The Evolving Role of the Head of School

In what ways have the demands of headship changed over the past 30 years?

In what ways does one’s approach to headship change over the course of a career?

A panel of ISACS heads will consider these questions based on personal experiences and engage session participants in discussion.
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For discussion

- In what ways has the nature of headship changed over the past 30 years?

- In what ways does headship change over the course of an individual head’s career?

- What can we recommend to heads, particularly those early in their careers, from our observations and experiences?
Resources

Relevant sessions at NAIS Annual Conference 2013

On leadership roles and administrative structure:

*Rethinking leadership*, March 1

On early headship:

*Breaking Tradition: Planning Strategy in the First Year of Headship*, February 28
*From Fellowship to Headship*, February 28
*First Year of Headship: Can You Spare Some Change*, March 1

On the role of head’s spouse:

*I Do; We Do! Jumping the Broom into Headship*, February 27
*Marriage Sustainability: Headship and Marriage – Can It Work*, March 1
Readings on the evolving role of the head of school


Summarizes full report on NAIS 2009 survey cited below. Key point: In 2002, heads reported personnel issues as very demanding, with business issues less so; in 2009, financial and business issues were a greater area of focus.

The evolving role of the head of school. ESHA News, Elementary School Heads Association, April 2011.

Outlines key points from 2010-2011 ESHA-member discussions on this topic.


Directly addresses increased complexity of the job, from educational leader to CEO; offers advice to aspiring heads.

*Tour* current literature on of technological advances, economic competition, emotional intelligence, and human diversity and considers the impact on school leadership – citing Thomas Friedman, Daniel Pink, David Brooks, Clay Christensen and others.

The state of independent school leadership: Report of survey research among school heads and administrators. NAIS, 2009. (Link to web page requiring NAIS password.)

*Offers data on demographics and perceptions of independent school leaders, including job stresses and satisfaction by area of endeavor.*


*Explores current data affecting the roles of independent school leaders across a wide spectrum of topics: the economic outlook, marketing, demographics, enrollment management, financial aid, international students, philanthropy, legislative and judicial issues, and equity and justice, HR, environmental sustainability, teaching and learning.*
Related readings


Offers advice for heads from heads in the form of essays on a wide array of topics.

**Data**. Look at My Happy Rainbow, 1/08/11.

*Responds to increased emphasis on quantitative assessment, from kindergarten teacher perspective.*


*Identifies the growing influence (more than 10 years ago) of the business model on independent schools.*
Geissman, J. "At the forefront: The experiences and insights of young heads of school." Independent School, NAIS, Fall 2010, pp. 32-40.

Reflects on headship based on author’s own “young-head” experience and interviews with 25 peers.

Godin, S. Too much data leads to not enough belief. Seth's Blog, 1/21/10.

Considers emotional connection in marketing, proof vs. belief.

The Internet a decade later. Best Education Sites, 2012.

In graphic form, gives a tour of change in information technology from 2002 to 2012.

Littleford, J. Head compensation: The race to the top. Littleford & Associates.

Describes the upper reaches of compensation in independent schools and its context.
Mogel, W. *The power of play*. Video, 11 minutes, CSEE, 11/10/12.

*Author of The blessing of the skinned knee* and *The blessing of a B-* offers an entertaining update on the mindset of contemporary parents, eager to save their children from discomfort and to ensure their success, and the ramifications for those children.

Ravitch, D. *Two types of superintendent*. Education Week, 2/09/10.

*Addresses leadership style in the context of the press for data in public schools.*

Ujifusa, A. *Debate stirs on arming teachers, school staff*. Education Week, 12/19/12.

*Presents a snapshot of the current concern about school safety across the nation.*