



## Head of School

The Lang School  
*New York, NY*



### Introduction

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The Lang School is a K-12 progressive school serving nearly 60 twice-exceptional (2e) students - high-achieving and high-potential students with learning differences - in the heart of New York City. The school offers students a rigorous education with highly specialized support services to encourage independence and self-advocacy. At Lang, exceptional students are not just welcomed but nurtured and celebrated.

With an innovative spirit and a remarkably low student-faculty ratio, Lang can offer differentiated instruction and individualized learning plans as needed. The caring and dedicated staff at Lang includes many support specialists who collaborate closely to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of every child. The school's facilities - including the spaces dedicated to occupational therapy and students' creative expression - are outstanding, and Lang's central location, near the transportation hubs of lower Manhattan, make it an appealing destination for students, families, and faculty.

Following the departure of the founding Head of School in the spring of 2022, Lang's Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Sue Groesbeck – a highly respected and experienced school leader – to serve as an Interim Head through the 2022–23 school year. Lang seeks an energetic school leader to join the school in July 2023. The appointee must be passionate about 2e education and working in service to the students and families that comprise the school's population. They will be energetic, compassionate, creative, and organized – ready to meet the challenges of growing the school while extending Lang's deep commitment to 2e learners.



For more information about its philosophy, history, programs, campus, and people, please visit <https://www.thelangscool.org/>.

## Overview

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**MISSION** – *The Lang School educates twice-exceptional (2e) children – gifted students with learning differences. We offer these highly promising learners a rigorous, child-centered, empirically validated education with integrated supports that foster independence and self-advocacy. We model and teach students to own their impact, and empower them to speak up and stand up for equity and social justice. For most people, the school years are about fitting in, while adulthood is about standing out; for 2e children, standing out comes early. At Lang, through the nurturing of purpose, passion, and talent, exceptionality is not only recognized but celebrated.*

**ENROLLMENT** – (2022–23, projected) 60+ students in grades K–12 (45+ students in grades K–8 and 15+ students in grades 9–12).

**TUITION, FINANCES, & FINANCIAL AID** – Annual tuition is \$86,250. The parents of Lang students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) seek reimbursement or direct tuition payments by the New York City Department of Education (DoE). Lang is committed to accepting all good-fit students with IEPs regardless of their ability to pay.

**STUDENT BODY** – Approximately 28% of Lang students identify as BIPOC.

**ACCREDITATION & AFFILIATIONS** – NYS AIS (provisional; reaccreditation visit scheduled for 2023), Progressive Education Network, Parents League of New York

## Academic Program

The Lang curriculum is designed to meet the specific needs and challenges of gifted learners. Lang helps students develop organizational skills, resilience, perseverance, self-awareness, and self-advocacy skills. At the same time, the curriculum helps students explore and develop particular areas of interest to feed their passion(s) and help develop their independence as learners.

**MESH** –Lang’s interdisciplinary MESH (math, engineering, science, humanities) curriculum marries “thinking and doing” skills to a framework that focuses on depth over breadth, process over product, and Socratic dialog over rote learning. Building on STEM principles, the MESH curriculum elevates and integrates universal questions of social, aesthetic, and philosophical thinking. History, literature, languages, and the arts are treated as an essential complement to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Lang’s research-based teaching and learning programs are deployed by flexible, well-trained educators who form therapy teams that coordinate, evaluate, and update each student’s learning plan.



**LOWER SCHOOL (K-7)** – A tailored multi-disciplinary plan is created to target each child’s unique needs in a classroom context. Extensive enrichment and acceleration options complement Lang’s robustly differentiated curriculum for grades K through 7. Lang uses a combination of classroom-based learning, fluid math and literacy subgroups, 1:1 tutoring for remediation, and accelerated learning opportunities in areas of advanced knowledge and/or interest. Teachers differentiate both curriculum and instruction, so each student receives an education that fits in the context of cohorts of no more than twelve students

Lang employs evidence-based practices to develop self-awareness and self-regulated learning. Some of the most common strategies are based on work in Organization, Time Management and Planning/Organizational Skills Training (OTMP/OST); Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD); Zones of Regulation, and Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS); and Positive Behavior Supports.

