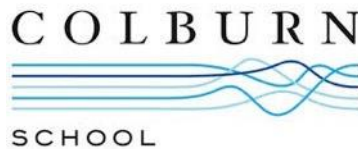




**CONTROLLER**  
**COLBURN SCHOOL**  
**Flexible—Metropolitan Los Angeles**  
[Colburn School](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Colburn School in the search for a Controller.

The Controller will serve as the senior leader of the accounting and finance operations and is responsible for the management and oversight of all accounting, tax, and reporting functions. The Controller will be responsible for the Colburn School's accounting activities, policies, and practices, the maintenance of its fiscal records and systems, and all procedures that support effective internal controls and program implementation. The Controller will evaluate and make appropriate improvements to internal accounting processes, ensuring that practices are in line with the overall goals of the School and with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The Controller will provide support to the Audit Committee including the production of audited financial statements. The Controller will have responsibility for maintaining the daily operations of the accounting department and will oversee all employees involved in the accounting process including general ledger, accounts receivable, accounts payable, fixed assets, student accounting, and investments. The Controller will be responsible for working with the investment advisors on the endowment and will ensure compliance with bond covenants and assist with tracking debt service and swap payments. The Controller will collaborate with the Director of Budget and Reporting in the production of financial reports, financial forecasts, and in the preparation and execution of the annual operating budget. The Controller will partner with the Director of IT to ensure the optimization of the School's ERP system and other supporting technologies. The Controller will liaise across the institution to ensure fiscal compliance and oversight of financial aid and will coordinate and supervise the annual audit and tax preparation.

The Colburn School provides access to quality instruction for young people who possess a passion for music, dance, and drama, so they may further explore their interests and continue developing their talents. Colburn's renowned faculty guide students through classes appropriate and catered to their age and skill level. The Colburn Community School of Performing Arts provides music instruction to beginners of any age as well as to those who want to hone their skills or participate in one of the School's ensembles, orchestras or choirs. Highly gifted pre-college students may apply to study at the Colburn Music or Dance Academies, and college-age students prepare for careers in music performance through certificate and bachelors and masters degree programs at the Colburn Conservatory of Music.

The staff and faculty of the Colburn School are committed to bringing music and dance performances and education into the greater community so others can experience the many benefits associated with the performing arts. Every year Colburn students and faculty present hundreds of free or affordable performances in Colburn's beautiful professional theaters on campus as well as in prestigious venues around Los Angeles. The Colburn School partners with 15 Los Angeles Unified School District schools, 13 of which receive Title I funding, to provide interactive and engaging concerts and instructional sessions to 5,000 students every year.

Colburn's goal is to accommodate students in developing a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts whenever possible without the constraints of financial concerns, awarding over \$500,000 in need-based scholarships to the Colburn Community School of Performing Arts every year. All students at the prestigious Colburn Conservatory of Music receive full tuition, room and board scholarships, and are admitted based solely on talent regardless of socioeconomic background. This is Colburn's access to excellence promise.

### **REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS**

The Controller will report to the Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Business Development, Maesha Merchant. The Controller will manage a professional team of four. The Controller will work in partnership with the Director, Budget and Reporting and the Manager, Financial Planning & Analysis.

### **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Controller will

- lead the development, implementation, assessment, and monitoring of all accounting and regulatory reporting policies to ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), regulatory requirements, and other accounting and business best practices;
- support and ensure consistency with the School's mission, goals, strategic plans, policies, and procedures;
- ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations;
- provide direct assistance to the Chief Financial Officer on accounting and tax matters;
- maintain internal control and safeguards;
- coordinate all annual financial audits and the production of annual financial statements;
- regularly compile and analyze financial data and present financial reports, including quarterly and annual financial statements, in an accurate and timely manner;
- oversee all financial, project/program, and grants accounting and ensure that expenditures are consistently aligned with grant and program budgets throughout the grant/fund period;
- oversee cash flow forecasting and treasury management;
- oversee reconciliations, roll-forward net assets schedules;
- interface with various vendors including but not limited to auditors, tax consultants, OCIO, custodian and commercial banks;
- liaise with Advancement and ensures gift accounting and compliance;
- ensure the optimization of the ERP system;
- oversee the Accounting team including hiring, training, mentoring, and evaluating staff;
- create and promote a positive and supportive environment; and
- other duties as needed.

