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Head of School Retention in Independent Schools

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HEAD OF SCHOOL RETENTION IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

by

Kevin Yaley

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Dissertation Committee

Robert Donmoyer (Chair), PhD
Leslie Boozer, EdD
Fred Galloway, EdD

University of San Diego

University of San Diego
School of Leadership and Education Sciences

CANDIDATE'S NAME: Kevin Yaley

TITLE OF DISSERTATION: HEAD OF SCHOOL RETENTION IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

APPROVAL:

_____, Chair
Robert Donmoyer, PhD

_____, Member
Leslie Boozer, EdD

_____, Member
Fred Galloway, EdD

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ABSTRACT

According to the National Association of Independent Schools (2020), independent schools across the country continue to experience an increasing number of head-of-school vacancies, both expected and unexpected. Save for the departures by heads who are retiring or obviously chasing greener pastures, the reasons why an increasing number of heads are departing at a disquieting rate are as enigmatic as the departures themselves.

As part of its governance responsibilities, the board has unconditional authority over the employment of the head, including, most especially, the ability to influence the retention of the head. Unfortunately, since these boards of trustees operate independently, there is no easy mechanism for researching what factors, if any, might influence enigmatic departures. Information, in short, is hard to come by due to both the need for preserving confidentiality as well as the desire for schools to communicate departure decisions in as amenable and mutually beneficial manner as possible to minimize the inevitable disruption to the school community such departures create.

What can be more easily researched are the factors that might influence the retention of heads, especially those who are enjoying a longer-than-average tenure at their current school. Presumably, there are many motivating factors that influence a head's job satisfaction and, consequently, their decision to remain at their current school. Using a mixed-methods approach to data collection that includes a web-based survey and interviews with selected heads from independent schools across the country, this study sought to identify potential motivating factors, including, and most especially, the relationship between the head and the board chair, and investigate to what extent, if any, these factors influence the heads concerning their job satisfaction and, ostensibly, their decision to remain in their current position.

DEDICATION

Nine months, two years, and two days to write five chapters. Saturday mornings were spent parked at my desk. 10,000 hours? Maybe. 10,000 edits? Definitely. Lots of uh-oh moments, and a few aha moments, though never enough of the latter. When it all started, it was a real awakening for me, but I knew that if I just played the long game, didn't bend, didn't break, and reminded myself throughout that sometimes my second shot at it would be the one to keep, I knew it would be done; one day. I had my playlist to keep me focused – seven days a week – and early morning runs to look forward to, which I especially needed on those days that felt longer than the winter migration of a turtle dove. And throughout, I was reminded of what Red said, "Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies." To my friends and family, thank you for everything.

Kevin

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

An independent school board of trustees, charged with holding the school in "trust," is ultimately responsible for the governance of the school (NAIS, 2018). Among other responsibilities, the members of the board of trustees serve as guardians of the school's unique educational mission, focusing their time, talent, and treasure on long-range, strategic issues that advance the mission and vision of the school, as well as bear the fiduciary responsibility of ensuring sound financial management of the school. Chief among the responsibilities is the board's duty to successfully hire, support, and retain the head of school ("head"). According to NAIS (2020), nothing is more critical to the success of the board and, thereby, the ongoing success of the school.

Over the last decade, research conducted by NAIS (2020) has revealed a noticeable rise in the percentage of schools dealing with unexpected head turnover, escalating from 8% in 2010-2011 to 21% in 2019-2020. Whether it is the decision of individual head, their board, or potentially both, it is difficult to identify the causes of and/or reasons for the growing number of unexpected departures. NAIS (2020) defines *unexpected head turnover* as "any nonrenewal or termination occurring within three years of hire not directly related to retirement, interim succession, or unethical or illegal behavior" (p. 8).

Whatever the reason for the turnover, with the rise in these unanticipated vacancies, coupled with the steady decline in the average tenure of a sitting head – from nine years in 2010-2011 to seven years in 2019-2020 – there is an increased likelihood that more and more independent school boards across the country will be faced with the task of attracting, hiring, and ultimately – and most importantly – retaining a head in an increasingly volatile market.

Unfortunately, for the large majority of independent school boards, supporting and retaining a successful head is neither an area of expertise, nor one in which sufficient time and resources are invested. In his 2014 study *Evaluating the Head of School Transition*, Marc Levinson, Executive Director of Mid-South Independent School Business Officers (MISBO) noted, "Most agree that hiring (as well as supporting and evaluating) leadership is the primary responsibility of our school boards, but most are ill-equipped to tackle this assignment" (p. 1). Considering the startling number of head transitions his study uncovered[1], Levinson is legitimately concerned over the number of boards that will likely find themselves in the search and/or retention business sooner rather than later, and very few boards, he believes, are adequately prepared for this critical task.