**UPPER SCHOOL (8-12)** – Lang prepares its upper-school students for college by incorporating their unique needs and passions into each school day. The school offers early opportunities for learners to discover and develop individual talents, which keep them motivated. Students are empowered to take ownership of their learning process and goals.

Upper-school students have access to many of the same pull-out and push-in supports listed above (with the notable addition of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)). The goal is to engage student interests deeply while building awareness and skills in social-emotional, behavioral, and sensory self-regulation. In BASIS classes, offered at the end of the school day, students receive academic acceleration or 1:1 support from content-area specialists.

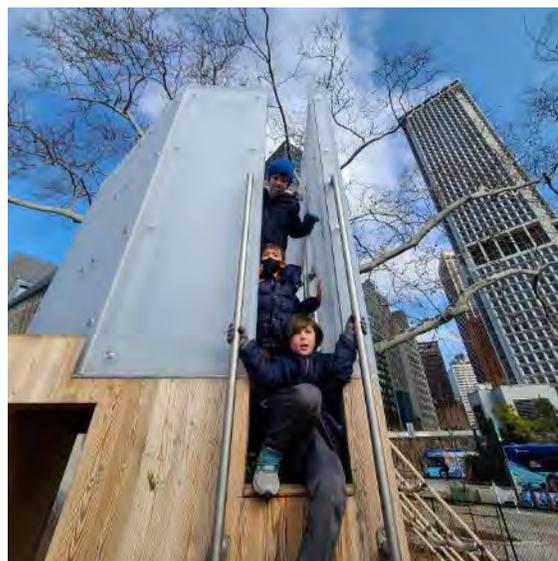
For more details regarding the academic program at Lang, visit the pages on the school’s website dedicated to [MESH](#), the [Lower School](#), and the [Upper School](#).

### **Talent Development Program**

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A hallmark of the Lang experience is the Talent Development (TD) program, which comprises the KidWorks program in the Lower School and the IndieStudies program in the Upper School. The TD program is designed to engage students at the highest intellectual levels while supporting them in special areas of challenge.

**KIDWORKS (K-7)** – Lang’s younger students spend the first three months of each school year exploring each of four domains in weekly two-hour sessions. At the end of this period, based on documented faculty observations of the student’s performance and interests, a placement in one of our four KidWorks groups is suggested. In the 2021-22 school year, the four groups were: illustrators, tinkerers, musicians, and storytellers.



KidWorks coaches regularly meet with each student, so that students learn to identify and advocate for their preferences. Though native abilities make it easier to master some domains, commitment and hard work are required to achieve excellence and can compensate for difficulties in mastering many skills. If a child demonstrates both strong interest and a willingness to work hard, they will be placed in their preferred group regardless of staff observations and recommendations. From January through June, KidWorks students explore projects in their domain in greater depth and with increasing constraints.

Lower School students who are ready to pursue a passion project with sufficient discipline and maturity may take advantage of the IndieStudies program.

**INDIESTUDIES (8-12)** – Every Upper School student is matched with a teacher/coach who guides them through a year-long process of exploring their interests, identifying a big idea that’s meaningful to them, connecting with mentors (often outside the school), gathering resources, and sharing their results with faculty and peers along the way. Past IndieStudies projects include a history of surgical knots, creating a multimedia autobiography, and disassembling and reassembling a Porsche. Some students design IndieStudies projects that overlap with core and elective coursework. The TD program promotes both joy and independence among Lang’s upper-school students, preparing them to flourish in the next chapters of their lives.



