

Crane Country Day School

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

LOCATION

Santa Barbara, CA

APPLICATION REVIEW PERIOD

December–January

START DATE

First or second quarter of 2027*

POST DATE

November 2, 2026

ON-SITE FINAL ROUND

Late January 2027

REPORTS TO

Head of School

PRIORITY DEADLINE

December 2, 2026

DECISION ANNOUNCED

Early February 2027

ANNUAL SALARY RANGE

\$200,000–\$220,000



* **Preferred Start Date:** While Crane would prefer that its next Director of Finance and Operations begin in early 2027, the School would be willing to consider a later start date to accommodate qualified candidates unable to transition mid-school year. However, Crane would not consider any start dates beyond July 1, 2027.

CRANE
COUNTRY
DAY SCHOOL



12M & Ed Tech
RECRUITING



MISSION STATEMENT

Crane Country Day School is dedicated to providing an experiential education characterized by a thoughtful balance of academic challenge and creative expression. We thrive as a community that builds character and confidence, while celebrating the joy in learning.

Summary

Founded in 1928, Crane Country Day School is an independent kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) day school in Santa Barbara, California, where approximately 275 students and 60 “Staffulty” (a term many schools use for teachers and administrators working together as one team) share a 12-acre campus. Guided by a mission to thrive as a community that builds character and confidence while celebrating the joy in learning, Crane offers an innovative, rigorous, and experiential program in which students’ social and emotional growth matters as much as their academic progress.

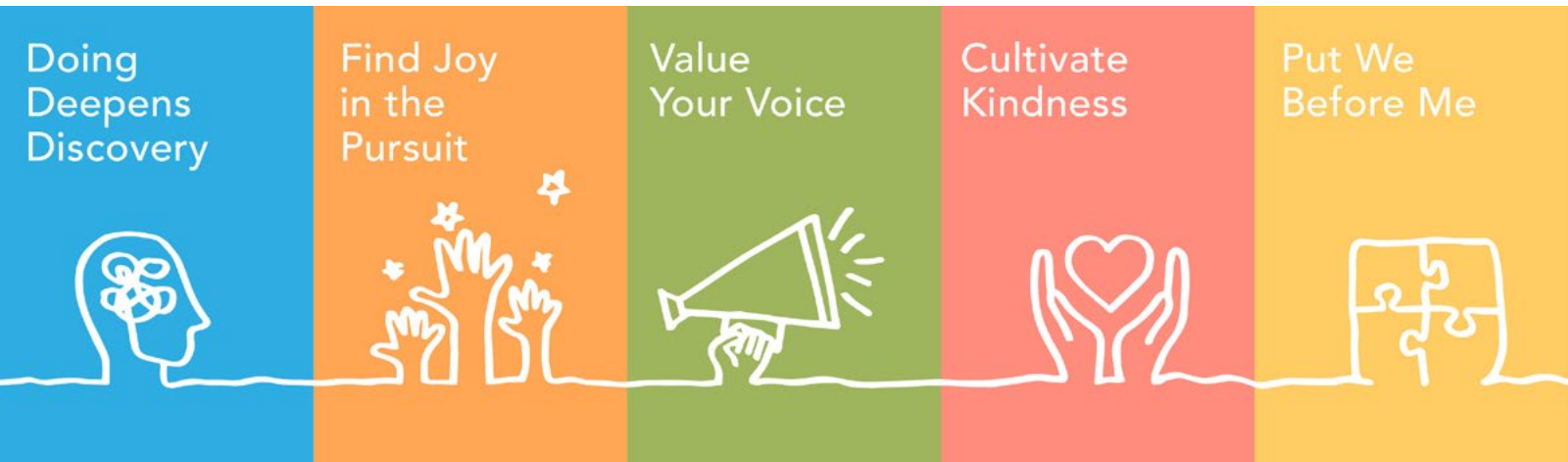
Crane seeks a Director of Finance and Operations to provide strategic financial stewardship and lead the operational functions that support the school each day.

