



SPENCE

CONTROLLER

Start Date: Immediate

The Spence School

New York, New York | spenceschool.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

With a commitment to **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE** and personal integrity, The Spence School prepares a diverse community of girls and young women for the **LIFELONG TRANSFORMATION OF SELF** and the world with **PURPOSE, PASSION, AND PERSPECTIVE.**

At a Glance



1892
established



804
total enrollment



52%
students of color



134
total faculty



80%
faculty with
advanced degrees



6:1
student-faculty ratio



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OVERVIEW

A premier New York City institution, The Spence School is a K–12 independent school for girls located on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. Spence enrolls a diverse community of students who benefit from a rich and challenging academic and co-curricular program rooted in inquiry, intellectual discovery, and purposeful engagement with the world. It is a place of joy, spirited adventure, and deep learning—where students find their voices and develop confidence that sets them up for lives of meaning and purpose. Inspired by outstanding faculty, many of whom spend decades at Spence, students are encouraged to embrace the School’s opportunities and take full advantage of the cultural resources of New York City.

Spence also benefits from exceptional facilities across three-plus locations in the East 90s, including a state-of-the-art athletic and education center that houses a gymnasium, nine squash courts, and the Brizendine Center for Ecology, complete with a greenhouse and rooftop garden.

Clara Spence, a visionary educator, founded Miss Spence’s School in 1892. In addition to strong academics, she ensured that her students experienced the city through “sightseeing trips” and invited speakers such as Helen Keller and Booker T. Washington to campus. A rooftop terrace provided outdoor space, while a progressive curriculum emphasized service and the practical application of learning. While Spence described life as “a splendid struggle,” she insisted that joy, play, and fun should infuse the school experience. These values—including public intellectual engagement, outdoor space, and an emphasis on service—remain central to Spence today.

The school moved to its current 91st Street location in 1929. As enrollment grew, the Lower School moved into a renovated historic mansion on 93rd Street in 2003; an adjacent townhouse expanded the 91st Street building in 2008; and the 412 athletic and education center opened in 2021. Most recently, Spence acquired property adjacent to its Lower School on Madison Avenue and is exploring options for that space.



In 2022, Felicia A. Wilks became Spence's 15th Head of School, ushering in a new chapter in the school's distinguished history. Since 2023, Spence has engaged in an inclusive and wide-ranging Strategic Planning process that brought together students, parents, faculty, and alumnae through town halls, focus groups, and surveys. In March 2025, Spence launched its Strategic Plan, The Spark of Spence, with a community celebration.

The Opportunity

Spence seeks an experienced, technically astute accounting professional to serve as its next Controller. As a senior finance leader, the Controller ensures the accuracy, integrity, and timeliness of all accounting operations and financial reporting. Reporting to the Chief Financial & Operating Officer, this leader oversees day-to-day accounting functions, guides and supports a seasoned Business Office team, and ensures strong internal controls and full compliance with GAAP standards for non-profit organizations. The Controller also serves as the primary liaison to external auditors and works closely with the Board of Trustees—particularly the Finance, Investment, and Audit Committees. With a well-run program already in place, and recent enhancements focused on improving customer service and reducing inefficiencies, this role offers the opportunity to steward a solid foundation while continuing to elevate best practices.

The ideal candidate will bring deep expertise in non-profit, fund, and construction accounting, ideally gained in an independent school or similarly complex not-for-profit environment. Equally important is the ability to thrive within Spence's collaborative, relationship-driven culture. Compelling candidates will demonstrate not only the technical strength required of a hands-on Controller but also the warmth, likeability, and collegiality that build trust and foster strong partnerships across the school. Spence seeks a professional who combines financial rigor with emotional intelligence—someone who engages thoughtfully with the community while upholding the school's mission with clarity, professionalism, and integrity.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Accounting & Internal Controls

- Oversee all accounting operations, including general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll accounting, cash receipts, and cash disbursements
- Ensure accurate recording and classification of unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted funds
- Manage the monthly and year-end close processes, including preparation and review of journal entries and account reconciliations
- Maintain and strengthen internal controls to safeguard assets and ensure compliance with regulatory and audit requirements
- Oversee bank reconciliations, cash management, and monitoring of operating cash balances
- Supervise accounting staff and ensure accurate processing of student billing, tuition receivables, financial aid, and advancement-related activity
- Administration of the credit card program. Issuing and managing credit card users as well as managing general user access.
- Administration of banking relationships. Managing user access and entitlement. Daily management of bank activity as well as monthly reconciliation of 14 bank accounts
- Administration and reporting relationship related to 2022 Bond Issuance



Financial Reporting & Compliance

- Prepare timely and accurate monthly internal financial statements for management
- Prepare annual financial statements and all schedules required for the annual audit; serve as the primary liaison with external auditors
- Ensure compliance with GAAP and applicable non-profit accounting standards
- Review and support preparation of required tax filings, including Form 990, 990-T, and applicable state filings
- Support reporting related to endowment activity, restricted gifts, capital projects, and designated funds

Budgeting & Analysis

- Oversee the preparation of the annual operating and capital budgets
- Oversee the preparation of budget-to-actual analyses and investigate significant variances
- With the support of the Assistant controller, partner with budget holders and senior leadership to provide financial insight and analysis in support of institutional planning

Cash, Investments & Funds

- Oversee accounting and reporting for endowment, board-designated, and other invested funds
- Record investment activity and prepare related financial schedules
- Assist in preparation of materials for Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee meetings as needed

Leadership & Collaboration

- Lead, mentor, and develop accounting staff, fostering a culture of accuracy, accountability, and continuous improvement
- Work closely with advancement, admissions, human resources, Parents' Association, and senior leadership to ensure accurate financial integration across the organization
- Serve as a trusted resource on accounting and financial matters for internal stakeholders



\$8.6M

financial aid
awarded



20%

students receiving
aid



\$163.5M

endowment



\$59.9M

annual operating
budget



92

clubs and
organizations



32

athletic teams

QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES



- Bachelor's degree in accounting or finance required; CPA strongly preferred
- Minimum of 8–10 years of progressive accounting experience, including prior experience as a Controller
- Significant experience in non-profit accounting, preferably within an independent school, foundation, or other educational institution
- Demonstrated expertise in fund accounting, including restricted and endowment funds
- Strong knowledge of GAAP, audit processes, and internal control best practices
- Proven experience supervising accounting staff
- High proficiency with accounting systems and Google Workspace; Blackbaud experience preferred
- Excellent analytical, organizational, and communication skills
- Ability to work collaboratively in a mission-driven environment while maintaining high professional standards
- Hands-on manager who is comfortable both executing and overseeing work
- Strong judgment, integrity, and discretion
- Collaborative, service-oriented approach with the ability to communicate complex financial information clearly



LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [School History](#)
- [Core Values](#)
- [Diversity and Equity](#)
- [College Matriculation](#)
- [About New York, New York](#)





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 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:

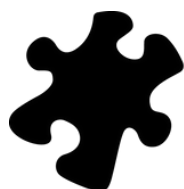
SARA SHULMAN

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GREG BRITTON

Chief Operating Officer, Search & Consulting Group
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The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$180,000-\$200,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience and expertise.



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