Assuming heads are meeting their goals and objectives, have neither violated any significant rule or regulation nor committed an egregious error in judgment, and are otherwise performing all of their duties, why are heads unexpectedly leaving their current positions at an increasing rate? And, more importantly, why do these unanticipated departures matter to schools and their boards?

As noted by NAIS (2020), head turnover is not necessarily bad, as new leadership "can bring renewed vision and energy to a school, and a new head may be able to respond more effectively to advancing the mission of the school" (p. 12). In some cases, a new head can bring much-needed experience and expertise in critical areas – financial savvy, enrollment management, marketing and branding – that could catapult a school to a stronger position within the market at a given moment in the school's growth and evolution.

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[1] In his study, Levinson provided the following snapshot of head transitions around the country between 2009 and 2014. During this five-year period, 64% of schools in Florida, 77% of schools in Georgia, 82% in North Carolina, and 45% in Connecticut endured a head transition. Similarly, of the 115 schools in the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS), 52% of the schools were hiring a new head during that same period.

However, even in the cases where the head transitions are publicly known and celebrated – from a well-respected head taking a position at another independent school closer to her family roots to the retirement of a long-standing, beloved head – any changeover in leadership at the top inevitably creates a sense of instability throughout the community and potentially impacts one of the most important aspects of the school; namely, the education of the students.

As noted by NAIS (2020), "Heads of school are vital to ensuring student success. Effective heads help maintain a positive school climate and advocate for the school in the community. Their faculty recruitment practices, financial management, and strategic planning indirectly impact student achievement" (p. 12). The disturbance that a change at the top causes and its impact on the educational mission is not limited to independent schools. According to Quimby (2015), research conducted by Levin and Bradley indicated that the abrupt departure of public school principals "disrupts school progress, raises teacher turnover, and lowers student achievement" (p. 1).

According to the most recent NAIS study *Head Turnover at Independent Schools* (2020), 21.6% of independent schools experienced a head transition in 2019-2020. Of greater concern, the potential for an increase in the percentage of schools facing a head turnover is exacerbated by the alarming high percentage of heads (42%) and boards (33%) reporting "having experienced a strained head-board relationship in the past ten years" (p. 4).

Among the many factors that may influence the level of job satisfaction of heads as well as, ostensibly, their decision to remain at a school, arguably it is this partnership between the head and the board – and, more importantly, between the head and the board chair – that is most vital to the retention of the head, and thereby the ongoing success of the school and its students. Furthermore, the relationship between the head and the board also is critical in determining the

short- and long-term performance and success of the school (Edwards, 1994). Research

conducted by Baker et al. (2015) confirmed that not only is a healthy and productive relationship

between board chair and school head necessary for board effectiveness, but "for the heads of

school, the ability to effectively work in partnership with boards of trustees is crucial to both

school success and career longevity" (p.83).

When the partnership is strong, the board and head are in its best position to support the

ongoing work of the school and to increase the likelihood of the head staying at the school as a

result of their ongoing job satisfaction. When the partnership is unstable or fractured and the

impact is felt in the lack of job satisfaction of the head, the risk of an unexpected head departure

increases, and if the departure comes to fruition, inevitably the school and its students will suffer.

Problem Statement

Save for the departures by heads who are legitimately chasing greener pastures – whether

it be increased compensation, preferred location, enhanced reputation, or retirement from the

profession – the reasons why an increasing number of heads are departing at a disquieting rate

are in many cases as enigmatic as the departures themselves.

As part of its governance responsibilities, the board has unconditional authority over the

employment of the head, including, most especially, the ability to hire, support, and retain the

head. Unfortunately, since these boards of trustees operate independently, there is no easy

mechanism for researching what factors, if any, might influence head departures in general. As

such, information about the reasons behind the departure of a head are hard to come by due to

both the need for preserving confidentiality as well as the desire for schools to communicate

these decisions in as amenable and mutually beneficial manner as possible in an effort to

minimize the inevitable disruption to the school community such departures create.

However, what can be more easily researched are the factors that might influence the retention of heads. In particular, heads who are currently enjoying a longer-than-average tenure at their current school. Undoubtedly, there are many motivating factors – both intrinsic and extrinsic – that presumably influence the level of job satisfaction that the head is enjoying and therefore, presumably, their ultimate decision to remain at their current school.