Reporting to the Head of School and partnering closely with the Board’s Finance Committee Chair, the Director will supervise four direct reports: the Controller, Accounts Manager, Director of Facilities, and Campus Safety Officer. The Director also works in close partnership with the school’s part-time Human Resources (HR) Lead, who reports to the Head of School, on matters where finance, operations, and people intersect.

The ideal candidate is calm, responsive, organized, and ready to act; someone who knows what is urgent, what can be delegated, and what can wait; and who is energized by improving systems rather than simply maintaining them. Leaders from a broad range of educational, nonprofit, and business sectors who are drawn to Crane’s mission are encouraged to apply.



Mission



Doing Deepens Discovery

Learning is a journey, not a destination, and we know that engaging not just minds, but also hands and hearts leads to real transformation. Everything that we do is contextualized for the real-world through an applied educational experience so that our students learn not only the answers, but why they matter.

Find Joy in the Pursuit

Challenging ourselves is important, and, under the right circumstances, can be wholly gratifying. But challenging academics must not outstrip the joy of learning nor get in the way of maintaining a balanced, sustainable lifestyle. Personal well-being, mental health, physical activity, and nurturing habits that stick will always be a priority in a Crane education.

Value Your Voice

Each of our students is capable of anything, but that only matters if they know it and believe it about themselves. Learning in a safe and supportive environment allows our students to try new things while knowing that failure is an essential step on the path to success, building confidence through ongoing creativity and curiosity.

Cultivate Kindness

Personal integrity isn't about doing the right thing because we have to. It's about doing the right thing because we want to model the way for others. We equally value character development alongside academic development because we know who our students are as important as what they know.

Put We Before Me

Our individual experiences wouldn't be possible without the collective, and an inclusive culture is a shared responsibility. Together, we ensure that every voice is heard, and that students and adults not only feel included, but that they express a strong sense of belonging as part of their experience in this community.



Key Stats

1928

ESTABLISHED

12

ACRE CAMPUS

63

FACULTY & STAFF

4

LEARNING SPECIALISTS

274

K-8 STUDENTS

31%

STUDENTS OF COLOR

18

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

7:1

STUDENT : FACULTY RATIO

24%

STUDENTS RECEIVE
TUITION ASSISTANCE

\$1.8M

AWARDED IN
2025-26

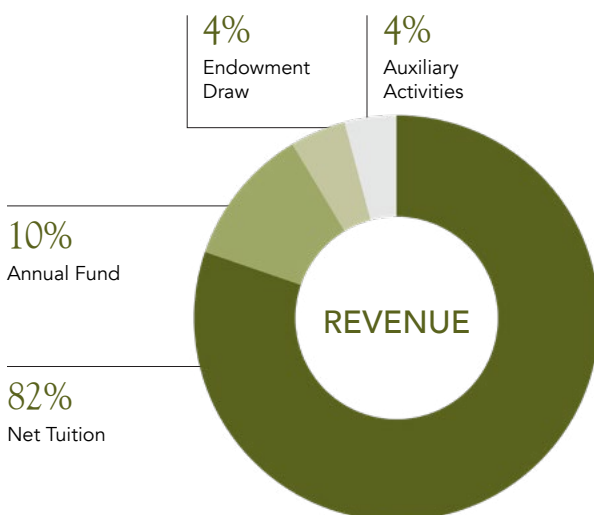
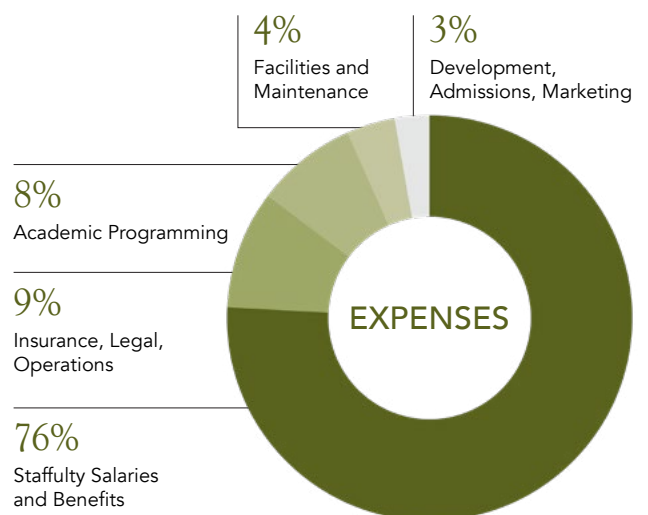
\$2.0M

