



The Montessori School of Raleigh  
Chief Financial Officer  
Raleigh, NC



The Montessori School of Raleigh  
*a Montessori and IB World School*

## Background

Approaching its 50th anniversary in the 2024–2025 school year, The Montessori School of Raleigh (MSR) is a heartwarming and relational school. Steeped in the Montessori tradition, each child is treated as a capable individual and encouraged to reach for the heights of plausible independence at every age and stage. Similarly, students' own interests and inclinations are fostered as they reach for the work that is most engaging for



them in the moment. Teachers serve as guides and facilitators throughout the school while they foster learning, care for each other and the wider community, and a love of the outdoors. Outsiders and new parents alike consistently express amazement at witnessing MSR children's capabilities. When was the last time you saw a room full of three to five-year-olds quietly doing their enriching work involving measurements, skip counting, reading, and/or writing? What you *won't* find at MSR are chaos and raised voices admonishing children. In its place, you may find work purposefully left out (that a child is still progressing through and will return to), collaborative projects, and so many students finding their voices and learning how to communicate across differences. There are no artificial limits placed on the learning possibilities for students at MSR.

Despite its almost 50-year history, MSR is in a lot of ways still very much like a start-up. In the four years that Head of School Monica Rodriguez has led MSR, their enrollment has increased by 62%, and they've instituted more effective financial systems and tighter internal controls. The start-up moniker may seem overstated until you understand that they've had frequent turnover in their Heads of School and Board Chairs in that window and that their high school hasn't even been open a decade. Ready for a new chapter, MSR is striving for stability and security in both its financial footprint and in its leadership. MSR is ready for a strategic, experienced, and forward-looking Chief Financial Officer.

## The Montessori School of Raleigh at a Glance

### Mission

The Montessori School of Raleigh is the Research Triangle's modern embodiment and mindful practice of the time-proven Montessori philosophy, developing agile thinkers, poised communicators, and gracious collaborators—engineers of authentic and fulfilling lives.



## Facts and Figures

Founded: 1974

2023–24 School-wide Enrollment: 434

Infant–Kindergarten: 243

Grades 1–6: 144

Grades 7–8: 25

High School: 40

Students self-identifying as students of color: 37%

Employees: 94

Average tenure of faculty: 4 years

Location: Infants through Grade 6 on the Lead Mine Raleigh campus, and Grades 7–12 on the 40-acre Brier Creek Durham campus

Acreage: 49.5 acres

Indebtedness: \$5 million

Operating Budget: \$10.1 million

Full-Day Tuition: \$20,525 – \$25,695

Financial Aid: \$400,000 to 14% of students

Total Funds Raised, 2022–23: \$225,000

Parent Participation in Annual Giving: 40%

Accreditation: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the American Montessori Society, and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation

Membership: American Montessori Society (AMS), National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), North Carolina Association of Independent Schools (NCAIS)

On the Web: <https://www.msr.org/>



## The Position: Chief Financial Officer

Reporting to Head of School Monica Rodriguez and serving as a member of the Senior Team, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for The Montessori School of Raleigh's financial management and ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability. The CFO prepares



budgets, financial reports and projections, and aligns current financial realities with future aspirations. The CFO also manages all Business Office operations including payroll, benefits, insurance, contracting, student billing and collections, and accounts payable. MSR seeks a forward-looking and relational CFO to manage banking relationships and bond renewals as well as partner with the Chief

Advancement Officer on a capital campaign.

In addition to overseeing MSR's finances, the CFO also oversees a number of operational functions, from human resources to database administration to auxiliary programs. The CFO manages and leads a team of six, including a controller, accounting assistant, auxiliary program manager, auxiliary program assistant, HR administrator, and database administrator.

## Key Responsibilities

### Financial Management and Strategy

- Holds comprehensive responsibility for all aspects of MSR's financial management with an eye towards ensuring current and long-term financial stability, sustainability, and risk.
- Develops financial models and projections for strategic planning and budgeting that balance the school's current reality with its aspirations and need for long term sustainability.
- Leads and directs the preparation of the operating budget and cash flow projections, including working alongside key administrators and faculty, and managing the budget upon its approval by the Board.
- Oversees all Business Office operations including budgeting, accounting, financial projections and analysis, payroll, benefits, insurance, contracting, student billing and collections, and accounts payable.
- Manages relationships with external parties including auditors, vendors, financial consultants, bankers, and outside counsel.

- Works collaboratively with the HOS and outside counsel to determine and predict risk to the institution.
- Ensures that necessary and efficient systems, processes, technology, and controls are in place to carry out all financial and administrative functions of the school.
- In conjunction with the Controller, ensures monthly reconciliation and the annual audit are carried out in a timely fashion.
- Remains proactive and informed about emerging business trends and their potential impact on MSR's financial health; looks beyond the present numbers and seeks to understand both national and international economic trends.
- Oversees banking relationships, cash and debt management, and investment of operating cash and reserve funds.
- Facilitates annual audit of the school's statements of financial position, activities, and changes in net assets and cash flow.
- Manages insurance and vendor relationships with the school's liability insurance broker, reviewing and ensuring appropriate coverage limits for liability, workers compensation, property damage, cybersecurity, and other key areas of coverage.
- Oversees all fiscal reporting activities - such as Form 5500, 990, 1096 - for the school and ensures legal and regulatory compliance.