Concerning these two types of human motivation – intrinsic and extrinsic – Ryan and Deci (2005) capture the distinction between the two. "The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome" (p.55). Of the many intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing a head, their partnership with the board chair is an essential and inescapable component of their job satisfaction, success, and, ultimately, their decision to remain in their current post.

Clearly, there are indicators of unhealthy partnerships – such as a lack of clear communication between the head and the board chair, a perceived lack of engagement by either the head or the board chair, or a less-than-positive working relationship between the head and the board chair – that, according to Wilson (2015), "often plays a pivotal role in a board's decision to part ways with a head or a head's decision to leave a school prematurely" (p.1). Unfortunately, much of this knowledge comes more from speculation and casual observation rather than objective research. Since leading research organizations including NAIS (2020) do not gather information related to the human factors that may potentially influence head transitions, "it is impossible to disambiguate disgruntled departures from fulfilled interim contracts, sudden deaths, justified firings, and other sources of unexpected head turnover that happen quickly but do not fit NAIS's actual definition" (p.12).

Purpose and Research Questions

The research challenge, then, is to identify motivating factors – including, and most especially, aspects of the head and board chair partnership – that appropriately support, professionally satisfy, and successfully retain heads. The purpose of this study is to identify potential motivating factors, including, and most especially, the relationship between the head and the board chair, and investigate to what extent, if any, these factors influence the behaviors and attitudes of heads as they relate to their job satisfaction and, ostensibly, their decision to remain at their school.

Only heads who have been in their current position (and at their current school) for a minimum of four years will be included in the study. The underlying assumption is that these heads have been in their current positions long enough to have had the opportunity (or opportunities) to contemplate their level of job satisfaction and, as such, reaffirm their decision to remain at the school.

To achieve the stated purpose, the following research questions will guide the study, at least initially:

> **(R1):** To what extent, if at all, do various motivating factors and select demographics influence the head's level of job satisfaction?
>
> **(R2):** To what extent, if at all, does the board chair and head partnership influence the head's job satisfaction in their current posts and, if it does, what aspects – both intrinsic and extrinsic – of this partnership appear to be of greatest importance?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In his seminal work *The Headmaster*, Pulitzer Prize winning author John McPhee (1966) recounts the sixty-six year reign of Frank Boyden who served as Headmaster at the prestigious Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts. According to Boyden, the role of the trustee in the life of an independent school was as simple as it was straightforward: When asked to show up, the trustee must merely bring their checkbook.

Beyond this singular responsibility, during the Boyden years the role of the board was limited to attending social gatherings where trustees chronicled stories of old while deferring all authority, oversight, and fiduciary responsibilities of the school to their sole employee, the headmaster. Since Boyden's retirement in 1968, much has changed about leading an independent school, most significantly the role and responsibilities of its governing body, the board of trustees.

Today, boards serve a critical role in the life and health of independent schools. Among its many responsibilities, to attract, hire, and retain the head is arguably its most important. And since the board has the sole discretion of hiring or firing the head of school, coupled with the fact that the head is forever at liberty to accept or reject any extension or ratification to their employment contract with the board, the significance of this relationship – and those factors that ultimately influence the decision of the head to stay or go – cannot be understated.

Thus, in an effort to fully understand the motivational factors – whether intrinsic, extrinsic, or some combination therein – that fundamentally influence the degree to which heads are satisfied in their current job, my work begins with a literature review of the following general

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areas: 1) independent schools; 2) the evolving role of the independent school head; 3) the role of

the independent school board with a focus on structure and composition, operations and

procedures; 4) head and board chair partnership; and 5) content theories of motivation.

It is important to note that while the research herein concerning independent schools, the

role of the head, and the head/chair partnership is primarily derived from current literature in the

field, a notable portion of the research related to best practices in independent school governance

is based weightily on descriptive data and anecdotal accounts. In their 2014 mixed-methods

research study *Independent School Leadership: Heads, Boards and Strategic Thinking,* the

authors noted that not only is the majority of the research on independent school leadership and

governance is "dominated by assumptions and claims based on eminence rather than empirical

findings" (p. 13), much of the existing literature pertaining to independent school leadership "is

rich in case studies and anecdotal evidence" (p. 18).

And while the findings in the literature and research rooted in descriptive, qualitative data

positively inform the reader on best practices in independent school governance, the absence of a

deep repository of data-rich quantitative and/or qualitative analysis invariably limits the integrity,

authority, and generalizability of the findings.