AWARDED IN
2026-27

\$12.3M

2026-27
OPERATING BUDGET

'26-'27 Operating Revenue & Expenses



The Crane Experience



Lower School (K–5)

The goals of the Lower School are to nurture each child's strengths and sense of competence, to help develop a sensitivity to others, and to encourage each child to take pleasure in being a member of the community. The curriculum fosters self-reliance and self-esteem; stimulates curiosity, creativity, and a love for learning; and builds enthusiasm for excellence and achievement. The Lower School emphasizes reading, writing, math, and social studies, complemented by a range of specialized subjects and integrated learning experiences that encourage cross-disciplinary connections and broaden students' understanding of the world. The objective is to create responsible, independent students who work well together and are excited about learning.

Upper School (6–8)

The Upper School program supports students in finding their own voices and caring for one another and the world around them. The rigorous academic schedule balances the traditional courses of English, math, science, social studies, and Spanish with performing arts, studio art, design and engineering, physical education, and elective classes. Crane's daily Assemblies allow Upper School students to shine through public speaking opportunities and Spotlight performances, while team athletics, the annual Upper School Musical, and programs such as Buddies, Tech Crew, the Student Association Leadership Team (SALT), and Coyote Cares provide additional opportunities for participation and leadership. The robust elective program offers students choice and opportunities to explore new activities across grade levels.

Daily Assembly

Assembly is at the heart of the Crane experience, bringing our K-8 community together daily for nearly a century to reflect our five core values. Through student speeches, Spotlight performances, and shared celebrations, it is where our culture comes alive. This daily tradition builds confidence, fosters connection, and unites our entire campus under one roof.





A Place to Grow

Crane School's campus sits in a quiet residential neighborhood in Montecito, California, nestled between the ocean and the mountains. Its proximity to the beach, trails, and creeks allows students and Staffuly to take field trips on foot, bike, or by car.

The 12-acre campus has been intentionally designed throughout the school's long history to create harmony between the many green spaces and the buildings. Most structures follow the same architectural language that provides a sense of coherence that is both aesthetically pleasing and practical.

The physical property is the manifestation of Crane's values. It's one large classroom that promotes joyful learning and prioritizes community.

The three prominent quads—the Oak Tree Quad, the Mulberry Tree Quad, and the Olive Tree Quad—create a natural flow through campus, weaving students and Staffuly through breezeways, down hallways, and past gardens, sports fields, basketball courts, and amphitheaters. Visitors walk into classrooms and remark about the natural lighting and the thoughtfully designed, child-sensitive intricacies of each space.



Gardens That Inspire

Experiential learning comes alive in the gardens. The campus is sprinkled with different gardens: the upper garden, the lower garden, the kindergarten garden, and the micro-forest. They serve as outdoor classrooms to teach our students an appreciation of nature, put the fundamentals of the scientific method into practice, hone their problem-solving skills, and help mold environmentally conscious citizens. Children learn through feeling the soil on their hands, enjoying sun-ripened tomatoes, feeding the goats, fast-growing beans, and cucumber taste tests, all the while filling the gardens with wide-eyed wonder and laughter.



IMPACT OUR FUTURE:

2022–2027 Strategic Plan



1. Amplify Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning has been central to Crane's mission for nearly a century. Crane seeks to amplify its hands-on model by providing students with opportunities for civic engagement, social entrepreneurship, inquiry, design thinking, and project-based learning, using Santa Barbara as a learning laboratory.

