

OAKWOOD SCHOOL



DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

LOCATION

North Hollywood, CA

POST DATE

November 13, 2024

PRIORITY DEADLINE

December 15, 2024

REMOTE OAKWOOD

INTERVIEWS

January 2025

ON-SITE FINAL ROUND

Early February

DECISION ANNOUNCED

February 28, 2025

START DATE

Spring 2025 (flexible), but no later than June 2, 2025

REPORTS TO

Chief Operating Officer

SALARY

\$210,000 – \$230,000





SUMMARY

Oakwood School is a two-campus, K-12 coeducational day school in North Hollywood, California that opened its doors in 1951. Now with over 830 students in grades K-12, the school has remained faithful to its original mission ever since:

to create a diverse educational environment where young people are partners with the adults; where preparing students for the future occurs by immersing them in the present; where joy and humor prevail alongside academic rigor; and where authentic relationships engage students with their teachers, one another, and the world around them.

With an operating budget of approximately \$50M, Oakwood seeks a director of finance to oversee the finance department that includes three other dedicated professionals. The role requires hands-on management of the school's day-to-day finance operations, as well as a strategic approach to long-term financial planning. As Oakwood enters a multiyear chapter of three separate capital campaigns that will trigger significant construction and development, the director of finance will also play a role in cash management, debt financing, and banking partnerships. The director of finance reports to the chief operations officer and interfaces with department heads across both campuses. Oakwood looks forward to welcoming the director of finance in spring 2025, to allow for a graceful hand-off with the outgoing director of finance, who will be retiring at the end of the '24-'25 school year.



STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Oakwood School was founded in 1951 by parents who wanted to provide their children with an educational experience that was rich in the arts, sciences, and humanities and challenging to their creative, intellectual, and physical capacities. They wanted a learning community which would foster independence of thought, intellectual integrity, sensitivity to the needs of others, and prepare students for participation in a democratic society.

Oakwood remains committed to the founders' goals. We believe that a school environment should foster individual growth and an active communal life, should hold intellectual attainment in high regard, and should encourage young people to exercise increasing autonomy and responsibility—for one another, for the environment, and for the larger world.

We believe that a school best prepares children for the future by focusing on the quality of their experiences in the present. We believe that teachers and learners should inspire one another, and that school must be rewarding in its own right. And we believe that young people's feelings and thoughts should be accorded respect and dignity.

WE INTEND AN OAKWOOD EDUCATION:

To guide students toward mastery in their academic, artistic, and athletic pursuits. We want students to grapple meaningfully with ideas, to discover relationships among disciplines, and to become independent and moral thinkers.

To spark passion. We want young people to become wholeheartedly immersed in their work. We believe that intelligence and imagination enrich each other, and that to involve a student passionately in learning is to involve the whole person.

To cultivate depth of character. We seek to nurture students' empathy, imagination, and moral courage; to foster a sense of responsibility and humility, along with a habit of service; and to instill a lifelong commitment to social justice. We intend for the development of their intellect and character to be intertwined, so that their choices are guided by internal controls and sensitivity to the needs of others.

Finally, we recognize that the school can best achieve its aims when students' experiences are predominantly positive and joyful, and where their relationships with teachers, and with one another, are caring and trusting.



To help students gain self-knowledge.

We want students to learn about their strengths and needs as learners. We seek to accommodate and appreciate the unique qualities of each young person and to provide multiple opportunities for students to succeed, to learn from mistakes, and to take risks for the sake of learning.

To foster a sense of community.

We seek to create a vibrant public life in the school, where students learn to express themselves fluently and responsibly, and to consider differing perspectives respectfully. We believe that an environment most conducive to learning and growth is diverse and inclusive, and balances seriousness of purpose with a sense of play.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING

Building an understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in our students strongly compels the realization of their full potential as advocates and activists for human rights and social justice.

Oakwood School pledges our pursuit of excellence by intentionally fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.



With purpose, Oakwood celebrates and affirms diversity,

of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, faith, family structure, socioeconomic background, age, and ability.

We also recognize the continued need for growth as an institution,

so that Oakwood—its board, faculty, staff, administration, student body, and families—may better represent the diversity of Los Angeles while better supporting equitable and inclusive practices and policies for all.

This ongoing commitment includes denouncing all forms of White supremacy,

systemic racism, patriarchal oppression, and class discrimination while empowering our community to do the same.