Student talent development is at the core of Lang’s academic program. The school helps students discover and develop their passion(s), provides structure and viability for big ideas, instills a sense of purpose and commitment, and, ultimately, empowers each student to fully develop their gifts. Lang strives to sow and grow the inspiration for a future generation of ethical innovators and thought leaders.

## STUDENT BODY



Lang students come from district and citywide gifted programs (e.g., Stuyvesant High School, Hunter College High School), traditional independent schools (e.g., Trinity, Saint Anne’s), specialized high schools (LaGuardia, Bronx Science), and schools that serve students with learning differences (e.g., Windward, Gateway).

The key to student fit at Lang is precocious intellectual or creative engagement and commitment. The Lang School subscribes to the definition of giftedness developed by the Columbus Group in 1991: “Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one

or more domains." Lang's twice-exceptional learners are gifted students with learning differences, such as ADD/ADHD, dyslexia, anxiety, or forms of autism spectrum disorder without intellectual impairment.

With the support of Lang's specialists, nearly all students improve their academic achievement through the development of executive function, self-regulation, and mindfulness. Graduates are well prepared to enter college with confidence.

In recent years, Lang alumni have been admitted to the following colleges and universities:

Boston University  
CUNY Brooklyn College  
Connecticut College  
Fordham University  
Marymount Manhattan  
New York University

Northeastern University  
Pace University  
Pratt Institute  
Skidmore College  
SUNY Stony Brook  
SUNY Binghamton

Temple University  
The New School: Parsons  
UC San Diego  
UMass Amherst  
School of Visual Arts  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst.



## Campus Life

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Lang students adhere to the school's Code of Honor – which calls on students to be civil, constructive, and self-reflective in all interactions – and each is an empowered member of their classroom community. Students in both the Lower and Upper Schools take classes together with ability and interest peers, not just age peers, and many Upper School students take on a mentoring relationship with a Lower School student throughout each school year. While Lower School students eat together in their classrooms, then walk to local parks and playgrounds for recess, Upper School students typically head into the Financial District in small groups for lunch and return to Lang for games of chess, talks with friends and favorite teachers, or time with a good book.



Extracurricular programs at Lang include lunchtime and after-school opportunities. The offerings evolve according to students' interests, but past programs have included Improv Comedy, Study Lab, Girls' Alliance, Computer Programming Club, Math Club, Role-Playing Game Club, Key Club, Trans Non-Binary Alliance, and the Student Government Association.

Lang students engage in neighborhood service learning – for example, by lending a hand at the

Brown Bag Lunch program at Trinity Church, which serves the 8 percent of Financial District residents living below the poverty line. Lang students benefit from many partnerships with cultural institutions and community-based programs across New York City, including BAM, The New Victory Theater, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Royal Shakespeare Company, and the North Shore Animal League. Regular field trips enrich the academic experience, helping students connect classroom learning to real-world experiences. Lang's schoolwide civics program ensures students organize and advocate for change with local and national political leaders.

### **Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Head of Lang**

Lang's next Head of School will be welcomed by an outstanding group of teachers, administrators, parents, and trustees – loyal, thoughtful, and incredibly hardworking. The school's mission is a powerful motivating force, and the Lang community is united in their desire to see the school flourish in the years ahead.

Lang's Board has empowered the Interim Head to address many of the school's most pressing needs while preparing the community to welcome a long-term appointee next summer. The challenges and opportunities facing the next Head are likely to center on the following areas (in alphabetical order):





**CULTURE AND COMMUNITY** – As a relatively small, young school on the frontier of 2e education, Lang was sustained through its startup phase by the energy and vision of its Founding Head of School. Lang has successfully supported scores of 2e learners, proving that its approach is effective. As the institution matures, the school will need to upgrade its standards and systems in service to students, faculty, and families – aiming to be more organized and efficient without sacrificing the intimacy and flexibility that

people appreciate about Lang. Building on the work of the Interim Head, the long-term appointee will have the opportunity to develop a professional culture that balances adaptability and consistency, mission focus and innovation, relationships and growth.

**ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**– Lang has the physical space to welcome more students, and a larger enrollment will open more paths to financial sustainability for the school. Like many 2e schools, Lang aims to retain as many students as possible, yet will actively support students and parents who desire the challenges of a more traditional school (especially in the high school years). Lang’s small size and well-defined mission are true assets that can surface as challenges in conversations about how to grow the school. The next Head will need to move carefully but quickly to increase the quantity and quality of applicants. They will also have to work with the faculty and parents to think about retention, ensuring that Lang can appropriately support and challenge its students through grade 12, extending the school’s impressive college placement record. Broadly, the Head will need to raise Lang’s profile in the New York City marketplace, polish the school’s overall excellence, and maintain its reputation for innovation in 2e education.

**FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING** – As with most special education schools, Lang families rely on direct tuition payments or reimbursements from their local Department of Education to help cover the considerable cost of tuition. Those payments may be delayed for a year or more, impacting the school’s financial models. Furthermore, Lang’s tuition revenue does not cover its operating budget, so the incoming Head will need to work closely with the Board to maximize efficiency, maintain quality, and consider an array of financial contingencies. The Head will also be charged with growing the school’s nascent fundraising efforts, tapping the gratitude and generosity of the parent body to help close the gap in the school’s operating budget. Most Lang families have a modest giving capacity, however, so it will be important for the school to think outside the box as it begins to cultivate relationships with potential lead donors. As with every institution, the dream is long-term financial sustainability, and some of Lang’s features (size, location, mission, age, business model) make it an exciting opportunity for a clever school leader with the imagination and energy to develop and test possible steps toward that dream.



## Who Should Apply

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Lang seeks a wise, charismatic, mission-driven leader who is energized by the complexities of leading a school dedicated to meeting the needs of a particular population that is full of promising students. The Head of School does not need to be an expert in 2e education, though they are unlikely to succeed without a genuine connection to the joys of working with exceptional kids who happen to have learning differences.

Curiosity, optimism, and exceptional emotional intelligence (EQ) are required, as is the confidence to lead a strong faculty and work with a demanding parent body. The Head should be a passionate communicator who can serve as a chief ambassador for Lang and a champion for the school's success and potential. This assignment also calls for a strong manager – an organized, steady leader who can plan and execute on an operational level without losing sight of the big picture or letting the dream dim.

The ideal appointee will also be:

- Warm and authentic
- Even-tempered
- An effective communicator across all media with all constituencies
- Humble
- Adept at giving and receiving feedback
- Able to hold people accountable without micromanaging
- An experienced classroom teacher
- A seasoned school administrator with the skills to manage a team
- At ease with complexity and ambiguity

## Search Overview

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Butler/White Strategies is partnering with the Board of Trustees at Lang to lead the recruitment and selection process for this opportunity. Jo Butler and Zachary White are serving as the lead consultants.

To nominate a potential candidate, please email [admin@butlerwhite.com](mailto:admin@butlerwhite.com). To express a personal interest in this opportunity, prospective candidates should contact Butler/White Strategies via the email above and include a current resume with their message. All inquiries and nominations are confidential.

To formalize their application and ensure full consideration, candidates should also submit via email:

- a letter of interest,
- a statement of educational philosophy, and
- a list of five professional references. *(No references will be contacted without the applicant's permission.)*

Applicants are also welcome to submit additional materials that might help the committee better understand relevant aspects of their candidacy and potential fit with Lang

The review of applications will begin immediately, and candidates will be interviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. This approach to the search may require an extra measure of patience and flexibility from candidates. Please contact Butler/White Strategies as soon as possible if you are interested in applying or learning more about the opportunity.



This calendar is subject to change based on the dynamics of the search and the best interests of The Lang School. Butler/White will update all applicants of their status as the search unfolds.



**Butler/White  
Strategies**

*This document was authored by Butler/White Strategies and approved by Lang.  
Data and images were provided by the school.*