The Association of Boarding Schools
Executive Director Search
Start Date: July 2022
TABS.org
Overview

One membership. One community. One TABS. As the premier resource promoting, serving, and ensuring best practice in boarding schools, The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) presents an exciting opportunity for executive director leadership. A not-for-profit membership association, TABS is comprised of roughly 230 boarding schools across the United States, Canada, and abroad. As a “community of communities,” TABS partners with school leaders—particularly Heads and Assistant Heads of School, Residential & Student Life Practitioners, and Admission & Marketing Professionals—to drive excellence, innovation, and collaboration so that every student thrives.

TABS hosts an annual conference, as well as other site-based and virtual workshops and symposia; produces industry research; supports schools and families through TuitionNet, the association’s tuition insurance plan; and has a robust website for educators at TABS.org and for families at BoardingSchools.com. An online approach to student recruitment, the new TABS Connect™, is a worldwide platform that brings together boarding schools and prospective students easily and efficiently.

Boarding schools offer an extraordinary academic experience filled with adventure, challenge, fun, diversity, acceptance, and community and lead to a lifetime of opportunities for students. Pete Upham, TABS Executive Director, will be departing his post in 2022, after 15 remarkable years of service. To further its mission of helping boarding school leaders, faculty, and staff become ever-more effective in their professional roles and helping boarding schools become even stronger institutions, TABS is seeking an Executive Director to commence the role by July 2022.
One membership.
One community.
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About TABS

TABS is home to the global boarding school community and is the central hub where boarding school faculty and administrators come together to learn, share, connect, and advance their communities. Its 230 member schools represent the substantial majority of eligible institutions in North America, encompassing the most prestigious schools sporting global brands; smaller, and often historic, regional schools; and unique gems of every size doing wonderfully creative work with young people.

TABS supports and advances its members through three main pillars:

• **Best-in-class Professional Learning** enriches Heads, Directors, Deans, and staff.
• **Cost-effective Enrollment & Recruitment Assistance** equips schools to make the case for the unique, lifelong value of residential education and connects schools with prospective families, at home and abroad, online and in-person.
• **Research & Resources** deliver unmatched, actionable data to bolster school planning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

TABS also develops programs for schools to better identify and manage risks, most notably through its training around student safety and care and through TuitionNet, the association’s tuition insurance program.

For each school TABS serves, TABS creates opportunities for true connection and sharing. TABS aims to help leaders cultivate academic communities that are inclusive, just, sustainable—and truly exceptional.
TABS’ Next Chapter

Like so many schools, TABS emerged from the pandemic a different organization. TABS has paired the lessons of the pandemic with those gleaned from extensive member research to shape a new vision for serving schools. With several key themes guiding its future priorities and concrete improvements to the 2021-22 membership program, TABS has an exciting future ahead. These principles will guide TABS’ future direction:

• TABS is one community.
• TABS must have an expansive view but a clear purpose.
• TABS must deliver unambiguous value to the Association’s core audiences.
• Speed matters.
• The Association finds its roots in shared principles.
• Throughout the past year, boarding schools cooperated with unprecedented openness.
• There is an ongoing need for schools to define and promote the advantages of an immersive, residential education, one that prepares young people exceptionally well for life.
• The residential and student life functions in schools should be elevated.

The incoming Executive Director will play a key role in designing a more detailed road map based on these themes.
TABS regularly innovates and expands the ways in which it helps boarding schools realize their own missions. The association hosts several professional development programs every year (site-based, virtual, and hybrid), with each program having a distinct focus tailored to a specific audience. These programs provide a range of opportunities for school personnel, administrators, educational consultants, and educational non-profits to develop the critical knowledge and skills needed to best serve students and communities. In addition, TABS offers its members a variety of webinars and forums that allow for discussion of key issues and timely topics in the boarding school community.

Following is a sampling of current and recent professional development offerings.

**Professional Learning**

**TABS Annual Conference**
This popular and celebratory event continues to be the leading education conference for boarding school heads, deans of admission, residential life specialists, faculty, and staff. In November 2021, it will be held in a hybrid format, with several days of virtual programming immediately followed by an in-person event.

**Summer Institutes**
TABS Summer institutes provide an array of professional development taught by a dynamic and diverse group of proven leaders. Each program features a concentration of industry experience, professional mentorship, camaraderie, and passion for boarding school education. Workshops include This Is the Life! Boot Camp, Admission Academy, ResLife Academy, and New Teacher Institute.
Now Boarding
Now Boarding is a robust and reflective onboarding to the complex world of boarding school life. This experience provides learning and mentorship to equip new members of a boarding school faculty and staff to ask the right questions and make an impact from day one.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Training
As part of TABS’ deep commitment to student safety, TABS offers a virtual introductory training on sexual misconduct prevention; the training is designed and facilitated by RAINN (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network), the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization.
Enrollment Assistance

To help connect families to boarding schools, TABS provides marketing and admission support focused on nurturing family and student interest in the boarding school option. With unique web content and powerful online tools, TABS helps boarding schools to be innovative with their marketing funnel, enrollment process, and retention tactics.

TABS Connect™ is a worldwide recruitment platform that connects students and families to schools around the globe. The platform allows schools and students to create their own profile, perform searches, direct message, set up video calls, and more.

