

CHIEF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS OFFICER SEARCH

ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL

Houston, Texas

sjs.org

Start Date: July 2024



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

St. John’s is an independent, co-educational day school presenting a 13-year sequence of college preparatory training. A non-profit institution, it was founded in 1946 to provide the community with a school of exacting standards in the development of individual, spiritual, ethical, intellectual, social, and physical growth. While the means to achieve that purpose may change, it remains the basic mission of the School.

The School seeks to develop the whole person in preparation for a lifetime of personal fulfillment and contribution to society. In particular, it is dedicated to the enhancement and the expansion of future leadership for Houston and the country. The School offers talented, motivated, and energetic students a genuine challenge for academic accomplishment and for development of a sense of self-worth and of personal responsibility. The School in turn holds itself responsible for providing that challenge.

At a Glance



Established
1946



Enrollment
1,423



Total Faculty
195



Campus size
42 acres



Students of color
48%



Financial aid awarded
\$4.35M



Faculty with advanced degrees
70%

Faculty of color: 26%
Students receiving aid: 14%
Endowment: \$90.6M
Annual operating budget: \$55.4M

Participation in Athletics: 78%
Participation in Fine Arts: 84%
Clubs and organizations: 118
School mascot: The Maverick



Overview

St. John's School (SJS) is an independent, co-educational K-12 day school in Houston, Texas, that provides students with a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum and a wealth of enrichment opportunities carefully designed to prepare students for lives of leadership, service, and personal fulfillment. St. John's graduates are renowned for their academic, athletic, and artistic accomplishments; the community is proudest of their hard work and acts of kindness.

SJS was founded in 1946 by Alan Lake Chidsey and a group of committed Houston families. Their vision was to create a school of academic excellence focused on cultivating leadership skills, teaching moral and spiritual values, and making a high-caliber education available to all, regardless of economic circumstance. St. John's has thoughtfully developed its campus and, in 2012, acquired 15 acres to augment its existing property, taking on meaningful but manageable debt. The goals of the School's 2022 Strategic Plan include continued investment in its physical plant and significant capital projects in the coming years, with aspirations to finance via its largest-ever capital campaign.

The School seeks an experienced professional to serve as the next Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CF&OO), overseeing all aspects of its financial profile. Reporting directly to Head of School Dan Alig, the CF&OO will also work closely with a talented, dedicated Board of Trustees and supervise an experienced and efficient Business Office. Compelling candidates will possess demonstrated financial acumen; the capacity to lead, mentor, and support teams; and high emotional intelligence. Given the impending capital campaign and campus projects, ideal candidates will have considerable experience in construction planning and financing. This is a tremendous opportunity to lead finance and operations at a highly respected school with both a solid financial foundation and exciting, challenging projects and initiatives ahead.



Opportunities and Challenges

St. John's next Chief Finance and Operations Officer will be joining the school community at an exciting time. The current CFO is a talented, dedicated, and well-respected individual who has enhanced systems and provided impressive financial leadership during a period of terrific growth and progress for the School. The CF&OO will be welcomed by a strong senior leadership team, a Board comprised of sophisticated financial talent, and an experienced, effective Business Office.

Of note, after the acquisition of a contingent 15-acre property several years ago, the School has thoughtfully and beautifully expanded its campus. The School has ambitious goals to update its Lower School and, eventually, its Middle School. The CF&OO will work closely with colleagues and Trustees to steward these projects to fruition via thoughtful financial planning, successful capital fundraising, and sound designing to minimize disruption through the construction phase. The priorities, opportunities, and challenges ahead include:

- Serving as a thought partner to Head of School to ensure alignment of the School's finances with its goals, mission, and values;
- Overseeing the School's robust financial aid program and working closely with the Director of Admission and Board of Trustees to ensure the funding of St. John's continued, demonstrated commitment to educational access and socioeconomic diversity;
- Effectively partnering with the Director of Advancement to ensure best practices and the success of the school's impending capital campaign;
- Collaborating with the Board of Trustees to ensure the short- and long-term financial health of St. John's School via management of the Finance, Investment, Audit, and Facilities Committees;
- Managing paydown of the School's debt that was financed during the last decade's land acquisition and capital projects;
- Supporting the continued growth, investment, and utilization of St. John's \$90m+ endowment;
- Investing in the talent of the Business Office;
- Ensuring that all of the School's financial functions use current technology and processes to provide first-rate customer service to all constituencies.