Independent Schools

Independent schools, juxtaposed to "private" schools, are fundamentally defined as non-

profit organizations that are significantly sustained by tuition revenue and lesser so by charitable

giving (i.e., endowment draw and annual fundraising). Private schools, for which independent

schools are often mistaken, are typically governed and subsidized, to a significant extent, by a

separate religious body, a corporate entity, or a non-profit organization. As noted by Baker, et.al.

(2015), these private school governing bodies and their funding sources "often have influence

over many of a private school's important decisions: funding, hiring, curriculum, mission, and accountability." Of note, one of the defining factors of an independent school that distinguishes them from private schools in general is the considerable role and responsibility of the Board of Trustees who are ultimately charged with holding the school in trust.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and United States Department of Education, in 2018-2019 of the estimated 57,098,000 students in the United States, approximately 5,218,000 students attended a private school (~ 9.1%), of which roughly 700,000 (or just over 1.2% of all students) were enrolled in one of the 1,603 National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) member schools. To be eligible for NAIS membership, an independent school must: demonstrate its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status; be governed by an independent board of trustees[2]; be fully accredited by an approved organization; demonstrate a commitment to diversity in compliance with state and federal law as evident in all nondiscrimination policies for admission and hiring; be funded primarily through tuition and charitable contributions; and adhere to the NAIS Principles of Good Practice (NAIS, 2019).

In 2018-2019, average total student enrollment for NAIS schools ranged from less than 100 students to over 2,000 students, with an overall average enrollment of approximately 400 students per school. Just over 82% of the NAIS member schools are day schools (the other 18% are partially or fully boarding schools), with 88% of schools being co-educational, and over 50% of schools serving elementary through secondary students (pre-kindergarten to grade 12). These schools carried a median class size of 15 students, with an average student to teacher ratio of 9:1. The location of these schools is fairly widespread with the East/Mid-Atlantic region (28%) and the West region (20%) serving as home to the largest percent of schools (NAIS, 2019).

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[2] Along with their unique missions and non-profit status, independent schools are governed by an independent board of trustees, and not run or controlled by an outside entity (church, foundation, etc.) that may undermine the independent operations of the Board of Trustees.

There is a myriad of factors that ostensibly influence parents' decision to enroll their child(ren) in an independent school. According to NAIS (2016), the reasons range from the individual attention provided to each student learner, to the emphasis on a balanced program of academics, arts, and athletics, to the skills and competencies students learn that purportedly prepare them for success in college and beyond (*The Independent School Advantage*, p.1). And while these 1600-plus independent schools can range meaningfully in their total enrollment, scope of program offered, and pedagogical lean, there is one critical aspect that each of these schools has in common; namely, its governing body – both in terms of its form *and* function – normally referred to as the board of trustees (*What Are Independent Private Schools?*, 2019).

Head of School

While the position of head of school has been around as long as independent schools themselves (some of the earliest US independent schools date back to the 17th century, such as the Collegiate School in Manhattan founded in 1628), articles and research on the role and responsibilities of the head are largely non-existent. This lack of substantive research may be the result of the perceived simplicity and straightforwardness of the job description itself. In short, the head of school – sometimes formally referred to as head teacher, headmaster, headmistress, chancellor, principal or school director – is principally the staff member of a school who holds greatest responsibility for the instructional leadership of the school.

A few writings from in the mid- to late-20th century reinforce a relatively simplistic and generally-accepted definition of the work of the head. Chamberlain (1944) succinctly defined the role of the head (commonly referred to as "headmaster" at this time) as an autonomous commander-in-chief who has sole responsibility of the entirety of the school. In his 1973 survey of heads, Nostrand (1977) found the most common description given about themselves was

"captains who are absolutely responsible for all things related to the school" (p.1). In his 1992 article, *Leading to Manage, Managing to Lead*, long-time head Peter Sipple maintains that the head is viewed as a paterfamilias, "the inheritor of parental authority in a family structure more typical of an earlier era" (p.2). Sipple goes on to explain: "Just as the school is more like a traditional than a bureaucratic organization, so the head leads by dint of personal qualities and strength of character more than by fulfilling a job description" (p.2).

Whether viewed as commander-in-chief, captain of the ship, or paterfamilias what has always been assumed about the head based on the clear and obvious nature of the work of a head – that of leading a school – is their fundamental responsibility of serving as the instructional leader of the school. As instructional leader the head focuses on the core responsibility of a school; namely, define the school's educational goals, oversee effective teaching and learning, manage the instructional program, and promote the school climate (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

As the primary instructional leader, the head would be expected to spend the majority of their time on major instructional matters such as designing and coordinating curriculum, evaluating faculty instruction, and supporting student learning. Few would argue that there is no role for the head of a school more important than ensuring the effective execution of the educational program. Research does support the critical role instructional leadership plays in improving and promoting instructional practices and cultivating student academic achievement (Spillane, Camburn & Pareja, 2007; Pustejovsky et al., 2009; Spillane & Zuberi, 2009).