BoardingSchools.com is a dynamic website that guides interested families through the complete and compelling journey of a boarding school experience. With nearly 5,000 visitors each week, TABS is continually expanding and refining content to better serve the boarding school universe.

TABS also offers individual consultations, as well as forums and webinars with its Boarding School Alliance Partners (Carney, Sandoe & Associates; Community Brands; and Marts & Lundy).
TuitionNet, a wholly owned subsidiary of TABS, launched with the 2017-18 school year, providing a tuition insurance benefit to U.S. member and subscribing schools. In its four years of operation, TuitionNet has served 29 schools and insured nearly 7,500 students and $278 million in tuition and fees.

Knowing that 95% of member schools offer a tuition insurance plan to their students, TABS recognized the opportunity to collaborate for the common good—on behalf of schools and the families they serve—to begin to redirect some of the revenues flowing through the current tuition refund insurance system back into the boarding school community. Schools that participate in TuitionNet benefit from the program’s transparency, rate precision and fairness, industry insights arising from sophisticated data analysis, and participation in the program’s future financial success.
Research & Resources

TABS provides timely news and dynamic resources for its members’ urgent challenges, along with original and collaborative research related to boarding school education, practice, and policy.

The Association’s unique resources include:

- The TABS Career Center where boarding schools and job seekers connect to find their match;
- A deep archive of recordings, information, and materials from TABS events, webinars, and forums;
- A collection of periodic Flash Surveys and comprehensive surveys that gather insight on trending and relevant topics;
- TABS Reports, which share insights and statistics about key marketplace, educational, and Student Life Trends, as well as research exploring the lifelong impact of the boarding school experience, accessible through the TABS Community Portal;
- Access to TuitionNet, a program designed to protect tuition investments families make in their child’s education (for U.S. member schools);
- A blog that features a broad range of constituents from the boarding schools community sharing their insights, reflections, and inspirations.

TABS Headquarters

The TABS offices are currently located in downtown Asheville, a thriving city in western North Carolina’s Blue Ridge Mountains. While Asheville has served the organization well for several years, the Board is open to considering alternatives, as the incoming Executive Director discerns how best to support member schools across the continent and around the world.
Position Overview

TABS is a vibrant membership organization, serving as the primary nexus for college-preparatory schools in the United States, Canada, and abroad. As a complement to the work with members, TABS offers TuitionNet, an insurance program designed to protect a family’s investment in their child’s education.

The association is an indispensable resource for residential schools, as they navigate everything from the ongoing need to promote the unique benefits of boarding schools to unexpected challenges such as how to help schools operate in a pandemic. TABS has demonstrated its nimbleness and responsive nature in the past year as it has guided member schools to create new protocols and communications strategies, all while continuing to make the case for an immersive residential experience through the TABS Connect™ platform.

A renewed emphasis on professional development brings training and enrichment opportunities— including a robust collection of site-based, virtual, and hybrid options to thousands of registrants each year. Proficient at balancing in-person and virtual management and programming, the association is primed to think creatively about its headquarters and to consider either a relocation or remote operations.

In June 2022, Pete Upham will conclude his successful 15-year tenure as Executive Director. TABS seeks a new Executive Director who will amplify the association’s strengths and lead it to provide ever more value to boarding communities broadly and to the members of those communities individually.
The Executive Director will be actively engaged in the daily operations of TABS. In addition, the incoming Director will encounter challenges and opportunities including:

• Inspiring and supporting member school leaders as a thought leader and visionary for the boarding school community and serving as an industry-wide spokesperson.
• Anticipating and recognizing trends in boarding school education—through the building of personal relationships with school leaders and through TABS’ research efforts—in order to meet the ever-evolving needs of a diverse community of member schools.
• Building cohesion within a dynamic team of professional staff based in multiple locations and implementing structures, policies, and feedback systems that support professional growth, enhanced productivity, and an even stronger organizational culture.
• Furthering conversations that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts internally at TABS and throughout the boarding school sector.
• In partnership with the Board of Directors, evaluating options for TABS headquarters and structure—whether in person, remote, or hybrid.
Desired Qualities & Experience

The Search Committee will consider a wide range of accomplished leaders for this role. Candidates who are most likely to advance will offer many of the following qualifications and qualities:

- Significant experience leading and managing adults in a complex organization and a deep appreciation for the opportunities and challenges of leading in a boarding school environment.
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the requisite skill to support employee growth in this area and to facilitate critical conversations in the design of increasingly inclusive programming.
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy and the tactical skills necessary to manage the systems and processes necessary to implement strategy, generating and harnessing energy around the potential for growth and change in the organization.
- The desire and skill to build and sustain relationships with member schools and sister organizations—often serving in the role of counselor, confidant, and guide—and including campus visits to exchange ideas with member school leaders.
- Well-developed business acumen and context for understanding independent school finance.
- Effective verbal and written communication skills, demonstrating facility using the written word, digital media, public speaking, and one-on-one conversations to educate and unify constituents, share an organization’s value proposition, and convey inspiration and thought leadership.
- Eagerness to develop a shared vision and work collaboratively with the Board of Directors.
To Apply

Interested candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

• A cover letter expressing interest in this particular position; and
• A current résumé.

Selected candidates will also be asked to provide the following:

• Responses to writing prompts specific to this position; and
• A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each. (References will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission.)

Candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence and to submit a résumé and cover letter to:

**Heather Flewelling**
Search Consultant
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**Marsha Little**
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