



The
**Philadelphia
School**



Director of Finance

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

July 1, 2024



EDUCATORS COLLABORATIVE
EXPERTS IN SEARCH, TRANSITION & STRATEGY



PROVIDING VISIONARY FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP TO A FLOURISHING PK-8 SCHOOL

The Philadelphia School, a progressive independent school serving students from prekindergarten through grade 8, is seeking a proactive financial leader who enjoys the challenge of analyzing, managing, and executing a financial strategy for its thriving current operations and exciting future. This intriguing opportunity will provide the successful candidate to be part of a mission-centered school that is dedicated to experiential learning, social justice, community, and academic mastery in a vibrant, urban setting.

Founded in 1972, The Philadelphia School (TPS) is located in the heart of Center City Philadelphia, where it is surrounded by historic row houses that are the homes to many families who choose to send their children to the school. The school has an intimate, neighborhood feel and it promotes this culture by connecting its students to the area on a regular basis. Indeed, TPS considers the city to be an extension of its classrooms, and as such students regularly

explore the vibrant neighborhood as part of their curriculum. In the fall and spring, students spend time each week in the school's "country classroom", in green spaces across Philadelphia, providing them the space to explore and learn. These intentionally designed programs are a reflection of the school's philosophy, which emphasizes an approach to learning through inquiry, projects, and community.

Currently enrolling over 400 students, TPS describes itself as "progressive by design and joyful by experience". Students and teachers are all on a first-name basis, and this informal culture permeates the atmosphere of the school's cheerful campus. Two buildings, a block apart, serve students and teachers – one for the prekindergarten and kindergarten program and a second for grades 1 through 8. Each of the buildings includes a new, thoughtfully designed playground where children are seen throughout the day, extending their learning to the outdoor space.

The school's next Director of Finance will develop a clear understanding of the life of the school, be able to communicate effectively, and will build relationships with a variety of stakeholders – teachers, administrators, the Board of Trustees, and most importantly, the Head of School. In addition to being responsible for tasks such as budgeting, risk management, and the outsourced human resources function, the Director of Finance will serve as a "thought partner" to the Head of School, providing strategic analysis that will help guide the future of TPS.

YOUNGER LONGER. LEADERS SOONER.

TPS is intentionally designed as a prekindergarten through grade 8 school, serving the distinct academic and developmental needs of this age group. The School's curriculum is integrated, so that there is a seamless transition in the student experience from one grade to the next.

The **Early Childhood Program**, which serves children from age four through kindergarten, provides the foundation for the TPS experience. Housed one block away from the building that serves grades 1 through 8, the Early Childhood Program utilizes The Project Approach and imaginative play to create a learning environment that is filled with exploration and growth. You can learn more about this program [here](#).

In first grade, students transition to the Lombard Building, where they experience the **Primary and Third Grade Program**, for children in grades 1 through 3. TPS fosters the social, cognitive and physical growth of its early elementary learners in carefully scaffolded ways, recognizing their development and growing independence. You can learn more about the Primary and Third Grade Program [here](#).

Students then join the **Junior Unit**, where they read to learn, as well as learn to read ever more challenging material in a rotating, thematic study that provides a focus for learning, giving purpose and meaning to the educational experience. You can learn more about the Junior Unit [here](#).



AT A GLANCE

- Established: 1972
- Number of Students: 406
- Grades served: prekindergarten through 8
- Beautiful urban campus in a residential section of Center City Philadelphia
- Faculty and Staff: 92
- Annual budget: \$13 million
- Financial Aid Awarded: +\$2 million

The culmination of the TPS experience is in **Middle School**, where students are provided with numerous opportunities to serve as leaders in the community. The culminating 8th grade year provides an opportunity for self-reflection, reinvention, and a voice to determine what's next. You can learn more about the Middle School program [here](#).

A COMPELLING NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

TPS last year completed a dynamic new [Strategic Plan](#) that will guide its work in the coming five years. The Plan provides a blueprint for the evolution of the school and identifies three priorities that will be the focus of its attention. The school is currently in the beginning stages of a Capital Campaign that will provide funding for TPS to bring the Plan to fruition.



FUTURE LEADERSHIP PROFILE

The Philadelphia School seeks a strategic, proactive, and relational Director of Finance who is responsible to oversee and manage the school's finances and to ensure the school's financial and operational strength.