Yet, while the responsibilities of instructional leadership will inescapably remain central to the role of the head, recent studies and articles have noted the expansion of the scope of responsibilities – well beyond that of the instructional leader – that are expected to be of the purview of the head, all of which are now competing for time and attention. This emergent

increase in the scope of responsibilities may well be the result of the changing nature of

independent schools and what is expected of them in terms of managing and leading[3] a mission-

driven comprehensive education for individual learners, coupled with the rising demands of

running a multi-million dollar non-profit in an increasingly competitive market place.

In October 2007, NAIS administered a survey to learn about the perceived leadership

challenges facing heads of independent schools. Based on the responses from 439 heads (33%

response rate), heads identified the following nine aspects of their job as most challenging (in

order of magnitude): finding time for self and family; fundraising; schedule and time

commitments/time management; hiring and firing of staff; managing the school's financial

health; and working with the board. Interestingly – and sadly – of the 22 aspects of the job they

were asked to rate, supporting faculty and students were ranked as the 20th and 22nd least

challenging (NAIS, 2007, p.2).

In the NAIS report, *The State of Independent School Leadership: Report of Survey

Research Among School Heads and Administrators* (2009), a follow up to the to the NAIS

leadership research study conducted by Belden, Russonello, and Stewart (2002), one of the major

findings revealed that, "the demands of the job for heads seem to have changed also during the

past seven years. Heads are more involved in managing the school's overall financial health,

strategic planning, and fundraising, as opposed to personnel management noted in the 2002

study" (p.2).

According to Jim Wickenden (2011), an independent school search consultant since

1986, "the challenges of leading a school have changed dramatically", as the head's job has

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[3] While there is an abundance of literature concerning the relationship between leadership and management (or leaders and managers) ranging from the notion that they are two distinct roles standing in opposition to one another (Bennis & Nanus, 2007), to distinct but mutually complimentary roles, (Kotter, 1990 & 2001), for the purpose of this study I will operate under the construct that the head operates as both leader and manager of the school.

become "more complicated, with growing demands on his or her time and talent" (p.1).

Wickenden goes on to pinpoint ten areas where he has seen the most dramatic change, and as a

result, the added time drains and pressures placed on heads. Of the ten, Wickenden highlights the

increased threat of litigation from unhappy parents, increased competition for attracting qualified

faculty and students, and the growing demands from the new consumer mentality to provide the

most current and attractive program and curriculum.

NAIS (2020), provides the most comprehensive and generally accepted description of the

role of head. While they freely acknowledge that there are "profoundly different ways to

accomplish this goal" (p.1), NAIS offers the following ten guiding principles for the role of the

head:

1. The head works in partnership with the board of trustees to establish and refine the

   school's mission; articulates the mission to all constituencies — students, faculty and

   staff, parents, alumni/ae, and the community; and supports the mission in working with

   all constituencies;

2. The head oversees the shaping of the school's program and the quality of life in the

   school community;

3. The head manages the school in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations;

4. The head establishes an effective manner of leadership and appropriately involves

   members of the administration and faculty in decision making;

5. The head is responsible for attracting, retaining, developing, and evaluating qualified

   faculty and staff;

6. The head is accessible, within reason, and communicates effectively with all

   constituencies;

7. The head is responsible for financial management, maintenance of the physical plant, strategic planning, and fundraising;

8. The head ensures that every element of school life reflects the principles of equity, justice, and the dignity of each individual;

9. The head is alert to his or her role within the broader networks of schools, school leaders, and the community; and

10. The head works to ensure that the principles of good practice of all school operations, especially those of admission, marketing, faculty recruitment, and fundraising, demonstrate integrity at all levels of the school.

This top ten notwithstanding, what most heads learn early into their tenure is that as comprehensive as the NAIS job description may be, the actual boundaries of the job extend well beyond these ten primary responsibilities and can, at times, feel seemingly endless. As one experienced head noted when asked after 10 years on the job what were the lessons learned, this head noted that while they needed to become continuous learners especially in those areas (i.e., finances) most heads are unfortunately ill-prepared. In their 2016 interview, this head noted that very early on in the job every head must be ready to be quickly schooled in areas they never thought would be within scope of their responsibilities such as, "city politics, lawsuits, zoning laws, building permits, quirks of the properties that schools sit on, raising money, leading a community through crisis, and endless aspects of ` law" (p.1). They went on to comment that there are those realities that you as head are ultimately responsible for that you never imagined would fall on your desk ranging from the seemingly mundane to the unpredictable realities including, but not limited to, "natural disasters, health threats, external threats, worldwide events, and politics" (NAIS, 2016a, p.1).

