



CHADWICK  
S C H O O L

Chief Financial and Operating Officer  
Chadwick School  
Palos Verdes Peninsula, California

## THE SEARCH

Chadwick School (Chadwick), an independent K-12 coeducational day school, seeks a strategic and collaborative finance and administrative leader to serve as its next Chief Financial and Operation Officer (CFOO). The incoming CFOO will inherit a talented, dedicated staff, and will be tasked with leading a comprehensive and innovative financial and operational strategy that accounts for the complexity of Chadwick's business and people operations and ensures a high level of financial stewardship. Partnering with the Head of School and other members of the leadership team, the CFOO will play an integral role in Chadwick's next chapter, driving fiscal strategy, operational oversight, and campus planning, and will align strong financial and administrative acumen with Chadwick's distinct community values.

Founded in 1935, Chadwick School is dedicated to academic excellence, the development of exemplary character, and self-discovery through experience. A highly educated faculty and staff bring out the best in the talented student body through active learning, challenging academics, one-on-one mentoring, unparalleled global opportunities, nationally distinguished outdoor education and community service programs, outstanding athletic opportunities, and award-winning visual and performing arts. Tucked in the Palos Verdes Peninsula of Southern California, Chadwick School values active participation in an intentionally diverse and inclusive environment, as well as living and learning in a student-centered collaborative atmosphere of excellence, integrity, and trust. Chadwick School shares its board, mission, and core values of compassion, fairness, honesty, respect, and responsibility with Chadwick International, a sister campus located in Songdo, South Korea.

Reporting to the Head of School, the Chief Financial and Operating Officer will manage and oversee the business, financial, investment, facilities, human resources, and operational functions of Chadwick School. The CFOO will be a critical partner to the Head of School, the Board of Trustees, and the leadership team, as well as an important resource to the campus community for all financial planning and decision-making. The CFOO manages an annual budget of \$44 million and leads a team of six direct reports across finance, facilities and operations, risk management, information technology, and human resources. Entering a mission-minded community in an exciting period of growth, the CFOO will be a collaborative and communicative change leader and systems thinker and will progress Chadwick's financial model to prioritize long-term sustainability.

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Chadwick School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT CHADWICK SCHOOL

### History

Chadwick is steeped in more than 90 years of history and tradition. In 1935, Margaret Chadwick opened Chadwick Open Air School in San Pedro, California as a homeschool, enrolling two of her children. Three years later, a Palos Verdes developer, Frank Vanderlip, generously donated land and Chadwick School's co-founders, the Roesslers, also provided financial support. What began as a homeschool expanded rapidly, with some students boarding on campus and others attending as "day pupils." From its founding, character, compassion, and play were as essential as academics. Experiential learning beyond the classroom fueled students' young minds and fostered their highest potential. Education was seen as an opportunity to positively impact students, their communities, and the world at large. These ideas are the core principles of Chadwick's founding philosophy and can be seen in the incredible contributions to society Chadwick students and alumni continue to make to this day.

In 2010, the School established Chadwick International, a second campus in Songdo, South Korea. Since then, the Chadwick International campus has grown from 260 students to nearly 1,500, spanning pre-K through grade 12. While each school is distinct, both campuses are united by a shared mission, core values, and a belief in experiential, relational, and purposeful learning.

### Finances

Chadwick is in a strong financial position. In FY2025, Chadwick's operating budget was \$38 million. At the most recent fiscal year end (June 30, 2025), its net assets totaled \$78 million, and its endowment and related funds were valued at \$51 million. In the 2025-2026 academic year, Chadwick awarded over \$7M in financial support to 23% of the School's student population. Looking ahead, the School is focused on ensuring long-term financial sustainability and growth as it embarks on campus planning and development initiatives.

### Facilities

Chadwick sits on a beautiful 45-acre hilltop campus on the scenic Palos Verdes Peninsula in Los Angeles County, boasting 26 educational buildings, outdoor learning spaces, and spectacular Los Angeles vistas. In addition to the Lower and Upper Village, Middle School, and Upper School academic buildings, the campus includes a 6,000 square foot Innovation and Design Building, a 400-seat Laverty Center for the Performing Arts, the Leavenworth Library Learning Center, the Pascoe Pavilion Gymnasium and Swimming Pool, and illustrious multi-sport athletic fields. Residential facilities as well as community spaces are interwoven through campus to support Chadwick's holistic approach to education.

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## Strategic Priorities

Chadwick School is deeply committed to self-discovery through experience and reflection. In 2023, following a collaborative, school-wide process, Chadwick introduced a set of strategic priorities aligned with the School's mission and vision to courageously pursue goodness and greatness. As a result, by 2028, Chadwick School pledges to stand as a model of an educational community that commits to leading, values community wellness, prioritizes institutional sustainability, and ensures an accessible experience. More information on Chadwick's mission, vision, and priorities can be found [here](#).

