



COLORADO ACADEMY

Denver, Colorado

CHIEF FINANCIAL AND OPERATING OFFICER

Start Date: July 2022

coloradoacademy.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES



MISSION

Creating curious, kind, courageous, and adventurous learners and leaders.

VALUES

- 1. We foster courage: exploring new challenges in academics, athletics, the arts, and experiential learning.*
- 2. We nurture curiosity: the foundation of lifelong, creative discovery.*
- 3. We choose kindness: engaging graciously in an inclusive, joyful community.*
- 4. We encourage understanding: listening to others and acting ethically, with integrity and respect.*
- 5. We embrace inclusivity: working through education to create empathy and compassion.*
- 6. We promote habits of health, both physically and mentally, strengthening resilience and confidence.*
- 7. We believe in a dynamic response to the needs of an ever-changing world.*
- 8. We inspire thoughtful individuals who are ready to transform the future.*

OVERVIEW

At the foot of the Rockies, Colorado Academy (CA) is a coeducational, independent day school in southwest Denver serving approximately 1,000 students from across the Denver metropolitan area. It is the only independent school in the Denver metro area with a Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 configuration, a key element of the school's identity and ethos.

Bringing students and families from as many as 66 zip codes across the city together to a single campus, the school teems with excitement, activity, and a love for learning. Rich in both tradition and the spirit of innovation, CA offers a college preparatory curriculum with an emphasis on skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, cultural competence, and character development, along with artistic and athletic training that rivals specialty schools.

Colorado Academy is seeking a seasoned professional to become Chief Financial & Operating Officer (CFOO), assuming the role in July 2022. Working closely with the Head of School, the CFOO serves as a strategic thought partner and as a member of the Executive Leadership Team. CA is searching for a goal-oriented senior leader who will embrace the culture and values of the institution and will respect the operational pace of an innovative institution with high standards and expectations.

FAST FACTS

- Founded: 1906
- Total students: 1,019
- Students of color: 29%
- Total faculty: 119
- Faculty with advanced degrees: 71%
- Student/teacher ratio: 9-1
- Zip codes represented: 66+
- Financial aid budget: \$4.3M
- Students receiving aid: 19%
- Endowment: \$33M



THE SCHOOL

Founded in 1906, Colorado Academy is known for its focus on the development of the “whole person,” balancing an innovative and rigorous curriculum with a supportive and encouraging school environment. Students are highly motivated and emerge from CA prepared for success in college and beyond. The school community is one that values and honors difference and seeks to be a place where students of all ages and families of all backgrounds are understood, represented, and highly regarded. Students of color make up nearly 29% of the student body. Students, parents, and employees alike appreciate and value CA’s strong community, culture of kindness and empathy, and camaraderie.

Through recent strategic plans, the school has successfully implemented many key initiatives, including an emphasis on social and emotional learning and student health, education that provides strong college and work readiness, and the teaching of the “Six Cs of 21st Century Skills,” which include Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, Cultural Competence, and Character Development. Throughout the school, there is a commitment to innovative teaching and learning. This has been supported through a generous professional development program. CA is also committed to teaching leadership, service, confidence, and tenacity. The school is known as the birthplace of Outward Bound in the U.S., evidence of which is found in CA’s signature Outdoor Program, its Travel and Exchange program, and annual Interim adventures which provide experiences for students of all ages.



Individuality is celebrated at Colorado Academy in an inclusive community that cultivates student voice and fosters learning. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) work reinforces the philosophy, mission, heart, and practice of Colorado Academy. CA values the complexity of society—including the richness of each individual’s ideas, identities, backgrounds, orientations, expressions, abilities, and aspirations and believes that an inclusive learning community is integral to achieving academic success and individual growth, CA is committed to preparing and inspiring students to be active, informed, and responsible citizens at local, national, and global levels. Colorado Academy offers events and programming throughout the year to engage students and the extended community in workshops, lectures, and celebrations around diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

Colorado Academy is accredited by the Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS). CA is a member in good standing of the National Association for Independent Schools (NAIS) and is a member and co-founding organization of the Association of College Counseling in Independent Schools (ACCIS).