## KEY COLLEAGUES



### **Maeesha Merchant**

#### **Chief Financial Officer, Vice President of Business Development**

Maeesha Merchant joined the Senior Leadership Team as Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Business Development in September 2020. In this position, Ms. Merchant plays a critical role in ensuring the financial health of the institution, developing and implementing fiscal management and reporting strategies across the School. Ms. Merchant also leads the effort to identify and develop new business and revenue opportunities for the School, working cross-departmentally and in close coordination with the President and CEO and Board of Directors. Ms. Merchant staffs multiple Board committees including Finance, Investment, Audit, and Business Development.

Ms. Merchant came to the Colburn School from California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) where she served as SVP of Finance and Operations, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Innovation Officer. In this role, she oversaw global initiatives, finance and accounting, analytics and IT, operations and facilities, and human resources. In addition, she was responsible for strategic planning and innovating new business models. She was instrumental in steering CalArts' Strategic Visioning project, laying the framework to guide CalArts through the next 50 years; and strengthening CalArts' financial position through the creation of new revenue streams.

An active member of the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), Ms. Merchant was honored with the 2020 Service to NACUBO Award for her outstanding contributions to the association's professional development programs. Ms. Merchant has served on NACUBO's New Business Officers Alumni Panel, mentoring program, Advisory Group on Leadership Diversity, and several program committees.

Prior to CalArts, Ms. Merchant spent twelve years as a management consultant working for Deloitte Consulting and (Mercer) Oliver Wyman and as an education technology entrepreneur. Ms. Merchant has experience across multiple states, countries, and industries (public sector, higher education, financial services, automotive). Her experience includes large-scale business transformations, strategic and financial planning, business process optimization, and analytics. In her consulting career, Ms. Merchant worked with several CXO clients to identify strategic imperatives and implement recommendations. Ms. Merchant graduated Magna Cum Laude from the prestigious Jerome Fisher Management and Technology Program at the University of Pennsylvania with three degrees in Finance, Biomedical Science, and International Relations.

## PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Colburn School seeks a Controller with

- experience coordinating audit activities and managing reporting, budget development and analysis, accounts payable and receivable, general ledger, payroll, investment accounting, and taxes;
- keen analytic, organizational, management, and problem-solving skills that allow for strategic data interpretation vs. simple reporting;
- an ability to leverage the strengths of a diverse team, clarify roles and responsibilities, and develop and implement training programs to maximize impact and effectiveness;

- personal qualities of integrity, credibility, discretion, and commitment to the ethical standards of the Colburn School;
- excellent written and oral communication and presentation skills including an ability to effectively translate complex information to constituencies at all levels including the Colburn School community, academic leadership, senior management, the Board of Directors, and others;
- advanced knowledge and experience in Excel and Windows suite;
- experience with accounting for endowments and investment pools, including knowledge of Fundriver (preferred);
- experience working with international students and associated tax reporting and compliance;
- financial aid experience and oversight;
- experience in contract management, procurement, and strategic sourcing;
- experience with public bond compliance and covenants (preferred);
- grants management experience including government, foundation, and corporation compliance and reporting;
- knowledge of fund and grant accounting; and
- experience in the education industry (preferred), non-profit experience (required).

A bachelor's degree in accounting or a related field is required for this position, as are five years of relevant experience.

### **SALARY & BENEFITS**

The Colburn School offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

### **LOCATION**

The Controller may work remotely from the Metropolitan Los Angeles area with visits to the School weekly and other times as needed. The Colburn School is located at the center of the thriving downtown Los Angeles arts and cultural corridor. Its immediate neighbors are the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, The Music Center, Grand Performances at California Plaza, The Broad, and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

The Colburn School is committed to equal employment opportunity. It will not discriminate against staff members or applicants for employment on any legally-recognized basis ["protected class"] including, but not limited to: race; color; religion; genetic information; national origin; sex; pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; age; disability; citizenship status; uniform service member status; or any other protected class under federal, state, or local law.

In California, the following also are a protected class: race; religious creed; color; national origin; ancestry; physical disability; mental disability; medical condition, including genetic characteristics; genetic information; marital status; status with regard to public assistance; sex; pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; perceived pregnancy; actual or perceived gender; gender identity or expression; sexual orientation; civil air patrol membership; service in the military forces of the State of California or of the United States; military and veteran status; lawful conduct occurring during nonworking hours away from School premises; and age [40 or over]. Included in the definition of each protected category is the

perception of membership in a protected category and an individual's association with an actual or perceived member of a protected category. Employees requesting accommodations will not be retaliated or discriminated against.

#### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the position prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

*To apply for this position, visit:*

[Controller, Colburn School.](#)

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:*

[annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com](mailto:annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com).

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*