We uphold the importance of intersectionality in our approach,

and we hold space for prioritizing pressing and timely issues so we can engage with an ever-changing world.

Within this questioning and consideration of school and society,

we acknowledge temporary discomfort as a possible reaction, and endorse the examination of our interpersonal and internalized biases as its most effective cure.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to creating an educational experience,

within a school community and learning environment that balances the intellectual, emotional, and social growth of children, allowing us all to learn how to honor the dignity and experience of every human being.



HISTORY

In the beginning, a small group of parents decided to create a school where their children could flourish as thinkers, as artists, as athletes, and most of all, as human beings.

By the fall of 1951, the school they had named Oakwood opened in Jessica and Robert Ryan's backyard. Three years later, those pioneering parents, including the Ryans, Sidney Harmon and Elizabeth Schappert, Wendy and Ross Cabeen, and Charles and Emilie Haas bought and built the elementary school campus on Moorpark Street.

Since then Oakwood has grown to become a K-12 coeducational independent day school on two campuses, where young people prosper in thought and imagination, as individuals and as members of a school community.



THE FIRST BACKYARD

Oakwood began in the hearts and minds of a small group of parents who had three things in common: 1) one or more of their children attended the same nursery school; 2) they were equally disturbed by post-war overcrowding in the public schools; and 3) they disagreed about almost everything else!

At the suggestion of her pediatrician that she “do something — start your own school!” — Jessica (and Robert) Ryan hosted several meetings at their North Hollywood home,

in the spring of 1950. At those meetings with Emilie and Charles Haas, Elizabeth and Sidney Harmon, and Wendy and Ross Cabeen, it was decided to open their school the following fall in the Ryan's backyard. Shortly thereafter, they moved to an abandoned religious building on Chandler Boulevard, under the direction of a gifted Quaker educator, Bryson Gerard. Mr. Gerard's educational philosophy appealed to these founding parents, who had rich and happy memories of their own progressive educations.



TWO CAMPUSES, ONE COMMUNITY



ELEMENTARY CAMPUS (K-6)

Beginning in kindergarten, students experience a rigorous educational program that ignites their intellectual curiosity. Our curriculum and instruction promote relevance through real-world applications and inquiry-based learning; depth through critical thinking and problem-solving; responsibility through studies of human rights and social justice; creative expression through the arts and music; and community through athletics, performances, and a myriad of classroom activities. Through partnerships formed by teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians, students develop as learners in the present to become well-informed, productive citizens of the future.

At Oakwood, 5th and 6th grades are a bridge to Middle School, providing students with the academic, social, and emotional support to succeed on their educational journey.

SECONDARY CAMPUS (7-12)

Oakwood functions as one K-12 institution on two campuses one mile apart. Since our middle and high school divisions are located separately from the elementary school, all students entering grades 7-12 are essentially "new." In 7th grade, approximately half of the students are new to Oakwood and come from 30+ schools in the greater Los Angeles area and beyond. In 9th grade, the number of students increases by approximately 20%.



KEY STATS

FOUNDED
IN

1951

Two campuses (elementary and secondary) on 6.5 acres in North Hollywood located approximately 5 minutes apart by car

STUDENTS

830

K-12 students enrolled in 2023-2024

22
AVERAGE
K-5 CLASS SIZE

45%
STUDENTS
OF COLOR

100%
SENIORS
ACCEPTED
TO COLLEGE

EMPLOYEES

200

total employees

47 WITH MASTER'S DEGREES

9 WITH DOCTORAL DEGREES

41% FACULTY/STAFF OF COLOR

14 PART-TIME ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE FROM CALARTS

AVERAGE 12 YEARS OF FACULTY TENURE

2023-24 FINANCIALS (AS OF 6/30/24)

FINANCIAL AID

\$6.2M+ awarded annually to 20% of students

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

\$9,491,815

CAPITAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

\$6,867,591

UNRESTRICTED ANNUAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

\$2,168,388

ENDOWED FUNDS CONTRIBUTIONS

\$386,861

DESIGNATED ANNUAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

\$68,935

REVENUES

\$48,494,142

TUITION & FEES	89.5%
ANNUAL FUND	4.6%
FUNDING FROM ENDOWMENT	3.1%
INVESTMENT INCOME	2.7%
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0.1%