### Operational Oversight

- Manages finance, human resources, auxiliary programs and database administration and ensures departments are optimally structured for maximal operating efficiencies.
- Partners with the Chief Operations Officer in oversight of significant construction projects by providing financial input and recommendations.
- Supervises Database Administrator to ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place for use of schoolwide information system.
- Supervises Auxiliary Programs Manager and provides guidance and support in the oversight of auxiliary programs including studio offerings, SummerScape, before and after-school care, staff childcare for in-service days, and spring break care.



- Oversees third-party rentals of the school's facilities including insurance requirements, contracting, and scheduling.
- In partnership with the HR Administrator and Head of Schools, monitors and ensures compliance with state and federal labor laws.
- In collaboration with the Head of Schools and division heads, develops annual staffing models to meet program needs that fit within the MSR's financial framework; oversees faculty, staff, and administrator contracting process.
- Collaborates with employees regarding high-level HR needs such as leaves of absence, performance improvement plans, conflict management with colleagues, and/or reports of conduct not in alignment with the School's policies and/or professional standards.
- Oversees and manages tuition assistance process including leading the Tuition Assistance (TA) Committee and partnering with the TA Committee and other school staff as needed to: outline and draft annual TA policies, draft and send communications, and set and communicate deadlines for each application cycle.
- In partnership with the Enrollment Management team and Controller, reviews applications and issues tuition assistance awards to new and returning families ensuring awards are granted equitably and that the evaluation process is objective and in line with best practice.

### Collaboration and Communication

- Serves as a member of the School's Leadership Team and internal committees.
- Supports the Chair of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees by providing internal financial information; attends Risk and Compliance Board Committee meetings.
- Collaborates effectively with both the offices of Enrollment Management and Development on all financial matters.
- Develops and maintains positive and productive relationships with faculty, staff, and parents and cultivate an ethic of high-quality customer service among Business Office staff.
- Prepares and presents accurate, timely, clear, and concise financial reports on both monthly and annual basis for the Head of School, the Finance Committee, and/or the Board of Trustees.
- Fulfills additional duties as needed by the Head of School.



## Desired Qualifications and Qualities

### Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree plus at least seven years of progressive financial leadership experience with significant experience in non-profits and/or independent schools.
- MBA, CPA, or other advanced degree or certification preferred.
- Expertise in financial accounting, cash management, budgeting, and financial projections and modeling.
- Possesses an understanding of human resources including payroll, benefits, and labor laws.
- Experience managing complex banking relationships.
- Strong strategic thinking skills, able to design effective plans and approaches and serve as a thought partner to the Head of School.
- Knowledge of or deep respect for Montessori philosophy.
- Experience working collaboratively and harmoniously with a leadership team, fostering an environment of open communication, trust, and shared goals.



### Personal Characteristics

- Demonstrates principled leadership and sound business and management ethics.
- Works effectively and objectively with all members of the MSR community.
- Develops strong working relationships with employees at all levels of the institution.
- Fosters teamwork, coaches, gives feedback, involves, and inspires others.
- Serves as a strong advocate for the school's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by: modeling cultural competence; creating strategies to increase diversity among faculty, staff, and families; and supporting new and existing education programs.
- Possesses outstanding interpersonal and teamwork skills, with a professional and empathetic approach.
- Sees opportunity in change.
- Owns results.
- Projects a winning attitude, a can-do approach to problems, and persistence in the face of adversity.
- Demonstrates excellent verbal and written communication skills.

- A customer service mindset and provides excellent service to internal and external stakeholders.
- Strives for continuous improvement and solicits feedback to improve service.
- Keen sense of humor.
- Maintains confidentiality.

## Key Competencies

- **Financial Acumen:** Interpreting and applying understanding of key financial indicators to make better decisions.
- **Instills Trust:** Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.
- **Strategic Mindset:** Seeing ahead to future possibilities and translating them into breakthrough strategies.
- **Ensures Accountability:** Holding self and others accountable to meet commitments.
- **Builds Effective Teams:** Building strong teams with a strong identity that apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals.
- **Decision Quality:** Making good and timely decisions that keep the organization moving forward.



## Benefits and Compensation

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$150,000–\$165,000. MSR offers a comprehensive benefits package including medical, dental, and vision insurance. The school also has a 403b retirement plan.

## Application Requirements and Search Process

DRG is conducting this search on behalf of MSR. Interested candidates should submit, as soon as possible, materials including the following:

- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position.
- A current resume.



- A list of references (references will not be contacted until the finalist stage of the search).

**Application Status:** Accepting Applications

**Start date:** July 1, 2024 or sooner

To apply for this position, please click [HERE](#).

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This position description is based upon material provided by The Montessori School of Raleigh, an equal opportunity employer welcoming applicants of any race, color, religion, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, and any other legally protected status.

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