

## Overbrook School for the Blind

Philadelphia, PA

### THE SEARCH

Overbrook School for the Blind [[www.obs.org](http://www.obs.org)] seeks a high-energy leader for our team of outstanding teachers, staff, and students. We invite applications from experienced leaders who are excited about our special educational mission and the challenges and rewards it presents. The Executive Director/CEO will assume duties by July 2017 with an earlier start up date possible to assist the transition of leadership. The successful candidate will be offered a 3-year renewable contract.

An excellent candidate will have the following credentials, experiences and attributes:

- A minimum of a Master's degree
- Minimum of 10 years experience in human services and/or education, development, marketing, financial management; experience with education of the visually impaired is a positive.
- A strong commitment to OSB's continuing mission, enhanced by the School's widespread, excellent reputation.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills. Such skills must be used formally, such as presentations to large groups, and persuasively, such as school-related issues or fundraising opportunities.
- Skill in working with personnel issues of faculty and staff, and in establishing clear expectations, with follow-up.
- Serves with integrity, enthusiasm and compassion. Any candidate must be sensitive to students and their families and to other constituencies of the School.
- Proven leadership; visionary thinker.
- A business development and networking skill set to enhance OSB's goal and mission to be a dynamic school and community leader.

### ABOUT OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Early in the 19th century, Julius Friedlander, a young teacher of children who were blind or had serious visual impairments, came to Philadelphia from Germany determined to establish a school. He found several prominent Philadelphians ready to help him in this venture. In March 1832, Mr. Friedlander opened his school in a rented building and called it The Pennsylvania



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Institution for the Instruction of the Blind. Mr. Friedlander died only six years later, but, before that time, his school was already well established in a new building at 20th and Race Streets. It continued to grow, offering quality education to the children of the area who were blind or visually impaired. In 1899, the school again moved, this time to its present location at 6333 Malvern Avenue. It was re-named Overbrook School for the Blind in 1946.

Today the school includes a main building with classrooms, offices, an auditorium, a library and a touch and learn center. Two separate buildings house programs for pre-school children and elementary age students. The Nevil Field House contains a gymnasium, indoor track, physical fitness room, and bowling alleys. The school's cafeteria is located in a modern facility immediately adjacent to the main building. Two recently renovated dormitories are home away from home for the few residential students. The recently completed Kappen Aquatic Center contains two pools with numerous adaptations for blind and visually impaired students. The building is the only one of its kind to receive a LEED platinum certification. A new education and horticulture center building is planned with ground breaking scheduled for 2017.

Improving accessibility is an ongoing project as the school continuously updates its facilities. Spacious well cared for grounds totalling 20 acres surround all the buildings and provide ample play areas for play and recreation.

Today, OSB serves approximately 200 students (ages 3 through 21) on campus. Our Early Intervention Outreach Program (birth through age three) provides at-home guidance and care to the parents of 175 additional families. Rounding out its programmatic footprint, Overbrook's International Program reaches thousands of children and adults in Southeast Asia and China by training teachers and administrators on recent developments in educating the blind and visually impaired.

### **MISSION AND VISION**

OSB's mission is to develop and deliver education that enhances the options available for persons with visual impairments, including those with additional challenges, so that they have the greatest opportunity to experience active and fulfilling lives.

OSB's vision is to inspire individuals with visual impairment, including those with additional challenges, to achieve their highest potential; to share our culture that embraces their abilities; to be a dynamic and leading educational organization; and to use our expertise to positively



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influence our students, families, partners and peers, regionally, nationally and internationally.

**GOVERNANCE**

The school is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of distinguished and influential leaders who are diverse in occupation and experience, but who are united by a shared commitment to the goal of providing quality education to blind and visually impaired children. The board represents education, business, legal, and medical fields and has a representative from both the parent and alumni bodies.

**POSITION TITLE:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO

**REPORTS TO:** OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**DIRECT REPORTS:** Business Manager/CFO  
Education and Professional Development Director  
Director of Development  
Health Services Coordinator  
International Program Coordinator  
Technology Coordinator  
Public Relations Consultant  
Athletic Director  
Residential Services Coordinator

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

- I. Primary
  - 1. Has overall responsibility for all aspects of OVERBROOK SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND operations, including student programs, budget and finance, development,



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facility management, and human resources

2. Inspires, proposes and oversees new initiatives to ensure school activities continue to be effective, dynamic and innovative
  3. Gives high priority to increasing the School's profile and expanding its funding base
  4. Develops and oversees innovative strategies to expand student enrollment
  5. Serves as liaison to OVERBROOK FRIEDLANDER PROGRAMS\*
- II. Board of Trustees
1. Reports to the BOARD OF TRUSTEES and keeps them informed of issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the School, as well as school events and student accomplishments
  2. Assists the President of the Board and Committee Chairpersons with planning general board meetings and committee meetings
  3. Takes an active role in identifying, recruiting, and orienting new board members
- III. Legislative/State Agency/Community Relations
1. Represents the School to the community and to its constituencies, including parents and alumni
  2. Develops positive and productive relationships with:
    - i. Funders/Donors
    - ii. Legislators
    - iii. Heads of the Chartered Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
    - iv. Pa. Department of Education
    - v. Parents and alumni
    - vi. Existing and potential external partners

- Overbrook Friedlander Programs (OFP) is a separate non-profit organization serving the needs of blind and visually impaired adults residing in and around the Overbrook community. All of the adults have significant, multiple impairments. Some of the residents are Alumni of Overbrook School for the Blind. OFP is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services as well as other local and state agencies and is subject to their strict regulation and supervision. The School's Executive Director is currently President of OFP and is responsible for the overall supervision and administration of the Program. An administrator who reports to the School's Executive Director capably serves the OFP.



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IV. Development/Marketing

1. Meets with, cultivates and secures funding from potential new donors
2. Maintains positive relations with current donors
3. Represents the School at featured events
4. Assures the publication of Towers newsletters, Council of Schools for the Blind "Clips," and updated website information,
5. Oversees the preparation and distribution of the Annual Report
6. Oversees the preparation of General, Staff and Board Appeals

V. Strategic Planning

1. Directs and guides the School's response to the legislative, staffing, enrollment, funding and logistical issues arising out of the national and local Inclusion challenges
2. Assures the completion of the Middle States Accreditation Self- Study process and the continued implementation of ongoing accreditation improvement activities
3. Assists in the development of a Strategic Plan and oversees its implementation

VI. International Program

1. Ensures the provision of services and supports in Southeast Asia (ON-NET)
2. Ensures the provision of services and supports in China
3. Maintains positive relationships with the Nippon Foundation (primary funding source for the ON-Net Program)
4. Takes a leadership role in determining future program direction

This is an extraordinary opportunity for an exemplary educator and school leader. There will be a highly competitive and significant compensatory and benefit package commensurate with qualifications and experience and designed to attract outstanding and accomplished candidates. Qualified candidates interested in this opportunity are invited to submit a resume by attachment and in WORD or PDF to:

**BARRY ROWLAND**  
**Senior Search Consultant**  
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