EXPENDITURES

\$48,344,848

SALARIES & BENEFITS	56.3%
INSTRUCTIONAL & TECHNOLOGY	13.1%
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	12.8%
FACILITIES & CAMPUS OPERATIONS	7.9%
ADMINISTRATION & ADVANCEMENT	4.9%
OTHER (DEPRECIATION, CONTINGENCY)	5.1%

ASSETS (AS OF 9/30/24)

\$154.7M

TOTAL ASSETS

ENDOWMENT

\$48.3M

PLANT FUND

\$15.8M

WWW.OAKWOODSCHOOL.ORG



A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE



**JAIME A.
DOMINGUEZ**
Head of School

“At Oakwood, the ways we learn and the ways we live our values are one and the same. We revel in complex thinking. We root everything we do in relationships and community. We take action on the issues that matter. These commitments are the foundation of our teaching and learning. They also guide our pursuit of societal values such as equity, sustainability, and civic responsibility. The priorities and projects outlined below further these commitments by empowering students to explore their passions, find their voice and make a difference. Our vision for Oakwood has emerged from conversations with our community as a whole and the future we are pursuing can only be realized by all of us, together. I am grateful to be partnering with you and every member of the Oakwood community to move our school forward.”

THESE PRIORITIES ARE GENERATING HIGH-IMPACT PROJECTS.

ADVANCE OUR CURRICULUM

At Oakwood, we revel in cross-disciplinary, complex thinking. These projects will enhance and extend our curriculum, making it more interdisciplinary, equitable, and aligned throughout the K-12 experience.

ENSURE BELONGING

At Oakwood, we root everything we do in community and relationships. These projects will ensure that all members of our school community experience belonging and have the support and resources to contribute their whole selves.

EMPOWER STUDENTS TO TAKE ACTION

At Oakwood, we take action on the issues that matter. These projects will provide students with the skills and opportunities to put their learning into action as problem-solvers, creators and innovators.



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

UPCOMING CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

Oakwood is in the silent phase of three significant capital campaigns that will dramatically change the footprint and impact of Oakwood School's programs. These projects are expected to begin as early as June 2025, and will be completed within the next three to five years.



DAVINCI LAB & CLASSROOM COMPLEX

Located at the heart of the elementary campus, this space will reflect our core beliefs by instilling in students habits of mind essential for deep learning.

The DaVinci Lab & Classroom Complex will include an innovative space for lower school students to create and pursue their passions, in addition to new 4th grade classrooms, an outdoor garden, salt-water aquarium, and innovators Hall of Fame.



PLAY, LEARN, GROW

The Play, Learn, Grow program will benefit every middle and high school athlete for decades to come by providing dedicated spaces for fun, free play, physical education, and organized athletics. It will enhance training opportunities and safety for students while reducing travel time and increasing time for play.

Key elements include the addition of a new practice field, renovations to a competition-ready venue, and an expanded partnership with the L.A. Recreation & Parks Department for additional sports facilities.



3C CENTER

The 3C Center will provide Oakwood students with exceptional facilities for academic and artistic exploration and a vibrant home for community life.

As the linchpin in the school's plans for the secondary campus, the 3C Center will be a state-of-the-art teaching and learning facility that will free up other spaces across campus, including current theater and visual art studios. The 3C Center will also allow the future development of new classrooms, labs, STEAM facilities, and more.



AREAS OF FOCUS



LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING

As a key partner to the COO and other senior leaders, the director of finance should bring a strategic financial vision to guide Oakwood through both immediate and long-term financial planning. This includes overseeing the school's annual budgeting process, long-range forecasting, and ongoing investment strategy, which includes the school's endowment and real estate assets. Additionally, with three upcoming major capital campaigns and construction projects, the director of finance will be a key partner to the COO and director of advancement in managing project budgets, setting and adjusting fundraising goals, and building long-term capital improvement budgets for these and other major projects.

IMPROVING EFFICIENCIES

In addition to establishing Oakwood's financial strategy, the director of finance plays a hands-on role in day-to-day financial operations. This includes coordinating with the advancement team to reconcile departmental budgets, managing financial software, and ensuring that team workflows are efficient and effective. The director of finance should continue to identify areas for operational and technical improvement both within the department, and cross-departmentally.

DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP

As a senior leader at Oakwood, the director of finance will not only supervise the finance team but also serve as an integral part of the school community. The director of finance should look forward to building strong relationships with faculty and staff across departments, and to being an engaged thought partner to the COO and other school leaders. Within the finance team, the director will have the opportunity to mentor and support the professional development of a committed team of finance professionals, and consider long-term staffing structures that will prepare the department for future growth and opportunities in alignment with the school's strategic direction.