ACADEMICS

With outstanding teachers and forward-thinking administrators, an enthusiastic student body, committed and involved parents, and top-notch facilities, CA has a clear mission and exciting goals for the future. By incorporating teaching tools such as design thinking, mindfulness training, performance tasks, independent research and making/building, CA supports students’ development of skills that will serve them well in the rapidly changing world. Small class sizes ensure that teachers know each student individually. The curriculum at Colorado Academy is a dynamic liberal arts education balanced across core academic subjects, visual and performing arts, and physical education. CA is deeply committed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Design, and Math), teaching 21st century skills at developmentally appropriate ages. The curriculum is woven across disciplines, allowing students opportunities to think critically and connect skills to the world around them.



Lower School (Pre-kindergarten – Grade 5)

Utilizing a Responsive Classroom approach, the Lower School provides students a challenging, safe, and engaging learning environment, with an emphasis on making learning “fun.” From a young age, the concept of lifelong learning is instilled as students begin to develop academic, social, and emotional skills working both independently and in groups. Lower School students are introduced to STEAM and gradually progress their engineering experience beginning with Legos® to iLab and concluding with Ozobots. All students have experience with 3D design, modeling, and printing by the end of Grade 5. The CA Lower School focuses on “The Formative Five” skills—empathy, self-control, integrity, embracing diversity, and grit, supporting the development of young students as caring human beings, as well as scholars.

Middle School (Grades 6 - 8)

Colorado Academy Middle School is a nurturing environment that encourages risk taking and discovery. At this age, students experience immense change physically, mentally, and emotionally, and the faculty and staff at CA create an environment that supports each child in navigating these changes as well as their desire to explore and set goals. Middle School students experience increasingly challenging courses along with opportunities for self-discovery, helping students shape personal values and develop respect and responsibility for themselves, preparing them for high school and beyond. STEAM curriculum continues to progress throughout the Middle School, and by Grade 8, students design and launch bottle rockets to study aerodynamics and rocketry. The Middle School Design and Innovation Studio includes 3D printers, a laser cutter, a Computer Numeric Control (CNC) tool for cutting, carving, machining and milling, hand tools, glue guns, littleBits, and recycled materials for students to use in any project. Students in Middle School are invited and eligible to compete on CA’s FIRST Lego® League robotics team. At CA, all Middle School students are part of an Advisory group, which meets twice daily and helps develop important social and emotional skills. Additionally, students participate in a variety of clubs, service-learning projects, and academic and social leadership opportunities.



Upper School (Grades 9 - 12)

Upper School students build critical thinking skills and empathy, as they mature to see themselves as well-prepared individuals with defined values and purpose, ready to step into the world as global leaders. A passionate and talented Upper School faculty brings a wealth of experience to the classroom. Students are taught by educators who are experts in their respective fields. Upper School faculty have an average of 17 years of experience in the classroom and 80% hold advanced degrees. Classes are intentionally small, with an average class size of 15 allowing for students to have personalized, individual interactions with faculty.

Colorado Academy has pioneered a pullout REDI (Research, Entrepreneurship, Design, Inquiry) Lab to support independent and innovative research projects. The school also offers an academic intensive program that allows freshmen to study a single topic in depth. Students have numerous experiential education and global travel opportunities, as well as robust service-learning programs, access to nearly 50 student clubs, and athletic teams in 19 competitive sports. CA students take pride in offering peer leadership, both informally and with formal training through the Community Leadership Team. Every senior identifies an individual service passion and implements a project which meets a community need outside the school. More than 90% of CA students exceed the two-year visual and performing arts requirements. Students affirm that there “is no one way to be” at CA, and they relish the range of academic and co-curricular offerings that allow them to pursue their interests.



COLLEGE MATRICULATION

Matriculations for Colorado Academy include the following colleges and universities, among many others;

Arizona State University
Auburn College
Boston College
Brown University
Clemson University
Colorado College
Columbia University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Denison University
Duke University
Elon University
Franklin & Marshall College
Georgetown University
Gonzaga University
Harvard University
Ithaca College
Lehigh University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Middlebury College
New York University
Northeastern University
Purdue University
Santa Clara University
Skidmore College
Southern Methodist University
Stanford University
Tulane University
University of California, Berkeley
University of Pennsylvania
University of Southern California
University of Virginia
Wake Forest University
Wesleyan University
Yale University

Through structured programs and individual integrity, CA seniors serve as positive role models and mentors to younger students. Upper Schoolers form relationships with teachers that foster intellectual and moral development. As a result, seniors graduate as well-rounded and well-prepared individuals with defined values and purpose.

Each year, at the end of Grade 11, Colorado Academy students take The College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA). Developed by the Council for Aid to Education, the CWRA is designed to help schools measure students' ability to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems, and communicate effectively in writing. Colorado Academy is one of only four high schools in the state to offer this assessment.