The successful candidate will be a leader distinguished by a warm and inclusive personal manner, exceptional verbal and written communication skills, a dedication to the school's mission, and a commitment to the development and execution of a financial strategy for the school. They will bring the skills, initiative, and drive to help further realize a compelling and sustainable vision for the future of The Philadelphia School.

The Philadelphia School is conducting a national search to identify its next Director of Finance. Search consultant George Sanderson of Educators Collaborative has solicited input from all stakeholders during an on-campus visit and subsequent conversations with additional members of the school community. Based on this input, the following represents a summary of the position's strengths, challenges and opportunities, and the skills and attributes desired in the next Director of Finance at The Philadelphia School.

Strengths of The School

- TPS has a clear and compelling mission and identity, which are important guideposts to all members of its community.
- With a recently completed Strategic Plan and aspirational philanthropic initiatives, TPS is at an important and exciting point in its history as it enters the second half century after its founding.

- The school's distinct experiential curriculum and its singular focus on children from preschool through grade 8 distinguish the school from its independent and public school competitors.
- TPS is committed to supporting its diverse student body, and its dedication to creating a culture of belonging is unequivocal.
- The strong sense of community, small class sizes, low student-teacher ratio, and the close relationships between students and faculty are universally valued.
- TPS benefits from a supportive and engaged parent community who consistently applauded the school's joy, kindness, and strong sense of community.
- Equally engaged and encouraging is the school's Board of Trustees, which provides a distinguished level of expertise to its governance work.
- TPS has an outstanding reputation, with strong enrollment and an impressive record of high school placement. TPS' students are sought after as high school freshmen because they are prepared, self-assured, well-rounded, and solid community citizens.

Responsibilities, Opportunities and Challenges



Partner with the Head of School

Working closely with the Head of School to develop a strategic financial vision for the future of TPS is a vital component of the responsibilities of the Director of Finance, who is responsible for managing and executing the strategy that is devised.

Lead Strategic Long-Term Financial Planning and the Budget Process

The Director of Finance leads the school's annual budgeting process and has the opportunity to further refine this process in a manner that is transparent, consistent, and clear. In addition to constructing the annual budget, the Director of Finance will work closely with the Head of School and Board of Trustees to develop long-term financial scenarios for TPS.

Work Closely with the Board of Trustees

The Director of Finance will present regularly to the Board of Trustees on budget and long-range planning issues and attend Finance Committee meetings on a monthly basis.

Help Execute the Strategic Plan

The Philadelphia School's [Strategic Plan](#) targets three ambitious goals for the future: to broaden the school's place-based learning, to expand experiential learning, and to lead the way in progressive education. The Director of Finance will work closely with the Head of School in developing ways to bring these priorities to fruition in a financially sustainable and responsible manner.

Oversee Risk Management

The Director of Finance will collaborate with the school's counsel and insurance agents regarding all legal and risk management matters; and establish policies to ensure risks are minimized.

Lead the Business Office

The Director of Finance will lead, and partner with, an experienced team of finance professionals, including a highly regarded Controller and Finance Associate.

Manage the Outsourced Human Resources Function

TPS recently entered into an arrangement with a local firm that manages the school's Human Resources services. The Director of Finance will be responsible for overseeing the work of this organization, providing ongoing support and evaluation of their work for the school.

Partner with the Director of Enrollment Management

The Director of Finance serves on the school's Tuition Assistance Committee, with the Director of Enrollment Management, and as such is responsible for analyzing trends in financial aid and helping to determine the amount of awards to be given to each student.



Further Explore What Makes The Philadelphia School Distinctive

- [Beyond TPS](#)
- [A commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging](#)
- [Progressive by Design, Joyful by Experience](#)
- [A Deep and Caring School Community](#)

Work closely with the Director of Advancement

The Director of Finance will establish a strong partnership with the Director of Advancement by providing support and analysis around fundraising initiatives.

Serve on the Building Committee and work in partnership with the Director of Systems and Spaces

The Director of Finance will work closely with the school's Director of Systems and Spaces, providing thoughtful analysis of the school's buildings and grounds plans for the present and future.

Oversee Relationships with Lessees and Vendors

The Director of Finance will oversee and approve all rentals of school facilities and ensure that renters abide by the terms of rental agreements. In addition, the Director of Finance will execute all contracts and maintain and perform review of all school leases and vendor contracts.