## Student Life and School Community

Chadwick's mission is to develop global citizens with keen minds, exemplary character, self-knowledge, and the ability to lead. The campus is made up of four inclusive communities, designed to intentionally guide and develop all of the School's learners: the Village School (grades K-5), the Sixth-Grade Experience (grade 6), the Middle School (grades 7-8), and the Upper School (grades 9-12). Across these Chadwick communities, gradual and intentional educational progression is combined with a strong focus on wellness, community, and sustainability.

- [The Village School](#) seeks to plant seeds of learning, using an experiential curriculum that addresses all aspects of a child's development and learning a hands-on philosophy within a warm, supportive environment.
- [The Sixth Grade Experience](#) acts as a bridge between the elementary school and the Middle School, allowing students to build confidence and independence and creating a natural, purposeful way to help students ease into higher learning with social and emotional support.
- [The Middle School](#) offers a period of never-ending exploration, allowing students to take risks without worrying about failure. Using a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum, students are supported in stepping out of their comfort zone and taking on new experiences and perspectives. A cornerstone offering includes Chadwick's Immersion Program, giving students the opportunity to leave campus for locations across Los Angeles, the United States, and the world to explore their place in the greater community.
- [The Upper School](#) provides students with unparalleled experiences to prepare for adventures after they leave Chadwick and commits to developing both hearts and minds of each student. With a high-level, rigorous curriculum that emphasizes critical and creative thinking and real-world experience, students graduate as curious thinkers who are flexible, creative, nimble, and collaborative.

Today, Chadwick enrolls 865 students from more than 50 different neighborhoods, all of whom benefit from the School's exceptional complement of educators. Chadwick faculty are mentors, collaborators, and champions for their students. With more than 70% of faculty holding advanced degrees, Chadwick teachers bring deep knowledge and real passion to their classrooms. Given the School's 8:1 student-to-teacher ratio, faculty are able to build meaningful relationships with every student.

## Leadership

Jessica S. Donovan joined Chadwick School in 2023 as Chadwick's 14<sup>th</sup> Head of School. Previously, Jessica served as Head of School at Sheridan School, an independent school in Washington D.C. She has spent more than 25 years working in schools as a teacher and school leader, including earlier administrative roles as a Division Director and Assistant Head of School. Jessica currently serves on the board of the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and is the Vice-Chair of the CAIS Secondary Board of Standards. Previously, she was on the board of the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, where she chaired the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. She also served on the board of the Association of Independent Maryland Schools, where she was the commissioner for accreditation. Jessica has presented at various conferences on integrated project-based learning, mindfulness, curriculum design and differentiation, and hiring and retaining diverse faculty. She serves as a leadership mentor for underrepresented leaders in independent schools. Jessica earned her B.A. in English and American Literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and her M.A. in Independent School Leadership from the Klingenstein Center at Teachers College, Columbia University.

## ROLE OF THE CFOO

Reporting directly to the Head of School, the CFOO is a key member of the senior leadership team and is responsible for finance, facilities and operations, risk management, IT, and human resources. The CFOO will also work closely with Board committees, including the Finance and Investment Committee, and must be willing to collaborate with the Chadwick International Chief Financial Officer as needed in various instances. The Chadwick community looks to the CFOO to understand the many facets of the mission and operations of the School, and to provide strategic and critical business thinking across a wide range of responsibilities. The full portfolio includes six direct reports: a Controller, a Director of Risk Management, a Director of Facilities, a Director of Information Technology, a Director of Auxiliary and Innovative Programs, and a Director of Human Resources, as well as 10 additional staff members working across these units.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CFOO

The incoming Chief Financial and Operating Officer should be prepared to address the following institutional priorities:

### **Provide sound and data-centered fiscal analysis and strategic financial planning to address Chadwick's educational and curricular priorities**

Working in partnership with the Head of School, fellow senior leaders, and the Board, the incoming CFOO will bring vision and strategic thinking to the financial and operational management of the School. The CFOO will lead and manage the annual budgeting process, collaborating closely with school leaders to set parameters, articulate priorities, and prepare and present the budget for Board approval. The new CFOO will anticipate challenges and develop robust financial budgeting scenarios and contingencies to aid in

decision-making, providing timely information on performance relative to the budget. Specifically, the CFOO will leverage their financial acumen to support decision-making related to tuition and financial aid, enrollment, endowment management, fundraising and advancement, programming, staffing, vendor management, deferred maintenance, and capital planning, among other important financial and operational considerations.