Beyond the scope of tasks for which the head is ultimately responsible, what is of equal importance in the minds of all the various school's primary constituencies – students, parents, trustees, and alumni – are the qualities and characteristics expected of the head. In his groundbreaking book, Sutcliffe (2013) interviewed some of the United Kingdom's most successful heads (referred to as "headteachers") to learn what makes for a great leader. Based on his qualitative research, Sutcliffe identified eight qualities of exceptional school heads: vision, courage, passion, emotional intelligence, resilience, judgment, persuasion, and curiosity.

Understandably, organizations of every type, schools included, seek these and other similar essential qualities of the charismatic, transformational leader. And while constituents may not knowingly be seeking a leader "of divine origin" who is "set apart from ordinary men" and "endowed with… exceptional powers and qualities" (Weber, 1947, pp. 358-359), one can understand why they are generally drawn to the aspects and attributes traditionally ascribed to this type of leader. It has been often quoted by boards and executive search firms alike, when looking for their next head of school the ideal candidate for the head vacancy is God on a good day.

It is understandable why we are drawn to the notion of leaders being god-like, ascribing a list of extraordinary attributes, viewing them as though they are "endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or exceptional powers or qualities" (Schweitzer, 1974, p. 151). In truth, the qualities often expected of the great school leader – boldness, courage, wisdom, foresight, initiative – are, by and large, heroic and, in many respects, god-like. However, the very notion of ascribing divine qualities to leaders undermines the most fundamental truth about leaders; namely, they are human.

Board of Trustees

The NAIS Principles of Good Practice (2020) outline the standards and expectations in key areas of independent schools including the role of the Board of Trustees. Membership in NAIS is contingent upon agreement to abide by the spirit of the Principles of Good Practice. Following are the twelve principles set forth for NAIS boards that outline the responsibilities of individual members of independent school boards.

1. A trustee actively supports and promotes the school's mission, vision, strategic goals, and policy positions.

2. A trustee is knowledgeable about the school's mission and goals, including its commitment to equity and justice, and represents them appropriately and accurately within the community.

3. A trustee stays fully informed about current operations and issues by attending meetings regularly, coming to meetings well prepared, and participating fully in all matters.

4. The board sets policy and focuses on long-range and strategic issues. An individual trustee does not become involved directly in specific management, personnel, or curricular issues.

5. The trustee takes care to separate the interests of the school from the specific needs of a particular child or constituency.

6. A trustee accepts and supports board decisions. Once a decision has been made, the board speaks as one voice.

7. A trustee keeps all board deliberations confidential.

8. A trustee guards against conflict of interest, whether personal or business related.

9. A trustee has the responsibility to support the school and its head and to demonstrate that support within the community.

10. Authority is vested in the board as a whole. A trustee who learns of an issue of importance to the school has the obligation to bring it to the head of school, or to the board chair, and must refrain from responding to the situation individually.

11. A trustee contributes to the development program of the school, including strategic planning for development, financial support, and active involvement in annual and capital giving.

12. Each trustee, not just the treasurer and finance committee, has fiduciary responsibility to the school for sound financial management.

Structure and Composition

According to the most recent *NAIS Trendbook* (2019-2020), the average size of the independent school board is 19, lower than the 2006 average of 22 yet higher than the 15-member average size for all non-profit boards as reported by BoardSource (2017). For the vast majority of schools (88%), the head of school serves as an ex-officio non-voting member of the board. Parents of a currently enrolled student(s) account for just over one-half (50.3%) of all board members, up slightly from 2006 (46%), followed by parents of alumni (20%) and alumni (16%).

It is less common for a school to include a member of the faculty on its board (13%), and if they do, the faculty member most often serves in a non-voting capacity (NAIS, 2019). Of note, both NAIS (2013) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (1992) caution against having faculty and/or staff (including the head of school) serve as voting members of the board as such involvement runs counter to the principle of independence of

judgment required of board members, and it can potentially place these employees in conflict with their employment status.

