



AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL  
Thessaloniki Greece

The American Farm School (AFS) is a private, independent, non-profit, educational institution founded in 1904 to serve the rural population of Greece and the surrounding region. The School today is taking agriculture and applied life sciences education into the 21<sup>st</sup> century while remaining true to its roots and century-long tradition of hands-on learning. Educational programs at all levels encourage discovery, engagement and inquiry in the areas of agriculture, food systems, the environment and other disciplines related to a sustainable future. The School adheres to a holistic program that educates students to use their heads, hands, and hearts. Students are taught to think creatively, act with integrity, and work both cooperatively and independently in order to become leaders in their communities. We believe that this learn-by-doing philosophy promotes an engaging and challenging educational experience.

#### Breakdown of AFS Schools

The American Farm School consists of three schools operating on one campus: Pre-School, Secondary Education Schools (General Lyceum, Technical Lyceum, Technical School) and Perrotis College, (post-secondary institution with degrees validated by University of Wales Institute, Cardiff and recognized worldwide). The campus' diversified research and demonstration farm serves as a living laboratory for students in all divisions.

Students apply for entrance to the General Lyceum, the Technical Lyceum, and the Technical School and selection criteria are set by the admissions office. These requirements adhere to the following categories:

- i) Student profile must fit school's mission, vision and identity,
- ii) Academic profile and professional direction indicating likelihood of success in school's curriculum and selected type of school/major,
- iii) Contribution to geography, gender and economic diversity of student body,
- iv) Special skills, abilities and qualities deemed valuable in AFS, including contribution to community building.
- v) Optimal capacity of the infrastructure and facilities

The three schools have a combined enrollment of 282 students, representing 8 of the 13 regions of Greece. 89% of the student body lives in the campus dormitories and the remaining 11% live at home in Thessaloniki. 50% of the AFS student body is from farming families and the other 50% is from rural Greece, whose parents have some relationship to agriculture. All students receive a subsidy on the actual tuition fees which varies according to their family profile (e.g. farming or not farming families, on and off campus students). Students may apply for further financial aid, which is decided and awarded by the financial aid committee on the basis of a combination of need and merit criteria.

#### General Lyceum (GEL) Principal: Ms. Katerina Diafa (kdiafa@afs.edu.gr)

Students entering the General Lyceum intend to take the standardized national (Pan-Hellenic) university entrance examinations (as determined under Greek law). All classes, except foreign languages, are taught in Greek; however, AFS offers students additional English classes, with special permission from the Greek Ministry of Education. Upon graduation, students are granted the Greek high school diploma "Apolyterion". The final Apolyterion grade for each subject is an average of the last two semester grades and the scores obtained in the standardized national (Pan-Hellenic) university entrance examinations (as determined under Greek law). In 2010, the AFS General Lyceum graduating class had a 76% success rate entering the Greek university system and Technological Educational Institutes.

#### Technical Lyceum (EPAL) Principal: Mr. Anastasios Apostolidis

The EPAL provides general education, vocational training and professional development. The EPAL grants two degrees: the high school diploma, similar to the Certificate of High School, and the Level 3 diploma, which is recognized in all EU countries that have the professional license. The EPAL is equivalent to the General Lyceum, allowing students to sit for the Pan-Hellenic examinations if they later add two additional classes. Fewer than 10% of EPAL students choose to do so.

**Technical School (EPAS) Principal: Mr. Sotirios Gialamas (sgiala@afs.edu.gr)**

EPAS is a school that prepares students in the professional fields of: Cheese-making, Animal Husbandry, Landscaping & Gardening, and Farm Machinery. EPAS students are not eligible to sit for university entrance exams.

**Grading System and Term**

The Greek educational system 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, 13-10=D, under 10=F. 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**

AFS implements the standard curriculum prescribed by the Greek government, but enriches the student educational experience by adding a rigorous practical training program. Students in all three schools are required to participate in daily practical/technical training, as stated in school mission, throughout their three-year plan of study (grades 10-12). For at least two hours daily, students are trained and work in the following areas on the School's campus and educational farm: organic farming, bee keeping, cattle, aviary, carpentry, cheese making, driving tractors, painting, machinery, planting, computers, gardening, construction, winery, food technology, green houses.

This expansive hands-on approach to learning enhanced with an active service learning component represents the very heart of our school mission and reflects how AFS students become meaningful members in their local communities and committed citizens of the world.

**Extracurricular Activities Program**

While students have a very full program, they do have the opportunity to take part in a small but meaningful selection of extracurricular activities aimed at reinforcing the strong traditions in Greek culture, while creating a warm sense of community on campus. Clubs offered: Greek Debate, Model United Nations, Greek Traditional Dancing, Cooking, Pottery, etc.

**Exchange Programs**

For more than 30 years AFS students, faculty and staff have invested time, effort and enthusiasm in a wide array of Exchange Programs. AFS students travel to and host student groups from European countries (England, France, Austria, Sweden, Hungary, Germany, etc.) as well as from the USA (through Global Outreach, 4-H, FFA, etc.) to learn about international agriculture and farming, to take part in international agricultural competitions, and to improve the student's language skills.

**AFS Alumni in Undergraduate Study in the USA**

Until recently only an occasional student found his/her way to study in the USA. However, a new administration has sought to refocus on our US roots and the professional orientation of students, which has caused a rising interest in - and ability to - study in the USA. We presently have one student enrolled in undergraduate study at St Lawrence University and eight seniors preparing their applications for Fall 2012.

**US COLLEGE COUNSELOR: Ms. Georgia Proestopoulos (gpro@afs.edu.gr)**