



## The CVI Complete Initiative

The Overbrook School for the Blind (OSB) has launched a transformative initiative: **CVI Complete**, a multi-faceted collaboration among educators, parents, medical professionals, researchers, and service providers that is designed to meet the needs of a growing population of children diagnosed with Cerebral Vision Impairment (CVI).

As part of **CVI Complete**, OSB is establishing a dedicated clinic for highly specialized CVI assessments that will serve both OSB students and children within the community at large. It will also provide high-quality training for educators and services providers, support and education for families, and groundbreaking research opportunities that will contribute to the evolving knowledge of the field.

### Background and Need

CVI is a visual impairment resulting from brain-based damage to the visual pathway versus ocular or eye-related issues. The impairment occurs when part of the brain is adversely affected due to trauma or a medical event/condition, thus preventing the brain's complex visual system from functioning properly.

As physicians receive greater training on the common associations and clinical features of CVI, the frequency of the diagnosis is likely to increase. To date, there is no medical cure or surgical intervention to treat CVI once it is diagnosed.

CVI is a global health concern

CVI is now the leading cause of visual impairment in developed nations, accounting for **30-40%** of visual impairment diagnoses.

However, with a correct assessment together with appropriate interventions, a child can gain or retain a significant amount of their functional vision.

### Implementation of CVI Complete

For OSB to become truly renowned as a leader in CVI locally and beyond, the time is now to make critical investments in advancing CVI assessment and remediation to improve the lives of our students and other visually impaired children. **CVI Complete** is designed to integrate multiple components of a CVI plan so that each child will receive customized interventions to achieve maximum functional vision. Once fully rolled out, we expect **CVI Complete** to become a replicable model that will be followed across the globe.

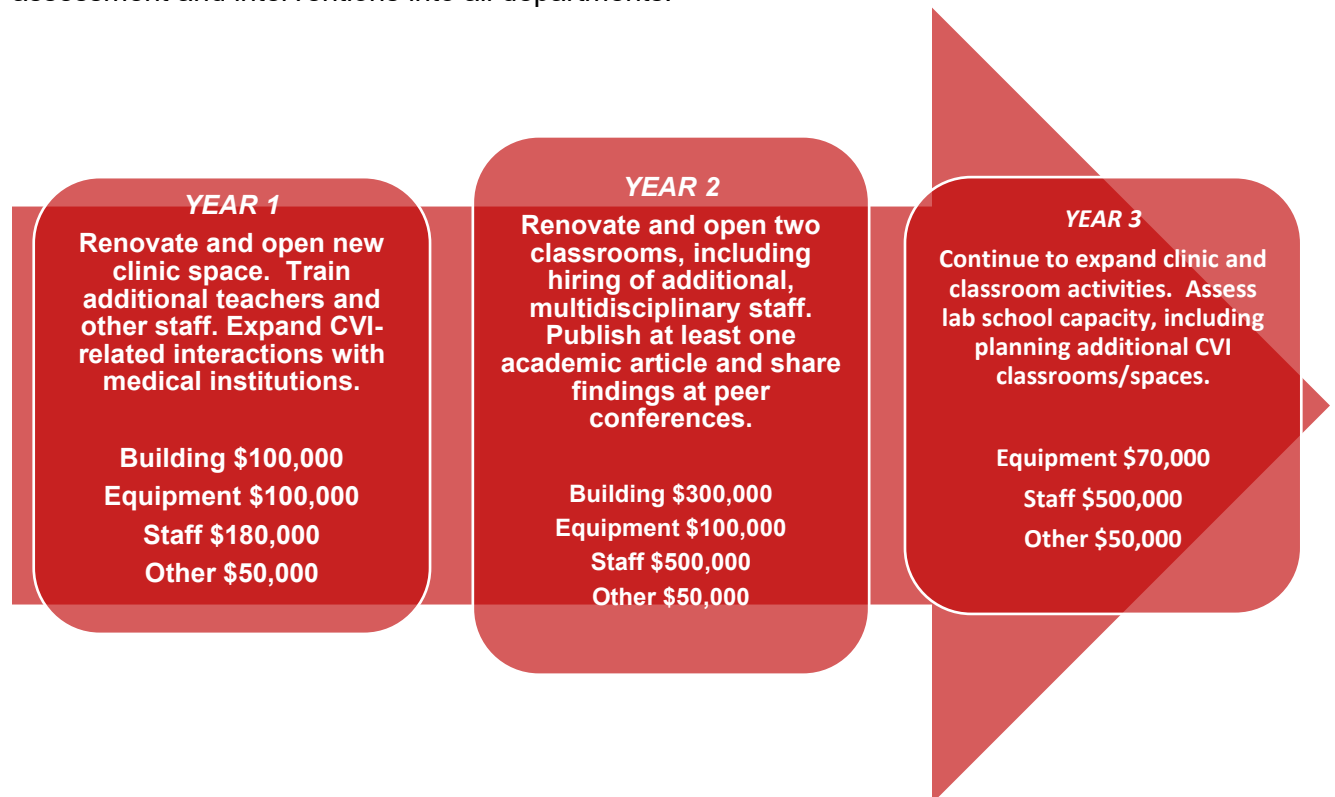
To this end, OSB has hired Beth Ramella, Ed.D. as the full-time CVI specialist to provide professional leadership to CVI Complete. Ramella, a teacher of people with visual impairments

for nearly 25 years, has developed specific teaching strategies for children with CVI, working alongside parents, teachers, and ophthalmologists. She is widely considered one of the most experienced and effective assessors of CVI in the country.

Currently, every student on OSB's campus receives an annual comprehensive CVI assessment. The assessment is to determine how the student uses vision, to track the student's progress, and to update individual education plans (IEPs). At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, 33% of OSB students were diagnosed with CVI. Like the trend nationwide, OSB anticipates a growing influx of students diagnosed with CVI.

The three-year **CVI Complete** plan includes renovating and equipping a fully accessible clinic space and two adjoining classrooms. In addition, OSB will hire, train, and maintain a multi-disciplinary staff for the clinic. The clinic, which will serve both OSB students and the community, will be a practical assessment lab, often referred to as a "lab school."

**CVI Complete** will function as an academic center to conduct research; provide hands-on CVI training for OSB teachers of the visually impaired, therapists, and paraeducators, as well as non-OSB affiliated educators; develop multi-faceted CVI-related partnerships with medical providers; create individualized, CVI-specific, accessible materials for students; and gather data on students' progress. Using data gathered from the clinic and classroom, OSB will publish research and share its results in presentations at state, national, and international conferences. OSB will continue to expand **CVI Complete** at the school in the coming years by adapting and equipping additional classrooms and spaces, training additional staff, and integrating CVI assessment and interventions into all departments.



### Funding Requirement and Timeline

**\$2 Million** for a three-year investment in launching and sustaining **CVI Complete**.