BACKGROUND & NARRATIVE



Oakwood School is a K-12 coeducational day school in North Hollywood, California that opened its doors in 1951. Now with over 830 students in grades K-12, the school has remained faithful to its original mission ever since: to create a diverse educational environment where young people are partners with the adults; where preparing students for the future occurs by immersing them in the present; where joy and humor prevail alongside academic rigor; and where authentic relationships engage students with their teachers, one another, and the world around them.

Oakwood is in an outstanding financial position, with an operating budget of approximately \$50 million and an endowment of approximately \$48.3 million. Across the street from its upper school campus the school also owns a number of single-family homes, which are currently managed as investment properties. Admissions and retention numbers are robust, and the school enjoys an excellent reputation as a leading K-12 independent school in Southern California. The current head of school is in his seventh year, following a long-tenured head who served for over thirty years.

The next director of finance will be joining Oakwood at an exciting and forward-looking time in the school's history.

Oakwood is currently in the silent phase of three significant capital campaigns that will shape the school for years to come. Construction projects will happen over the next decade or so, with an initial, relatively small \$1.9M athletics project starting as early as this coming June. The director of finance will play an essential role in those campaigns and construction projects, from cost analysis to budget management to debt financing and everything in between. The finance team works closely with the advancement team to manage donation revenues that come in many forms; maintaining this interdepartmental collaboration will be essential to ensure the success of these large campaigns.

At the helm of the business operations division is the chief operations officer (COO), who oversees a number of non-academic functional units, including: auxiliary services, dining, facilities, finance, human resources, and safety and security. Because the COO manages a wide portfolio of operational projects, and because of the size and financial complexity of Oakwood, the director of finance is without question the COO's most frequent and essential partner. The finance team works in the same office space as the COO, which allows for daily collaboration and coordination.





Reporting to the director of finance are three dedicated, full-time professionals: an assistant controller, an AP coordinator, and a manager of accounting and financial assistance. All of them have been at Oakwood for many years, which has created a warm, positive, and stable team culture. Each member of the finance unit brings a depth of expertise, an understanding of institutional history, and a commitment to Oakwood's mission. With the exception of the assistant controller, who used to be on site but is now fully remote, the remainder of the team works on site. Maintaining this culture of connectedness among the team, with the other operational units, and with the greater community is essential. To that end, it will be important for the next director of finance to establish relationships with stakeholders across both campuses. Thus, for all these reasons this is a fully on-site position.

In addition to managing Oakwood's annual budget, the incoming director of finance will have the opportunity to lean into more strategic and external-facing lanes, including capital campaign finance, investment strategy, and banking partnerships. An ideal candidate would be able to balance the hands-on, detailed approach to managing day-to-day finances, with the detailed mindset of a CPA-credentialed controller, while still paying attention to long-range planning and financial strategy, with the visionary mindset of a C-level administrator. While the COO is the primary liaison to the board of trustees, the director of finance will have frequent interaction with board committees and trustees in support of annual budget planning, audit work, long-range forecasting, and other special projects requiring financial analysis.

Earlier this year, the current director of finance, who started at Oakwood as the accounting manager and was later promoted to lead the finance unit, announced her retirement at the end of the '24-'25 school year. Her departure will mark ten successful years of financial service to Oakwood. Because of her extensive insights, knowledge, and understanding of all things financial at Oakwood, the school is seeking to onboard the next director of finance at least a month or two prior to the outgoing director's retirement, which is scheduled for June 30, 2025--to allow for a graceful transition and handoff. If you are a mission-driven, non-profit financial leader with outstanding financial acumen, leadership skills, and community dedication, Oakwood invites you to apply for this position by the priority deadline of December 15!

INTERVIEW WITH THE COO



**CHRIS
THOMAS**

Chief Operating Officer

Chris has served as the school's chief operating officer, overseeing finance and operations, since 2015. As an executive, he partners with the head of school and board of trustees. With a background in business operations, Chris is passionate about enhancing business, finance, corporate compliance, and process improvement. The director of finance will be a key strategic partner to Chris in establishing the financial strategy for Oakwood's future.

We invite you to [watch our interview](#) with Chris, who discusses the need for a strategic director of finance to lead an engaged and welcoming finance team.



