



## AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL Thessaloniki Greece

The American Farm School of Thessaloniki (AFS) is very different from your average high school. "Challenging, experiential, unique, residential, hands-on, green, traditional, life-changing..." are a few adjectives alums have used to describe it.

AFS students come from the rural mainland and islands throughout Greece, creating a uniquely diverse student body. Building on more than a century of tradition developing stewards of the land, AFS prepares future leaders who value the wise use of natural resources, preservation of the environment, application of the life sciences for solving problems, and effective utilization of information technology. Although AFS students must complete the full academic curriculum required of all Greek accredited high schools, our diversified educational farm serves as a living laboratory that supports applied research and hands-on learning ... and feeds the school.

The American Farm School was one of the first institutions worldwide established with an obligatory community volunteering component and our residential campus has allowed our philosophy to become a way of life. AFS students form a deep sense of community and a connection with the land they work and live on, while learning how to be independent and responsible. Students work daily on the farm, and our every meal is rich with what they have planted and nourished. Students can birth calves, make wine, and tell if it will rain. They have lived a combined academic and life experience which has made them honest, engaged, genuine, principled, and hardworking. If you are seeking unique students, come meet our kids.

### EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

AFS includes Pre-K, Elementary, Middle School, two High Schools (General & Technical Lyceums), and Perrotis College (post-secondary institution offering Bachelor's & Master's degrees). Our research and demonstration farm serves as a living laboratory for students in all divisions. The high schools have a combined enrollment of 290 students, from 10 of the 13 regions of Greece. 80% live in campus residence halls and the remaining live at home in Thessaloniki. 50% are from farming families, the rest are from rural Greece or families with a significant relationship to agriculture. All students receive scholarships based on a sliding scale relating to grades and family income. All classes, except English, are taught in Greek.

General Lyceum (GEL)	Technical Lyceum (EPAL)
Students enter General Lyceum intending to attend universities. Upon graduation, students are granted the Greek high school diploma, Apolyterion.	The Technical Lyceum provides students with general education, vocational training, and professional development. EPAL grants two degrees: the high school diploma Apolyterion, and the Level 3 Diploma, recognized in all EU countries as a professional license.

### GRADING SYSTEM

The Greek high-school grading scheme is based on a 20-point scale that corresponds to the U.S. grading scheme as follows: 18.1-20=A, 16-18=B, 13.1-15.9=C, 10-13=D, under 10=F (according to Athens Fulbright Foundation). Ministry of Education "Aristeion" Awards are given annually to outstanding students (equivalent to Dean's List in U.S. schools). Colleges should note that the first semester / mid-year grades are available early February.

### PRACTICAL TRAINING (PROJECT-BASED LEARNING)

The educational farm provides an opportunity for AFS students to apply their classroom learning on a fully functioning farm. All students are required to participate in weekly practical and technical training throughout grades 10-12. Students receive a certificate upon graduation for their successful completion of the practical training / service program.

Every day one finds fresh milk, cheese, yogurt, Omega-3 eggs, and more at our campus store - raised, collected, packaged and sold by our students. Students complete projects and training in horticulture (growing, harvesting, packaging & marketing produce), landscaping, animal husbandry, dairy science, bee keeping, and farm management (from driving tractors to welding).



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All this is complemented in the classroom with an increased emphasis on preparing students soundly in the life sciences. First and second year students participate in afternoon Biology, Chemistry, and Physics labs linked to the morning curriculum. Second year students strengthen their food technology expertise by learning cheese making, yogurt making and such in the Educational Dairy laboratories. Third year students perform applied science experiments with Perrotis College students and faculty in both our college and USDA laboratories – which are cutting edge and state of the art.

## STUDENT LIFE

In addition to the full academic program, students are offered a wide variety of extracurricular and athletic activities reinforcing the strong traditions in Greek & American cultures and creating a strong sense of community on campus. Juniors and seniors take advantage of on-campus leadership opportunities such as our Residence Leaders program and class elected Student Council. Many students choose to participate in after-school clubs similar to those found in the United States, including Model United Nations and Theater club. Other more “Greek” clubs include our Traditional Greek Dance team and the Snail Farming club. More recently, the school has taken an active role in promoting global consciousness through our PeaceJam club, with students working with unaccompanied refugee youth. Other clubs include: Astronomy, Cinema, Environmental, Junior Achievement (Entrepreneurship), Robotics, and Reading Club. Student Life is further enhanced by our six American Fellows, who live and interact with students in a range of different roles on campus.

## ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

AFS students participate in numerous STEM academic and cultural exchange programs, both in the USA (Global Outreach, 4-H, FFA, etc.) and in Europe (France, Austria, Sweden, and Hungary).

## AFS ALUMS IN THE USA

Created in 2010, the Study USA program exists to provide AFS students with an opportunity to pursue studies in the USA. We have had students attend the following universities: Bates College, Barry University, Berea College\*, Bowdoin College, Brown University, Davidson College\*, Franklin & Marshall College, Gannon University\*, Haverford College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Juniata College, Kalamazoo College, Lawrence University, McNeese State University\*, Middlebury College, Mt. Holyoke College\*, Pomona College, Princeton University, Quinnipiac University, Rhodes College\*, Sewanee: The University of the South, Skidmore College, St. Lawrence University\*, Union College\*, University of Richmond\*, University of Tampa, Vanderbilt University, Viterbo University\*, Warren Wilson College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute\*, and Yale University (\* more than one).

## INTERESTING FACTS

- + 100% of AFS high school students receive scholarships (from 50% to full scholarships).
- + AFS is the oldest American-founded educational institution in Greece, and was one of the first international institutions to host Fulbright Scholars. We also have several faculty/administrators who have visited the USA as Fulbright Scholars.
- + The USDA has only two full-time research programs in Europe—one in France and one on the AFS campus.
- + AFS received the **Green Flag Award** in 2014 and the **Sustainable School Award** in 2018 (acknowledging the commitment and engagement of the youth of today to protect the planet of tomorrow).
- + In recent years, AFS has initiated day visits for more than 10,000 public school students each year. Students learn about the origin of their food and their own responsibilities to ensure a sustainable world.
- + AFS is recognized as a national leader in adult education, enrolling more than 700 adults annually in courses such as cheese-making, wine-making, beer brewing, organic urban gardening, bee-keeping, snail farming, and much more.



## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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