One hundred percent of Colorado Academy seniors are admitted to a four-year college or university across the U.S. and some of the best institutions abroad.



ARTS AND ATHLETICS

At CA, the arts and athletics programs are on equal footing with the academic program in terms of institutional priorities. The visual arts department exposes students to disciplines including drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, graphic design, and more. Performing arts enables creative outlets in dance, theater, and music. Students at CA enjoy a state-of-the-art recording studio to produce their own recordings. Theater and dance productions, art shows, and music recitals all provide creative outlets that encourage students to cultivate their own sense of artistic expression.

A wide range of athletic options helps students build stamina, skill, and confidence while learning teamwork and sportsmanship. CA's Upper School athletic teams and athletes have been recognized for their success at the national, state, and league level. Many of CA students go on to successful careers playing Division I, II, and III sports in college.



EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Experiential education offers students greater insight into themselves and others, as they venture into the outdoors, engage in service projects, or travel around the country and the world. Each spring, students in the Middle and Upper Schools participate in weeklong [Interim](#) trips designed to immerse students and faculty in experiences and pursuits that broaden their skills, test their abilities, and sharpen the awareness of the world in which they live. Whether they engage in artistic pursuits, service-learning trips, or wilderness expeditions, CA alumni often describe the Interim program as their favorite CA tradition.

CAMPUS

Colorado Academy's inviting 94-acre state of the art campus is stunning and features academic buildings arranged in a quadrangle, much like a small college campus. Each division has a dedicated school building and students share two on-campus libraries, a new visual arts center, a dedicated music center, a campus center, and a dining hall. A new athletic center completed in 2019 includes a field house, two gyms, a training center, and an indoor climbing facility.

Outdoor spaces include eight tennis courts, a turf baseball diamond, a turf lacrosse and field hockey field, and additional grass playing fields. This year, CA debuted a new center for the performing arts featuring a state-of-the-art theatrical rigging system, upgraded digital sound, lighting, and video equipment, and improved accessibility.



DENVER, COLORADO

Denver is one of the country's most scenic and thriving metropolitan areas. Situated at the base of the Rocky Mountains, Denver enjoys 300 days of sunshine annually, making it a haven for outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds. The largest and capital city in the state of Colorado, Denver is nicknamed the "Mile-High City," due to its elevation of exactly one mile above sea level.

With the nation's largest park system, 90 golf courses, 650 miles of paved bike trails, and a two-hour drive to several of the country's premier ski resorts, the metropolitan area offers endless opportunities for residents and visitors alike to enjoy its moderate climate and universal appeal. There are countless opportunities for seasonal outdoor recreation, from winter sports at numerous nearby resorts to hiking in the summer months.

Residents and visitors enjoy the city's culture, from its nationally-recognized museums (including the Daniel Libeskind-designed Denver Art Museum, the Clyfford Still Denver Museum, the award-winning Museum of Nature and Science, and the Red Rocks Amphitheatre) to its active, local music scene and its four major sports teams: the Broncos, Rockies, Avalanche, and Nuggets.

Denver's metro economy is the 18th largest in the United States. A transformational revitalization in the 1990s has made Denver home to tech companies, startups, innovative chefs, cultural and music festivals, and craft beer.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Colorado Academy is a stable, thriving institution with strong leadership and a clear vision for its future. The school is led by Mike Davis, a well-respected “big thinker,” who fosters an environment of innovation around the School’s structure, reach, and educational offerings. The last decade has seen meaningful growth and renewal in the School’s resources, enrollment, and physical footprint. At present, there is only one building on campus that has not been renovated or replaced during a continuous cycle of capital campaigns and construction. A high priority will be building a new Lower School, the last of the legacy buildings. This renewal and replacement work has contributed to what many describe as an exceptionally beautiful campus and learning environment.

Educationally, CA enjoys several signature programs, including the REDI Lab, a one-trimester “school-within-a-school,” that uses self-directed learning to offer students the opportunity to grow as problem solvers and be better prepared for college, careers, and life. Topics under consideration academically center around meeting students where they are academically and adding supports like a potential learning center or remedial learning program, and shifting out of an Advanced Placement structure.

