



The Montessori School *of* Raleigh

Raleigh, North Carolina

Director of Finance and Operations

The School



The Montessori School of Raleigh (MSR) is the oldest fully accredited Montessori school in the Research Triangle region of North Carolina and the only independent school in the area that offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. Established in 1974, MSR is steeped in Montessori tradition and allows students to experience the educational environment as they engage in self-directed learning in carefully

prepared classrooms that encourage curiosity, imagination, and self-discovery. The 10-acre Lead Mine Campus, in North Raleigh, houses children from 18 months through grade six and is comprised of five buildings in a village-like setting surrounded by protected forest and wetlands. The 40-acre Brier Creek Campus, approximately 10 miles away in Durham, is an expansive wooded site designated for Middle and Upper School students. MSR's Middle School was created in 1999 and the Upper School was added in 2016. Both campuses have been intentionally designed to meet the needs of students at their particular developmental stages, and at each venue, one finds talented and committed faculty and staff who are both passionate about learning and dedicated to the success of every child.

Mission Statement

The Montessori School of Raleigh is the 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.

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Fast Facts

Location: Two campuses in Raleigh and Durham

Enrollment: 400

Grades: PK - 12

Head of School: Monica Rodriguez, appointed 2020

Board of Trustees: 14 members

Total Faculty and Staff: 82

Budget: \$8 million

Annual Fund: \$215,000

Endowment: \$400,000

Debt: \$6 million

Diversity: 27% students of color; 9% staff of color

Financial Aid: 21% of students receive financial aid

Accreditation: AdvancED/Southern Association of Colleges & Schools; American Montessori Society (AMS); International Baccalaureate Organization

Member: the National and North Carolina Associations of Independent Schools (NAIS and NCAIS)

Celebrating over 45 years of serving the Raleigh community, MSR has stewarded and built upon the vision of its founding families. While the Lower School has maintained its commitment to a true Montessori education and the Middle School embraces student-directed learning as well, the addition of the Upper School now provides students with an opportunity to experience a rigorous, challenging, interdisciplinary high school curriculum within the framework of a traditional Montessori education. In the 2017-2018 academic year, MSR completed certification as an IB World School, giving 11th and 12th grade students the option to participate in this enriching two-year course of study that emphasizes critical thinking, rigorous research and exams, thesis writing, a “Theory of Knowledge” course, and other advanced college preparation. MSR is the first and only Montessori high school in the state and the only independent school in the Triangle to offer this highly regarded curriculum.



The Montessori School of Raleigh looks toward the future with optimism and excitement. July 2020 brings a new Head of School, Monica Rodriguez, to Raleigh from the Latin School of Chicago, where she served as Director of the Upper School, overseeing a

division of 80 faculty members and 475 students in grades 9-12. In addition, MSR is embarking on a nearly \$3.5 million capital campaign for endowment, financial aid, program enhancement, and facilities and capital improvements. A successful mini-

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campaign will provide some of the financial resources required to maintain stability and continue to advance the school. At the same time, it will raise the institution's stature, strengthen its brand, and significantly enhance the school's ability to reach the strategic financial goals currently being established.

The Opportunity

The long-time Director of Business Operations will be retiring in June 2020 after a 15-year tenure at MSR. This event comes at a significant inflection point in the life of the school and represents an exciting opportunity to effect a major transformation of the School's business function. With the recent addition of an Upper School, The Montessori School of Raleigh has continued to grow, with a concurrent need for more sophisticated systems and processes in the business office. The size of the staff has recently increased to include a human resources position and an auxiliary services role. MSR's next Director of Finance and Operations will be charged with analyzing and improving current procedures around budgeting and financial reporting; examining and expanding auxiliary programs; ensuring the effective management of technology systems; providing day-to-day and ongoing strategic financial management; and serving as a trusted advisor to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees and as the lead person in all operational aspects of the school.



Responsibilities

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team reporting to the Head of School, the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) is accountable for the financial and operational health of MSR. He or she works closely with the Board of Trustees and participates in strategic planning and high-level decision-making to ensure that the school's finances are managed in a way that optimizes delivery of its mission. In addition to providing fiscal oversight and guidance, the DFO is directly responsible for

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buildings and grounds, human resources, auxiliary programs, transportation, and safety, and also oversees outsourced functions including technology, cleaning, and food service. The incumbent will supervise a staff that currently consists of seven direct reports: Accounts Payable Coordinator, Accounts Receivable Coordinator, Director of Human Resources, Buildings and Grounds Director, Auxiliary Program Director, Database Manager, and the Receptionist/Administrative Assistant.

Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Providing counsel and support to the Head of School, the Board of Trustees, and other senior staff members on all matters pertaining to finance and operations.
- Managing Finance, Buildings and Grounds, Human Resources, Auxiliary Programs, Transportation and Safety, and overseeing outsourced functions including Food Service, Cleaning, and Technology, ensuring that all departments are optimally structured for maximal operating efficiencies.
- Developing 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.
- Leading and directing the preparation of the operating budget, including incorporating input from key administrators and faculty and managing the budget upon its approval by the Board.
- Making certain that necessary and efficient systems, processes, technology, and controls are in place to carry out all financial and administrative functions of the school.
- Being 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.
- Generally supervising all renovation, new construction, and ongoing facilities maintenance on both campuses.
- Preparing and presenting accurate, timely, clear, and concise financial reports on both monthly and annual bases for the Head of School and the Finance Committee.
- Overseeing banking relationships, cash and debt management, and investment of operating cash, reserve funds, and endowment.

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- Facilitating an annual audit of the school’s statements of financial position, activities, and changes in net assets and cash flow.
- Developing and maintaining positive and productive relationships with faculty, staff, and parents and cultivating an ethic of high quality customer service among business office staff.
- Supervising, mentoring, retaining, and, as necessary, hiring knowledgeable and hardworking staff for the business and operations functions under his/her management.
- Overseeing all fiscal reporting activities for the school and ensuring legal and regulatory compliance.

Candidate Qualifications

Leadership

A strategic thinker who sees the “big picture,” anticipates future needs, and is able to articulate a well-conceived plan to achieve goals.

An accessible, visible, and engaged person who is an active and positive presence in the daily life of the school.

A secure leader who motivates and empowers people through artful delegation while retaining ultimate accountability.

One whose management style is based on transparency, honesty, direct communication, and a genuine desire for collaboration.

A team player who works productively, respectfully, and enthusiastically with others, particularly the Senior Leadership Team, Head of School, and members of the Business Office.

A financial executive whose experience, force of intellect, character, technical knowledge, and expertise engender support and trust among others.

Experience

A minimum of five years of experience in senior-level finance and administrative positions of increasing responsibility, ideally including working in an independent school or other not-for-profit organization.

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A strong track record of advising at the highest level and participating in major strategic decisions that have profound, long-term implications for an organization. Experience using sophisticated financial models for analyzing new opportunities for an organization, determining their potential financial consequences, and recommending and implementing a prudent course of action.

Ideally, a career that includes involvement in financial planning and analysis, accounting and financial reporting, budgeting, audit and tax returns, information technology, facilities management, human resources, and auxiliary programs.

Background working effectively with multiple constituencies such as parents, faculty, staff, and board members.

A history of successfully managing a diverse staff toward the achievement of common goals.

Skills and Knowledge

Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to develop genuine relationships throughout the school and building upon them to exercise leadership among the board, administrators, faculty, staff, and parents.

An understanding of the importance of collaboration, information-sharing, and ongoing communication among various departments in a school or other nonprofit organization.

A broad and deep knowledge of financial management and skill in implementing its associated administrative processes, budgeting procedures, and accounting systems.

Proven competency in financial modeling and developing forecasts in the context of long-range strategic planning.

Strong verbal and written communication skills that allow one to educate others about the importance of sound financial management and to explain complicated fiscal matters to non-financial constituencies.

A solid grounding in information technology, particularly as it relates to the efficient operation of the business office, and the ability to use and evaluate database management software systems.

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Familiarity with physical plant management, including financing, construction, renovations, maintenance, and daily operations.

Personal Attributes

An individual of unquestioned honesty and integrity.

An accessible and approachable person with a “service ethic” who demonstrates sincerity, caring, and sensitivity in his or her interactions with others.

A team player who exhibits enthusiasm and a sense of humor in managing a team in pursuit of a common goal.

A results-oriented person who is able to multitask effectively and to prioritize competing demands.

One who is self-directed, well organized, reliable, and routinely follows through with his or her commitments.

An innovative thinker who is willing to explore new ideas and to embrace prudent change.



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Other Considerations

<u>Compensation:</u>	Commensurate with experience and competitive with comparable schools in the region.
<u>Travel:</u>	Minimal.
<u>Education:</u>	Bachelor's degree required; MBA, CPA, or other relevant certifications or graduate degree(s) desirable.
<u>Website:</u>	www.msr.org
<u>Candidates May Now Be:</u>	<p>A senior financial administrator – such as a CFO, business manager, or controller – in an independent school.</p> <p>An experienced financial manager of an “educational campus” such as a museum, botanical garden, or zoo.</p> <p>A financial executive with a not-for-profit organization whose skills and experiences can be readily transferred to the independent school world.</p> <p>A financial executive in the for-profit sector with non-profit experience (such as serving as a trustee or active volunteer) and a temperament that would lead him or her to be successful in an independent school.</p>

For more information, contact:

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