4. Expand The School's DEI Efforts

Crane is committed to creating an equitable learning environment for its diverse community and sustaining a school culture in which all community members feel welcomed, valued, and a sense of belonging. A more strategic, integrated, and directed coordination of efforts will support ongoing, steady, and effective growth.

2. Create a Faculty Growth Plan to Develop, Support, Reward, and Inspire Crane Teachers

Teachers are at the heart of Crane. And now, more than ever, teachers are facing increased demands. The school will work to strengthen internal systems, ensuring that teachers feel safe, supported, inspired, and that their contributions are recognized and appreciated.

5. Strengthen Crane's Approach Toward Neurodiversity

Crane embraces the uniqueness of its students and recognizes that there is more than one way to learn and more than one way to teach. The school seeks to personalize instruction and customize support for students with different learning styles, providing educators with tools to better understand and support neurodivergent learners.

3. Promote A Healthy Community Of Kindness, Support, Courage, And Respect

Crane is committed to producing graduates who are healthy, adaptable, balanced, self-directed, and connected. The school strives to enhance students' mental, physical, and social development while reinforcing kindness, empathy, and a healthy community culture.

6. Elevate Marketing and Communications

Crane seeks to consistently evaluate its branding and communicate the benefits of a Crane education in a clear, compelling, and consistent manner. A full-time marketing and communications position will help enhance the school's presence in the local community and strengthen its marketing and communication strategies.



Background & Narrative



Crane's education is experiential at its core, balancing rigorous academic challenge with unbridled creative expression, and shaped by the belief that character and confidence grow best in a community that delights in learning. Learning here engages hands and hearts alongside minds, and it stays rooted in the real world, so that what students discover feels useful and alive. Challenge is part of that, and so is joy. The school is careful not to let rigor crowd out well-being, and it treats mental health, physical activity, and habits that last as a real priority rather than an afterthought.

Beneath it all is a quiet confidence in each child. Teachers create a place that feels safe enough for students to try something new, to stumble, and to discover that stumbling is an essential piece to how humans grow. Kindness is understood as a matter of character, of doing the right thing because it models the way for others, and Crane cares as much about who its students are becoming as about what they know. The community holds itself to a shared responsibility in return: that every voice is heard, and that students and adults alike feel they belong. It extends to the people behind the scenes, in the front office, the kitchen, and on the grounds, whose work is part of the education itself.

That sense of belonging shows up in the rhythm of the year. The Crane Country Fair and the Art Show are occasions the whole community anticipates, and throughout the year there are events for alumni of various graduating years to gather and visit with former peers and teachers. Film screenings, lectures, and conversations with authors, filmmakers, and thinkers, some of them Crane alumni and past parents, fill out the calendar, and past parents are always welcome. Crane is a community that keeps its people close long after graduation.

It is also a school that approaches change with great consideration. Crane describes itself as adept at adapting, and it plans with intention. Its 2022–2027 strategic plan, *Impact Our Future*, directs resources toward supporting excellent teachers, amplifying experiential academics, nurturing distinct learning styles, honoring diverse voices, and promoting a culture of kindness. A campus master plan adopted in 2012 as a blueprint for the next fifty years has already brought the parking lot expansion and the Oak Tree Quad complex to life.

The Director of Finance and Operations is responsible for the financial health of the school and key operational areas that support the day-to-day functions.

The DFO will have an opportunity to bring greater clarity to how this work is organized, with a meaningful voice in how responsibilities are shared among the Business Office, Facilities, HR, and the Head of School's office. Financial stewardship and operational leadership carry equal weight in this role, and each is strengthened by the other.

The responsibilities span both finance and operations, and no two days look alike. In a single day, the Director's attention may move from facilities and food service to parking and drop-off, emergency and health procedures, a forecasting conversation with the Head of School, or a budget review with the Finance Committee Chair. With many priorities competing at once, the Director's skill lies in knowing which matters most: sequencing the work with care, relying on a capable team to carry it forward, and keeping the larger picture in view rather than responding to whatever is loudest.