The actual number of trustees serving on a board varies from school to school[4] based on a number of factors, not the least of which are the total school enrollment and the unique culture of the school (NAIS, 2018). While BoardSource (2017) presumes that "there is no 'right' size for a board" (p. 17), they do believe that "it is possible for a board to be either too small or too large" (p. 17). Michael Useem, Director of the Center for Leadership and Change Management at the Wharton School suggests that studies do, in fact, point to an ideal size range: "Boards that are too small – under seven – don't have enough expertise and diverse strategic thinking, but over 13 they become too unwieldy to be effective" (Tahmincioglu & Hall, 2018, p.38).

The key factor in establishing the optimal size of the board should be based primarily on the board's organizational structure. Excerpted from the *Trustee Handbook, 9th Edition* (2007), if there is a multiplicity of committees or task forces, even with a large number of non-trustee participants, the board will need to be larger than one that has fewer committees and focuses on strategic issues through the use of task forces. There is risk at both ends of this spectrum; smaller boards with larger organizational structures (greater number of committees and task force groups) are at risk of burn out, while overstaffed boards with smaller organizational structure can lead to tedium and lack of purpose (NAIS Trustee Handbook, 2007, p. 35).

Structuring the board into committees tasked with specific areas of oversight and governance is the cleanest and most effective way to proceed. A specialized focus of committees

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[4] Typically, a general correlation exists between total student enrollment and the size of the board, as schools with higher enrollment tend to have a higher number of trustees serving on the board and vice versa. However, while quantitative studies in support of the following claim are hard to come by, it does appear that one factor influencing the size of the board irrespective of the student enrollment is the historic culture of the board. In other words, it is not uncommon for schools of similar size to vary in the number of trustees on the board, the explanation of which is most commonly that it is how it has always been at the school. Like many school traditions and cultural norms, it is not easy to change the make-up of a board if the culture of the board – including the number of trustees believed are "needed" to serve effectively – has remained constant for a significant amount of time and everything seems to be working just fine. As the old idiom advises, "If it isn't broke, don't fix it".

"enables board members to delve into specific areas and develop wise recommendations for board policy" (BoardSource, 2012, p. 58). When filling these committees, members (trustees and non-trustees) should be chosen based primarily on their area of expertise, their diverse perspectives, and their professional background.

Based on the 2013 NAIS Governance Study, almost all boards have standing committees for those key areas in support of strategic and fiduciary responsibilities: Finance (98%); Development or Fundraising (93%); Governance or Nominating (88%); Executive (85%); and Facilities or Buildings and Grounds (81%). Of note, between 2006 and 2012 there has been a dramatic decline (from 44% to 28%) of boards that have an Academic or Educational Committee. While the study does not presume a specific cause for this decline, what one can surmise is a broader understanding of the work of the board vis-à-vis the work of school. In other words, work that might fall under an Academic or Educational Committee would be within the purview of the school administration and staff, not the board.

Operations and Procedures

Even with the appropriate size and structure of the Board and its accompanying committees determined, what is arguably more essential to achieve good – or, better yet, great – governance is ensuring that this group of dedicated, well-intended, and deeply committed volunteers understands intimately their roles and responsibilities and, accordingly, how it should best operate and proceed.

During its nascent years, NAIS commissioned two veteran headmasters, Francis Parkman and E. Laurence Springer, to write it first ever treatise on the role of trustees at an independent school. In 1964, the authors penned *The Independent School Trustee: A Handbook*. From the start, Parkman and Springer (1964) insisted that in order to sustain an effective relationship

between the board and the headmaster (and thereby ensure the success of the entire school) an

"understanding and accepting of the basic division of responsibilities… must exist" (p.10).

Borrowing from the college model of the time, Parkman and Springer continued, "The

relationship between the trustees and president is best described in terms of the familiar

distinction between policy and operations. The board limits itself to broad considerations of

policy. The president is the operating head of the institution" (p.10). A few years later in the 3rd

edition of the NAIS Trustee Handbook (1972), senior member of the Harvard Corporation and

long-time independent school trustee C. A. Coolidge stated it a bit more unequivocally by

imploring trustees to do as follows: "DON'T MEDDLE… Do your best to see that the

organization is good, that it is well manned, and that it runs smoothly – but don't try and run it"

(p.3).

According to Peter Gow (2013), the most critical challenge for boards is to clearly

demarcate and honor the boundary between the board's role and the work of the school's

management team.

> *"Micromanaging" by boards--overzealous 'education committees' or*
> *simply over-involved, single-issue parent or alumni/ae trustees--has proved fatal*
> *not just to headships but occasionally to schools themselves by igniting political*
> *firestorms; by the same token, under-involved boards and incurious trustees can*
> *sit idly by as schools sail serenely toward financial or programmatic ruin. Close,*
> *congenial, and candid collaboration between school heads and board chairs is*
> *generally cited as a major factor in many schools' success in a given period or*
> *era of leadership* (p. 2).

