

**CAIS Trustee/School Head Conference
Saturday January 31, 2015**

**Strategies for Successful Leadership Searches
(Session Two: Workshop #2-04)**

I. Leadership Identification and Cultivation

Adopt a strategic mindset and position or point of view that precedes and supersedes any and all specific searches.

Commit to meaningful professional and leadership development in the case of internal cultivation and to stature and reputation building in the case of external searches.

Be open to the idea that the right person can ably fill a position he/she hasn't already filled.

II. The Search

Constitute a search committee that is appropriately representative and suited to the specific search; orient the committee to its role and relationships and to the search timeline; select/assign a chair.

Create a clear, compelling position statement to accompany school materials; include desired qualities and qualifications, information about the school culture, and details about the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Choose a search firm that understands your philosophy, specific needs and locale.

Don't underestimate the investment a strong, successful search requires with regard to time (and whose time), expertise, and financial commitment.

Periodically update stakeholders on the search progress/status. Balance communication and transparency with necessary confidentiality.

Take the time to find the right person. You need someone who is authentic about who he/she is right from the start.

Give yourself permission to place an interim or hire a consultant, especially if you are replacing an iconic figure. This can be a valuable opportunity to reflect, redefine, and set a new direction.

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III. Transition and Support

A new leadership role in an independent school, particularly a headship, represents a lifestyle choice, not simply a new professional position. View the new hire as a whole person, and establish a transition committee that is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that all aspects of his/her life are given careful attention.

Make it clear early on that martyrdom is not an expectation of the new administrator; work with the administrator to develop sustainable systems of support. Do not allow the leader to establish unhealthy habits, such as taking less vacation time, attending a school event every weeknight, checking emails into the wee hours of the morning, forgoing exercise and physical examinations, etc.

Exercise patience, and allow time for closure. Do not expect the new hire to begin significant work for your institution before concluding her/his current role. Similarly, understand that it takes time to understand a new culture and make systemic change.

Head Searches only: If the search committee has hired a first-time head of school, support his/her attendance at the Institute for New Heads, offered each July by the National Association of Independent Schools. This will be the Head of School's national cohort from which he/she will be able to draw strength, knowledge, and inspiration.

Panelists

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