BUSINESS OPERATIONS DIVISION

The COO oversees many of the school’s non-academic functional areas, each led by its own director. Within the COO’s cabinet, the director of finance is the COO’s closest partner, helping to steer complex programs, workflows, and initiatives including the school’s annual budget process, investment strategy, and long-term financial planning. Reporting directly to the director of finance is a talented, committed team of three: the assistant controller, who collaborates daily with the director to manage day-to-day financial controls and workflows; the manager of accounting and financial assistance, who handles accounts receivables and administers Oakwood’s financial aid program; and the AP coordinator, who maintains accounts payable reports, records, and files. Because the COO focuses primarily on operational domains and construction projects, the director of finance is the primary liaison to other departments and divisions on most financial and budgeting matters. However, the COO and director of finance work in close partnership to ensure that budgets and financial goals support the school’s overall operating strategy.



DUTIES



FINANCE AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

- Manage all accounting operations of the organization in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and internal policies and procedures.
- Lead the annual budgeting process, collaborating with departmental leadership and preparing monthly financial reports and forecasts to guide informed decision-making.
- Oversee the investments of the school's funds in compliance with the Investment Committee's policies and guidelines.
- Provide financial analysis and financial modeling to assist the head of school and COO with strategic financial planning for the school's existing priorities and new initiatives.

COMPLIANCE, ANALYSIS, & REPORTING

- Implement policies and procedures to ensure all accounting transactions and record-keeping functions comply with applicable state and federal regulations and accounting principles.
- Lead the annual financial audit and oversee the preparation of the school's tax returns.
- Maintain the general ledger, and complete all monthly and quarterly reconciliations.
- Prepare regular financial reports in support of the board Finance Committee and Investment Committee.
- Maintain schedule of fixed assets including capital improvements and annual depreciation.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION & LEADERSHIP

- Work closely with the COO to establish the business office goals and to develop, implement, monitor and assess strategies to meet or exceed the strategic objectives.
- Improve processes and implement strategies to make financial operations more efficient, including evaluating and recommending systematic improvements for the school.
- Supervise a team of three financial professionals including an accounting and financial aid manager, assistant controller, and accounts payable specialist.
- Work onsite daily from Oakwood's campus, report directly to the COO, and perform other duties as assigned.



QUALITIES & QUALIFICATIONS



QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required; CPA preferred
- 8+ years of experience in a related position, preferably working in nonprofits or independent schools, or experience auditing these industries preferred
- Expertise in using technology and software relevant to the role, including Microsoft Windows (Word, Excel, PowerPoint; experience with Blackbaud Financial Edge and NXT preferred)
- Demonstrated expertise in developing and using financial models for forecasting, budgeting, strategic planning and analysis

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

- Excellent verbal, written and presentation communication skills
- A customer-service mindset and eagerness to build partnerships with members of Oakwood School's community
- The ability to manage multiple tasks and projects under pressure of deadlines while adhering to internal control procedures and guidelines
- An organized, accurate, and timely approach to prioritizing and completing projects
- The ability to maintain strict confidentiality with highly sensitive information
- A genuine belief in the mission and values Oakwood School, including a personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Exemplary ethical standards



HOW TO APPLY

12M & Ed Tech Recruiting is acting on behalf of Oakwood School to identify exceptional finance leaders to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Please direct any inquiries to:

JOBS@12MRECRUITING.COM



**APPLICATIONS
SUBMITTED BY
DECEMBER 15, 2024
WILL RECEIVE
PRIORITY REVIEW.**

All applications must be submitted online:

WWW.12MRECRUITING.COM/JOBS/OAKWOOD/FINANCE

An application requires submitting four PDFs:

1. Cover letter introducing yourself to the Oakwood School search committee
2. CV or resume
3. A list of four references (include each person's name, current organization, title, phone number, email, and past connection to you — though we will not contact any references without obtaining your permission first)
4. A response to the following prompt:

Given the financial and organizational statistics on page 7, please describe a few essential principles that would inform and guide your approach to finance management at Oakwood.

Oakwood School is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to cultural diversity in our workplace. Oakwood School does not discriminate against employees, interns, or applicants because of race, color, religion, sex, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, including results of genetic testing, pregnancy, marital status, national origin, citizenship, service in the military or veteran status, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability (an impairment that limits a major life activity), medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristic), including the perception that a person has any of those characteristics or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics, or any other characteristic made unlawful by applicable laws.