accomplished at the school and begin to look ahead to the next chapter in the growth and development of the school.

### **Ideal Candidate Attributes and Experiences**

The new Head of Early Childhood will be an innovative and energetic educator and an accomplished leader who has the skills and drive to lead the Early Childhood division to its next level of excellence. Candidates will have a steadfast belief in the mission, values, ideals, and educational philosophy of Catherine Cook School.



Candidates will be prepared to deal with the broad range of school matters and be able to **demonstrate successful experience** in most, if not all, of the following:

- leading a progressive, developmentally appropriate child-centered academic program, which includes recruiting and developing a talented faculty and staff
- exercising educational vision and innovation
- developing and implementing strategic initiatives
- forging relationships with multiple constituencies

Candidates will also have a broad range of **leadership and management abilities**, including:

- proven ability to think strategically and be a thought leader on education
- excellent organizational and interpersonal skills with exceptional follow up
- a collaborative, inclusive and transparent leadership style
- exceptional communication skills
- demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

**Personal qualities** are very important to the Catherine Cook community, and the Head of Early Childhood must be:

- an unrelenting advocate for students and their learning and development
- accessible and approachable (especially for faculty, students & parents)
- passionate and knowledgeable about early childhood education
- intelligent, innovative, and inspiring with exceptional emotional intelligence
- someone who will commit to and enjoy being part of the community

## Information on the Search Process and Calendar



A search is underway to identify a new Head of Early Childhood by February 2019, who will assume the position on July 1, 2019.

Catherine Cook School is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools and will follow NAIS Principles of Good Practice regarding hiring and searches.

The School has engaged a national executive search firm, Educational Directions to assist the Search Committee and the Catherine Cook Community with the search. Please direct all inquiries, applications, and nominations in confidence to: Samuel S. Richards – [srichards@edu-directions.com](mailto:srichards@edu-directions.com)

Candidates should express their interest and begin the application process as soon as possible.

Candidates should submit:

- A letter of interest explaining their explicit interest in Catherine Cook School
- Current resume or CV
- The names, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and affiliation to the candidate of five (5) professional references
- Reference letters are welcome but not required

The compensation package will be within the expected norms of comparable NAIS and ISACS schools.

## Calendar for the Search

Applications due: November 17, 2018

Candidates notified of status: December 14, 2018

Semifinalist Interviews: January 12-13 , 2019

Finalist Interviews: January 22-31, 2019

*Catherine Cook School and Educational Directions do not discriminate against qualified applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, national or ethnic origin, sexual identity, religion, age, or physical disability.*

*Catherine Cook School is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and seeks a diverse and broad spectrum of qualified candidates.*