The financial responsibilities of the role are every bit as substantial as the operational ones. The Director owns the annual operating budget and multi-year financial plans, partnering with the Head of School and the Director of Admissions on enrollment forecasting,



tuition strategy and tuition assistance. The Director prepares the forecasts, cash flow analyses, and reports that the Board and Finance Committee rely on, directs the annual audit and tax filings, coordinates with investment managers on endowment reporting, and oversees the school's insurance programs. Crane needs someone as comfortable working on a financial model as they are interacting with constituencies on campus, and who can bring the same care and rigor to both.

The ideal DFO understands that teamwork is a real asset. Crane's Director of Facilities is a hands-on colleague who knows the campus intimately, and the Director of Finance and Operations will be a thought partner with the Board's Building & Grounds Committee, benchmarking against peer schools, weighing the long-term financial implications of projects, and planning well beyond the immediate year. In the Business Office, the Controller and Accounts Manager bring deep experience, dependable judgment, and valuable institutional knowledge, along with real curiosity about what technology can do, including fuller use of the school's UKG platform. The incoming

Director will build on that foundation as a collaborator, setting a shared direction, clarifying who owns what, and inviting experienced colleagues to help shape the work of improvement.

Crane has solid policies and procedures and its longtime employees carry a great deal of valuable knowledge. An opportunity ahead is to gather that wisdom into shared documentation and digital systems so that it continues to serve the school for years to come. Just as important is a spirit of curiosity. The Head of School welcomes a fresh perspective on the school's financial model, and the work may include looking at Crane's approach to tuition assistance, with attention to current best practices and peer comparison, as well as alternative revenue streams such as summer programs, space rentals, and other creative sources of income beyond typical school programming. The Director will proactively identify needs, opportunities, and challenges, anticipating where the greatest challenges are clustered and addressing those areas proactively.

With Head of School Joel Weiss planning to retire following Crane's centennial year in 2027–28, the next DFO will also play

an important role in providing continuity, institutional knowledge, and steady leadership through a period of transition. Following the departure of the current Director of Finance and Operations, Crane has put strong interim finance and operations support in place to ensure continuity until the new Director begins. This will allow the incoming Director to join a stable operation, build on the work already underway, and help shape Crane's next chapter as the School approaches its second century.

The Director will work closely with Crane's part-time HR Lead on benefits, payroll, compensation, policy, and other employment matters. The Director will also serve as a trusted partner to the Board's Finance, Audit & Risk, Investment, and Buildings & Grounds committees, helping trustees understand the school's financial and operational landscape and make thoughtful, forward-looking decisions. Across the school, the Director will collaborate regularly with admissions, advancement, communications, the main office, and academic leadership. The role offers an opportunity to become an integral part of the Crane community and help guide the school into its next chapter.



Interview with the Head of School



Joel Weiss

We invite you to [watch our video](#) interview with Joel, who shares insights into his background, Crane's close-knit community, and the collaborative partnership he hopes to build with the next director of finance and operations.



