

# Office of Overseas Schools U.S. Department of State



## *American Overseas Schools*

*Thomas P. Shearer-Director*

*Brent Mutsch- Senior Consultant-Search Associates*

## *NAESP 2021 Conference*

# Speakers



- **Mr. Thomas (Tom) Shearer** serves as the Director of the Office of Overseas Schools in the U.S. Department of State. He joined the Office in 2013 and was assigned as the Regional Educational Officer (REO) for Eastern Europe, Russia, and South Central Asia. He has also served as the REO for a portion of the Western Hemisphere (Central America and the Caribbean). In addition, he has served as the REO for Africa before his appointment as Director of the Office in 2018. Before joining the Office of Overseas Schools, Shearer served as Superintendent of the American International School of Lagos, Nigeria and President of the Executive Board of the Association of International Schools of Africa.



- **Dr. Brent Mutsch** joined Search Associates in August 2017 as a Senior Consultant focused on Director/Head of School and Superintendent searches. In August of 2018 he assumed the leadership role of the new Director of Consulting Services position while Search Associates conducted a world-wide search for the permanent Director of Consulting Services. In August of 2019, he returned to the role of Senior Consultant where he dedicates his time to senior leadership searches as well as Board governance training, strategic planning and mentoring of less experienced school leaders.

# American International Schools

- **Locations:** Africa, Central/South America, Europe, Near/Middle East, Asia/Pacific Rim, Southeast Asia
- **Student body:** Multi-national
- **Governance:** Independent community based, company sponsored, church related, proprietary
- **Language of instruction:** English / bilingual
- **Curriculum:** International, US based, IB, AP



## **Schools Assisted by the Office of Overseas Schools**

**193 Schools Receive Grant Assistance**

American Republics – 39

Europe - 66

East Asia – 26

Near East/South Asia – 23

Africa – 39



**International School of  
Islamabad**



**Lincoln Community School, Accra**

# **American-Sponsored Schools Around the World**



**Jakarta International School**



**American International  
School of Mozambique**



# The Mission of the Office of Overseas Schools

Leveraging Human, Financial and Information Resources to Create Quality American Education Overseas

- Support a strong educational program for dependents of U.S. Embassy employees.
- Develop model American schools to promote mutual, education and cultural understanding for all.

# Student Population at Schools Assisted by the Office of Overseas Schools

- 135,163 Students Enrolled
- 29 % US Citizens
- 27% Host Country Nationals
- 44% Third Country Nationals
- 2020 SAT mean - 1229



# School Support



Activities

- Accreditation by US organization
- School-to-School Partnerships
- Regional Education Associations
- Security Measures in Overseas Schools
- Grant Assistance and Embassy support



# Cairo American College – Cairo, Egypt





**International School  
of Dakar**



**International School of  
Addis Ababa**



**American  
International  
School of Vienna**



**St. Stephens School,  
Rome**



**American Embassy School,  
Reykjavik**



**American  
School of  
Asuncion**

# Berlin Brandenburg International School – Berlin, Germany





**Kyiv International School**



**International School of Beijing**



**Overseas School of Colombo**



**International School Suva**



**International School of Ulaanbaatar**



**Copenhagen International School**





**International School of  
Kenya**



**Yangon International  
School**



**Shekou International School -  
China**



**Hong Kong International School**



**Academia Cotopaxi – Quito,  
Ecuador**



**Anglo American School –  
Moscow, Russia**

What questions come to mind  
specific to overseas  
leadership opportunities?



# Selection Criteria for Administrators

- A Master's degree in educational leadership at a minimum.
- A minimum of two years of administrative experience.
- Previous successful experience. Progression as a teacher, principal, superintendent is often desirable.
- Certification/licensure is preferred by many schools and may be required for visa issuance.
- Some regions have age restrictions for residence visas and/or work permits.



# Qualities of Successful Overseas Administrators

- Excellent professional experience.
- Professional competence and confidence.
- Flexibility/adaptability.
- Excellent interpersonal skills – strong communication skills – active listener.
- Collaborative leadership style.
- Sense of humor/adventure.

# Create a Professional File

- Why would you be an excellent match for the position?
- What is the nature of your resume?
- What is your educational philosophy?
- Who are the direct supervisors who can serve as references and what is their contact information?
- Do you have your official transcripts and certification documents available if requested for work visa issuance?
- If married, is your spouse an educator, which can often be an advantage in smaller schools?

# Administrative Recruiting

- Begins earlier than in U.S. – international schools are beginning now to list positions for 2022-2023.
- Most active period is August through February.
- Often involves a campus visit of the top 2-3 candidates (with spouse) for on-site interviews lasting for 2-3 days.
- Directors/Superintendents are hired by the Board; Principals and other leadership roles are hired by the Superintendent/Head of School/Director.

# International Administration

## Personal Advantages

- Opportunity to work with motivated students, supportive parents, and excellent educator colleagues.
- Phenomenal opportunities for further growth and professional development.
- Educational value for your own children.
- Fascinating and engaging lifestyle.
- Excellent saving potential.
- Travel opportunities.



# Professional Advantages

- Small organizations – many are < 1,000 students.
- Initiatives can be implemented quickly.
- Flexibility in staffing/high quality teachers.
- Few legal issues.
- Administrators are focused on education with few mandated requirements.
- Supportive parent community.



# Professional Challenges

- High Board turnover – many are locally elected.
- High teacher turnover (challenge/opportunity).
- Demands of a diverse community.
- Some locations are quite isolated.
- Language/cultural differences.
- Supervisor/Counselor/Coach/: “You serve as the mayor of the school community.”

# Characteristics of Overseas Schools

- Focal point of the international community.
- High expectations of parent community.
- Well educated two-parent families.
- Highly motivated, capable, success-oriented students.
- Well funded programs.
- Small expatriate community – Fish-Bowl.



# Contact Us

State Department - Office of Overseas Schools - A/OS,  
Washington, D.C.

Thomas P. Shearer— Director

E-mail: [shearertp@state.gov](mailto:shearertp@state.gov)

Web: [www.state.gov/m/a/os](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os)



Search Associates -

Brent Mutsch— Senior Associate

Email—[bmutsch@searchassociates.com](mailto:bmutsch@searchassociates.com)

Web: [www.searchassociates.com](http://www.searchassociates.com)



**Search**  
ASSOCIATES



# Search Organizations

Carney-Sandoe: [www.carneysandoe.com](http://www.carneysandoe.com)

International Schools Services: [www.iss.edu](http://www.iss.edu)

Resource Group 175: [www.rg175.com](http://www.rg175.com)

Search Associates: [www.searchassociates.com](http://www.searchassociates.com)

University of Northern Iowa: [www.careerservices.uni.edu](http://www.careerservices.uni.edu)

# Office of Overseas Schools U.S. Department of State



*Thomas Shearer-Director*  
*Brent Mutsch-Senior Consultant /Search Associates*  
*American Overseas Schools*  
*NAESP 2021 Conference*

# Poll

On a scale of 1-5 and based on what you've learned today, where would you rate your interest in serving in an international school leadership role?

- 1. Not at all interested**
- 2. Somewhat interested:** I would likely consider the right opportunity.
- 3. Interested** and would like to learn more.
- 4. Very interested:** I have already started to consider international leadership roles.
- 5. Extremely interested:** I'm currently seeking an international leadership role.

# Further Questions and Answers