Responsibilities

In addition to embracing St. John's School's mission, supporting its Head and leadership, and representing the School at professional and public forums, the new CF&OO has a number of primary responsibilities:

- Model the School's Precepts and Principles: care and compassion, kindness and respect, honesty and integrity;
- Collaborate with the Senior Administrative Team to realize the School's strategic priorities, aligning the mission and the vision set forth by the Board of Trustees;
- Manage budgeting and long-range financial planning for a \$55 million operation;
- Manage the preparation of the annual operating and capital budgets for Board approval and any additional reports necessary to assist them with their review of the School's finances;
- Manage the preparation of monthly and annual financial reports and annual financial audit;
- Manage banking relationships and oversee the investment portfolio and cash position of the School;
- Supervise the following functions and related staff: Controller, Human Resources, Spirit Store, and Food Services; assist with supervision of Facilities and Security;
- Develop and manage a system of internal controls and provide oversight to ensure the operating effectiveness of financial systems;
- Manage risk, including liability insurance, claims, and related areas;
- Serve as school liaison for construction projects;
- Collaborate with the Head of School to assure appropriate resource allocation for ongoing and future campus operations and facility maintenance;
- Demonstrate ability to deal with frequent change, delays, or unexpected events;
- Solicit customer feedback to improve service and keep commitments;
- Develop innovative approaches and ideas that improve financial systems and school functions;
- Display ethical behavior, always maintaining the trust and respect of staff, Board members and parent body. Commitment to confidentiality is imperative;



- Form substantive and productive relationships with a wide variety of constituents;
- Exhibit sound and accurate judgment;
- Demonstrate excellent writing and verbal communication skills; ability to write routine reports and correspondence; ability to speak effectively to various constituents including parents, employees, and board members of the organization in a clear, persuasive, and positive manner;
- Create thoughtful and compelling presentations using appropriate software programs;
- Use reason even when dealing with emotional topics; ability to perform root-cause analysis to solve complex problems;
- Demonstrate ability to manage multiple projects across functions including follow-up and timely resolution of issues;
- Identify internal and external threats and opportunities; analyze market and competition; understand how the organization's parts make up the whole, and how to make and act on decisions that will move the entire organization toward established goals;
- Work independently and in teams; contribute to building a positive team spirit;

Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- Impeccable integrity and dependability;
- Bachelor's degree required, MBA or CPA preferred;
- 10-15 years of senior-level experience creating and executing financial planning and management strategies;
- Experience in an independent school preferred, though individuals with strong financial and leadership skills, particularly in the non-profit realm, are welcome;
- Experience managing a team and setting clear goals, responsibilities, expectations, and methods of accountability;
- Experience building a team and creating strong cohesion;



- Proven record of accomplishment designing, implementing, and managing large-scale organizational growth and enhancement;
- Superb communication skills; excellent written, verbal, and presentation skills;
- Demonstrated ability to understand complex subjects, distill them, and then communicate them to varied audiences;
- 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, and payroll procedures;
- Knowledge of business and not-for-profit accounting policies, procedures, practices, facilities, and software programs. Blackbaud experience a plus;
- Ability to think and plan strategically and creatively;
- Ability to supervise, manage, and delegate multiple functions and activities;
- Ability to remain calm, flexible, and work effectively under pressure;
- Skilled at negotiating and initiating contracts with external vendors;
- Aptitude for high customer-service standards;
- Consistent demonstration of an entrepreneurial mindset;
- Demonstrated commitment to equitable and inclusive practices;
- Warmth, approachability, and a sense of humor.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about St. John's School.

[School Website](#)

[School History](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[Community and Inclusion](#)

[Virtual Tour](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[About Houston, Texas](#)



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 their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

Greg Britton

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Sara Shulman

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