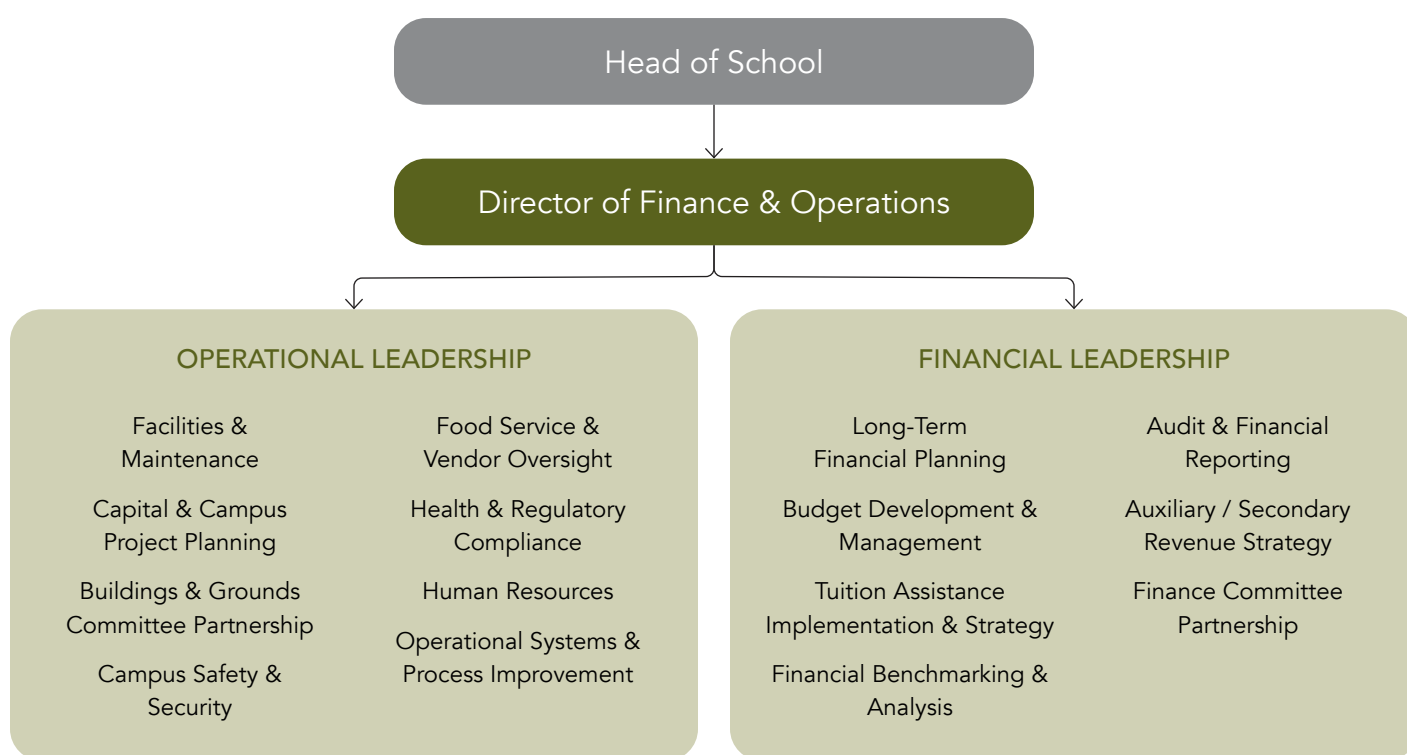
Areas of Focus

1. Operational Leadership

The next Director will be asked to provide strategic oversight of Crane's day-to-day operations, including facilities, campus safety, vendors, and other essential services. Working closely with the Director of Facilities and the Buildings & Grounds Committee, the DFO will bring a longer-range perspective to capital projects, campus needs, and operational planning while ensuring that day-to-day issues are handled effectively.

2. Financial Stewardship

The next Director will be asked to lead budgeting, forecasting, financial analysis, and long-term planning in close partnership with the Head of School and Finance Committee. Beyond maintaining sound financial systems, Crane is seeking forward-looking analysis, benchmarking, and recommendations to help school leaders make thoughtful decisions about its resources and priorities.



3. Team Leadership

The next Director will be asked to lead an experienced Business Office and operational team, clarifying responsibilities, delegating effectively, and creating greater consistency across systems and processes. An important opportunity will be strengthening documentation, improving workflows, and making fuller use of technology while respecting the institutional knowledge already present at Crane.

4. Long-Term Sustainability

The next Director will be asked to help Crane look beyond the annual budget and consider how its resources can best support the school over time. This may include reviewing tuition assistance practices, benchmarking against peer schools, evaluating auxiliary and alternative revenue opportunities, reviewing Crane's benefits package, and helping the Head of School and Board assess new ideas through both a financial and mission-driven lens.