### **Strategically link master planning with long-term financial planning**

A key element of Chadwick's long-term financial strategy is master planning, as the School recently engaged in a comprehensive planning process to articulate priorities, including those related to the physical plant and facilities, for the School's future. The CFOO will continue to advance these strategic conversations, providing financial analysis and long-term budget modeling to support strategic facilities decisions and ensure alignment with the School's financial sustainability goals. As the School prepares to start construction on a number of projects in the near future, the CFOO will need to work closely with the Director of Facilities and the Assistant Head of School for Academic Learning to ensure these initiatives advance with fidelity and in support of delivering a best-in-class experience for Chadwick's students. In particular, the CFOO will prioritize ongoing compliance with the conditional use permit to allow for current and planned facility maintenance and management. Across all of these initiatives, the CFOO will thoughtfully address the School's built, natural, academic, and communal environments while keeping financial sustainability at the forefront of all key decisions.

### **Lead, manage, and empower the departments that report to the CFOO**

The CFOO will prioritize supporting, mentoring, and developing the talented group of colleagues who comprise the finance and business functions of the School. In providing leadership across financial operations, facilities, technology, human resources, and risk management, the CFOO will draw on the institutional knowledge and expertise of seasoned team members, while also providing mentorship and facilitating professional development and growth. The CFOO must be able to operate at a high strategic level, delegating appropriately across their team, while remaining knowledgeable about the tactical details of the work and facilitating cross-departmental collaboration.

### **Communicate effectively and maintain a culture of disciplined financial stewardship across the Chadwick community**

Chadwick is a tight-knit community where students, faculty, and staff are highly engaged and invested in creating and sustaining a purposeful and welcoming community. The CFOO will be expected to create strong, collaborative working relationships with stakeholders across the School and to support the Head of School in the communication and presentation of financial matters to faculty and staff, using these regular touchpoints as teaching and learning opportunities. The CFOO will be a clear communicator and active listener with the ability to present and translate complex financial information and operational processes and policies to a wide variety of offices.

## **Continue to strengthen and professionalize financial and business operations and reporting**

While the CFOO will inherit a financially sound school with solid assets, there is an opportunity to refine and update processes, policies, and systems across the finance and operations functions. As the School prepares for an upcoming campaign and possible capital projects, the CFOO may want to assess the structure of the business office, ensuring that proper procedures and processes are in place for successful execution. The CFOO should be a systems thinker and adept at change management, able to understand and assess current operations while looking to build new, more efficient processes and workflows that allow for greater efficiency and financial transparency. As part of this effort, the CFOO will develop a financial reporting system that will keep the leadership team and Board apprised of the School's ongoing financial health and operational performance, ensuring that reports are accurate and available for review at regular intervals.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- At least 10 years of progressive responsibilities in accounting, finance, operations, and/or general business management. Prior management experience with a private school or non-profit organization is preferred;
- A bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business management, or related area of study. An MBA degree and/or CPA certification is preferred;
- Significant and substantive experience in leadership and supervision in a complex organization, including the oversight of financial functions. While prior experience in a non-profit organization is helpful, prior experience in a school setting is not required;
- An ability to think and plan strategically and creatively, with excellent financial and business skills that enable visionary and proactive approaches to complex financial management situations;
- Strong operational leadership and broad project management experience;
- Confident decision-making skills with an inclusive, transparent, collaborative, and decisive leadership style;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills that inspire trust and collaboration; strong ability to work in a team environment;
- An understanding of non-profit and independent school finances and trends facing the field.
- Strong proficiency with accounting and financial systems, including strong Excel skills.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT**

- Required to lift and carry up to a maximum of 10 lbs., in a correct manner consistent with the appropriate training by the School.

- Occasionally required to use hand to handle, or feel objects, touch and use tools, reach with hands and arms, climb stairs, bend, stoop, twist, lift, reach, push, pull, grasp, balance, kneel, crouch, crawl, grasp, talk, hear, and walk during the course of employment.
- Specific vision abilities required by the job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and an ability to adjust focus.
- May use telephone, computer, copier, and other office equipment in the course of a day.
- May be required to sit while operating word processing equipment for approximately two-to-four hours daily, repetitive motion for typing and other keystroke needs.

*Work environment characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential function of this job. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. While performing this job, the employee is exposed to weather conditions prevalent at the time. This may include warm, hot, or cold temperatures. The noise level in the work environment is moderate.*

## COMPENSATION

The annual salary range is \$305,000 to \$320,000 based on years of experience, credentials, and other qualifications. Chadwick School offers a competitive benefits package.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/chadwick-school/chief-financial-and-operating-officer>.

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Isaacson, Miller

*Chadwick School is a 501c3 non-profit corporation which does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin or sexual orientation in administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, employment, and athletic and other school administered programs.*

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Chadwick School. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Chadwick School would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*