Skills and Attributes of the next Director of Finance

The Philadelphia School seeks an experienced finance professional to step into the Director of Finance role. The school takes great pride in nurturing an environment that is compassionate, rigorous, joyful, progressive, highly collaborative, and innovative. An individual who brings energy, integrity, and intellect will thrive and experience success in the TPS community.

The ideal candidates will possess the following qualifications, skills, and attributes:

- A Bachelor's degree in Finance or Accounting; CPA or Masters in Accounting designation preferred.
- 5+ years of experience in Finance Administration, preferably in an educational or nonprofit institution.
- Strong understanding of financial systems and controls, GAAP, budgeting, and capital management, and plant management.
- Proven experience with long-range financial planning and overseeing the financial particulars of capital projects and building renovations.
- Ability to think critically and creatively.
- Proven success in a senior administrative role.
- Demonstrated leadership qualities.
- The ability to work collaboratively with other school community members.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to effectively tell the story of the school, demonstrate the values of the school.
- Proficient knowledge of a variety of MAC/PC computer software applications including Google Suite, word processing (preferably Google Docs and MS Word), spreadsheets (preferably Google Sheets and MS Excel), database, and presentation software.
- Overall mobility is essential including sitting, walking, standing, driving, and working under adverse conditions for extended periods of time during the school day from 7am-6pm.
- Working knowledge of independent school operations is preferred.
- Working knowledge of financial sustainability best practices, trends in (independent school) finance and operations.
- Personal qualities, including diplomacy, tact, discretion, flexibility, resourcefulness, initiative, dependability, organizational skills, friendliness, emotional maturity, punctuality, and professionalism.
- The ability to work effectively with multiple supervisors, balance and prioritize multiple requests.
- The ability to complete assigned project tasks on time and with minimal supervision.



The Philadelphia School is an Equal Opportunity Employer

The Philadelphia School provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetics. In addition to federal law requirements, The Philadelphia School complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which the company has facilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

The Philadelphia School expressly prohibits any form of workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. Improper interference with the ability of The Philadelphia School employees to perform their job duties may result in discipline up to and including employment termination.

SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials by **April 15**:

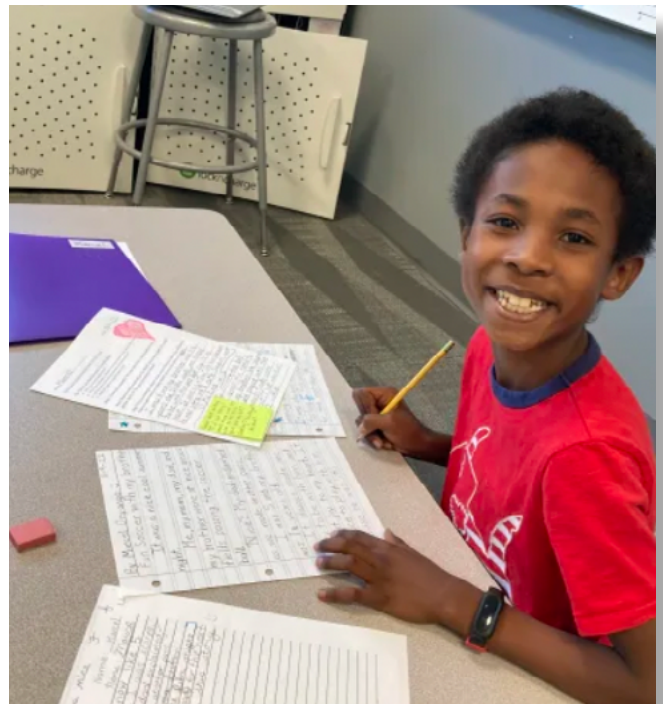
- EC Summary Sheet and Disclosure Statement (Contact George Sanderson for these documents)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Head of School
- Current Resume
- A list of five or more references with contact information (Name, relationship to candidate, phone and email addresses)

Application materials are to be sent electronically via email to:

George Sanderson, Partner, Educators Collaborative
Email: gsanderson@educatorscollaborative.com

The Search Schedule

TPS plans to identify a preliminary group of candidates to interview (virtually) in late February. From this group, the school will select finalists for a full day of interviews on campus in March. The Head of School expects to reach a decision and appoint a Director of Finance shortly after finalist visits, with the term of office to commence on July 1, 2024.



The Philadelphia School
2501 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146

The Philadelphia School educates children for a future that is impossible to know but not impossible to shape. Learn here. Go anywhere.