A top priority for the School going forward will be significantly growing its endowment, in part to provide more opportunities for students of diverse backgrounds to attend the School. The next Chief Finance & Operations Officer will need to evaluate current structures, technologies, workloads, and resources in the business office to maximize automation and efficiency while making sure it is all manageable for him/her and the staff. Additionally, the Board and the administration will continue to discuss the School’s debt policy and ability to create auxiliary revenue streams. The next CFOO must also provide strong thought partnership to the Head of School, with a firm grasp of the overall vision, flexibility, and creativity about the methods that can leveraged to achieve them. At the Board level, the CFOO must not only provide good data, clean audits, and accurate projections—he/she must also apply a layer of strategic thinking to what the numbers mean and how they connect to the larger plans being discussed.



Colorado Academy is well-positioned because of its visionary leader, supportive Board, and great educational product. The next CFOO will be joining this high-performing organization at an opportune time while big ideas are being discussed and implemented.

In addition to embracing Colorado Academy's mission, supporting its Head and leadership, and representing the school at professional and public forums, the new CFOO has a number of primary responsibilities:

- Provide school-wide strategic leadership, analysis, and management of finances and operations.
- Serve on the Head of School's Administrative Team and lead, co-lead, or participate in several other teams and committees.
- Oversee all financial reporting, including the development and approval of the annual operating budget, periodic reports of operating results compared to the budget, and bank covenant compliance. Audiences for financial information include the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee, the Head of School, other administrators and internal departments, lenders, and other authorities.
- Establish financial and capital strategies that enhance the long-term value and are consistent with the strategic priorities.
- Build and/or maintain the School's short- and long-term strategic financial models.
- Oversee the administration of the School's endowment; execute endowment and investment policy; implement investment decisions of the Investment Committee; and coordinate with the endowment consultants, investment managers, and custodians, ensuring effective endowment allocations, performance, and reporting.
- Oversee School operations including personnel, maintenance, and vendors.
- Oversee and manage all Business Office operations including budgeting and accounting, financial modeling and analysis, payroll, human resources, risk management, and benefits.



- Evaluate the Business Office's strengths and weaknesses and develop goals/plans and systems that will improve department performance and customer service.
- Oversee the annual financial and 403b plan audits and filings of tax returns.
- Serve as chief staff liaison to Board committees, including but not limited to, the Finance, Audit, Building & Grounds, and Investment committees; working closely with Committee chairs and organizing agendas and meeting materials and presenting at meetings.
- Negotiate with lenders when necessary to ensure that funding is secured for needs of the school and ensure compliance with loan terms.
- Ensure that the School is in compliance with all local and state reporting requirements.
- Collaborate effectively with and provide support for Advancement, Admissions, and other departments.
- Coordinate with the Director of Operations on oversight of the physical plant, grounds, and construction functions; help plan and direct all replacements and renewals of the physical plant.
- Publicly represent the School in a positive and proactive way, collaborating with other School administrators, neighbors, and public officials.
- Maintain appropriate professional memberships and represent the school at related meetings and conferences.
- Provide sound and consistent employment policies, adequate staffing levels, compensation, and appropriate benefits programs for all facets of school operations.
- Help implement and administer, along with the HR Director, all employee benefit programs including health insurance, retirement, worker's compensation, life insurance, and other related plans.
- Collaborate with the Head of School and other senior administrators on providing leadership regarding employee hiring, termination, compensation, and management.
- Manage and make decisions regarding insurance programs: property, casualty, medical, workers' compensation.
- Work collegially within a diverse community and communicate effectively with diverse populations.
- Demonstrate an interest in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work and participate in professional development as related to DEIB work.



DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required, MBA or CPA preferred.
- 10-15 years of senior-level experience creating and executing financial planning and management strategies.
- Superb communication skills; excellent written, verbal, and presentation skills
- Demonstrated ability to take complex subjects, distill them, and then communicate them to varied audiences.
- Experience in an independent school preferred though individuals with strong financial and leadership skills are welcome.
- Experience on senior administrative teams and working with non-profit Boards.
- Demonstrated experience in measuring and improving organization-wide productivity.
- Demonstrated experience in the development of analysis for strategic decision-making, such as key cost drivers, competitive analysis, market analysis, organizational strengths and weaknesses, etc.
- Experience in human resource management, employee benefits (including pension plans), and payroll procedures. Knowledge of business and not-for-profit accounting policies, procedures, practices, and software programs.
- Ability to think and plan strategically and creatively.
- Ability to supervise, manage, and delegate multiple functions and activities.



TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this position;
- A current and comprehensive résumé;
- A list of five professional references, including name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will be contacted only with the candidate's permission) to:

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