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
American-Sponsored Schools Around the World

International School of Islamabad

Lincoln Community School, Accra

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

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

International School of Addis Ababa

St. Stephens School, Rome

American Embassy School, Reykjavik

American School of Asuncion

American International School of Vienna
Berlin Brandenburg International School – Berlin, Germany
International School of Kenya

Yangon International School

Shekou International School - China

Academia Cotopaxi – Quito, Ecuador

Hong Kong International School

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
Web: www.state.gov/m/a/os

Search Associates -
Brent Mutsch– Senior Associate
Email–bmutsch@searchassociates.com
Web: www.searchassociates.com
Search Organizations

Carney-Sandoe: www.carneysandoe.com

International Schools Services: www.iss.edu

Resource Group 175: www.rg175.com

Search Associates: www.searchassociates.com

University of Northern Iowa: www.careerservices.uni.edu
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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