Duties

Financial Strategy & Stewardship

- Lead the annual budget process and multi-year financial planning.
- Provide clear financial reporting, forecasting, and analysis to the Head of School, Board, and Finance Committee.
- Review tuition assistance, financial benchmarks, and other major cost drivers to support long-term sustainability.
- Help identify and evaluate additional revenue opportunities, including summer programs and use of campus facilities.
- Partner with Canterbury Investments and support the Board's Investment Committee in monitoring endowment performance, planning for long-term growth, and aligning investment strategy with Crane's financial goals.
- Oversee the annual audit and other core financial reporting requirements.

Operational Leadership & Campus Stewardship

- Provide strategic oversight of facilities, maintenance, campus safety, food-service vendors, Crane vehicles, and other school operations.
- Partner with the Director of Facilities and Buildings & Grounds Committee on capital planning, project sequencing, and long-term campus needs.
- Strengthen operational policies, procedures, documentation, and continuity planning.
- Oversee vendor relationships and ensure operational issues are addressed efficiently and appropriately.
- Support effective emergency preparedness, safety practices, and regulatory compliance.

Team Leadership & Systems Improvement

- Supervise the Controller, Accounts Manager, Director of Facilities, and Campus Safety Officer.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and decision-making across the Business Office and operational functions.
- Delegate effectively while providing experienced colleagues with clear direction and support.
- Improve systems, workflows, documentation, and use of technology, including UKG.
- Assess staffing and organizational needs and recommend changes where appropriate.

People, Governance & Community

- Serve as a trusted strategic partner to the Head of School, to whom this role reports, and perform other duties as assigned.
- Work closely with the HR Lead on benefits, payroll, compensation, policy, and employment matters.
- Partner with relevant Board committees, including Finance and Buildings & Grounds.
- Collaborate closely with admissions, advancement, communications, academic leadership, and other school leaders.



Qualifications & Qualities

Professional Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree or relevant professional credential welcomed
- Significant leadership experience spanning finance, operations, business administration, or a related field
- Demonstrated experience with budgeting, financial planning, analysis, and communicating financial information to senior leaders or boards
- Experience overseeing complex operations such as facilities, safety, vendors, capital projects, or auxiliary programs
- Experience supervising and developing experienced professionals
- Demonstrated ability to improve systems, processes, documentation, and use of technology
- Familiarity with HR, benefits, payroll, compliance, and risk management
- Experience working effectively with boards or board committees
- Independent school experience welcomed but not required; candidates from nonprofit, higher education, healthcare, business, hospitality, and other relevant sectors encouraged to apply

Leadership and Personal Qualities



Communicative
Connective
Steady
Proactive
Analytical
Strategic
Organized
Empowering
Collaborative
Detail-Oriented



How to Apply

The 12M & Ed Tech Recruiting search consultant team, led by Ilaria Cortesi and Kate Halsey, is acting on behalf of Crane Country Day School to identify exceptional financial and operations leaders to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Direct inquiries to:

jobs@12MRecruiting.com



Applications submitted by **December 2, 2026** will receive priority review.

All applications must be submitted online:

www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/Crane/DFO

AN APPLICATION REQUIRES SUBMITTING FOUR PDFS:

1. Cover letter introducing yourself to the Crane Country Day School search committee
2. CV or resume
3. A reference list of four or more individuals who could speak on your behalf if you were to progress further in this search (include each person's name, current organization, title, phone number, email, and past connection to you; we will not contact anyone on your reference list without obtaining your permission first)
4. In a few short paragraphs, please respond to the following questions:

What do you believe are the most important ingredients in maintaining the long-term financial health of an independent school?

What principles guide you when designing or improving operational systems so they remain efficient, clear, and sustainable without becoming unnecessarily complex?

Crane Country Day School is an equal opportunity employer. We strongly encourage applications from people of color, LGBTQ+ educators, and educators from communities that have historically been underrepresented in independent schools. Crane is committed to sustaining a diverse and inclusive community in which each member is respected and valued. We believe that a diversity of voices and backgrounds enriches the educational experience by encouraging a variety of thought, social awareness, and a creative exchange of ideas.

www.12MRecruiting.com

RETAINED SEARCHES FOR
MISSION-DRIVEN ORGANIZATIONS



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