On the whole, the operations and proceedings of the board should occur at the proverbial

30,000 foot level where time, energy, and expertise is spent on long-term, strategic planning and

policy work. One of the inherent challenges of a board – maintaining the appropriate separation

of duties between board and the school management – is ever-present due to the fact that on

average over half of the trustee seats are held by parents of current students. The result is boards

admittedly struggling to maintain an appropriate strategic vision in the face of an ever-increasing

competitive independent school landscape and the realities of the inevitable complaint a child

brings to their parent – a current trustee – about the day-to-day occurrences of school. Whether it

be a frustration with a current teacher, lack of playing time from the soccer coach, rumors about

bullying on the middle school courtyard, or the fifth grade standardized test scores falling short

of the local competition, maintaining separation between the trustee and the parent as trustee is

no easy task.

In short, the best way to separate these two identities is for the individual trustee to think,

act, and speak as a trustee only on those matters that are long-term and strategic. And while these

lines can be easily blurred (e.g., test scores today could impact future admissions), boards and

school are best served if the focus of the board operations remains on building for the future, and

not living in the present experience of their children. According to ISM (2011), one of the key

stability markers of a high-functioning board is when a board functions professionally and

strategically, committed to taking "viability-focused action on behalf of the next generation of

students" (p. 4). Strictly speaking, the focus of the work should not be on current school

operations, but rather on the future health and success of the next generation of students and

faculty.

NAIS (2012) set forth the twelve principles of good practice for individual trustees, one

of which implores the trustee to take care "to separate the interests of the school from the

specific needs of a particular child or constituency" while another reminds each to "not become

involved directly in specific management, personnel, or curricular issues" (p.1). Independent

School Management (2002), an independent school consulting firm, puts it rather bluntly: "The

board's core activity is planning, and the board's primary constituency is not today's students but the students of the future" (p.4).

While easier said than done, one way in which effective boards manage this human conflict is through board education and professional development. Unfortunately, one area of critical importance that is often overlooked and underappreciated in terms of boards' operations is this need for ongoing professional development and education. And while most boards understand the importance of ensuring new trustees receive a thorough orientation at the start of their service, what is often forgotten is that all trustees irrespective of their tenure need ongoing board education. Long-time Executive Director of the Klingenstein Center for Independent School Education at Teachers College, Pearl Kane (1992), put it best. "Just as the school needs a strategic plan, boards need educational plans for their development" (p. 16).

One of the major findings from the 2014 qualitative study *Independent School Leadership: Heads, Boards and Strategic Thinking* was that although most boards have a process of orientation, "boards that exhibited higher strategic effectiveness ratings invested in organizational socialization and acculturation of new trustees ("onboarding") over longer periods of time" (p. 8). Trustees are recruited to serve on the board because of the various talents, skill sets, and areas of expertise they bring to the collective. They are not, necessarily, bringing to the table a depth of experience in terms of working on a non-profit board even though many make the mistake thinking that their familiarity with education is enough to prepare them to serve effectively.

Long-time independent school governance consultant Tom Olverson (2018) sees a clear distinction between the two roles:

> Board members, by and large, are not professionals in child development, education, fundraising, or the myriad other areas where heads of school must have

proficiency. Merely having attended a school does not make one an expert on education any more than having had surgery makes one a surgeon. (p.1)

The need for current and relevant professional development and education around effective board governance is imperative. As noted by NAIS Trustee Handbook author Mary DeKuyper (2007), "as a means to better serve their schools, the best boards regularly pause to advance their own training and knowledge" (p. 3).

One of the primary operations of the board is undertaking a formal process of strategic planning. As the guardian of the school's mission, nothing could be as critical to that work than looking forward and planning strategically for how to best support the school in living its mission for years to come. Doing so will focus the attention of the board on the big rocks in the jar – enrollment targets, fundraising priorities, diversity goals (socio-economic, ethnic, etc.), independent school market trends and competition, and financial sustainability – that can significantly advance or undermine the future health and wellbeing of the school.

In their study of nonprofit governance, Chait, Ryan, and Taylor (2005) found that the most successful boards, "cultivate and concentrate on processes that sharpen institutional priorities and ensure a strategic approach to the organization's future" (p. 66-68). However, a common misunderstanding of boards is that strategic thinking is only done during the discrete period of strategic planning. High-functioning boards understand that strategic thinking should be the norm not the exception, and that this strategic mindset should guide the work of the board throughout the year.

The strategic mindset is one that habitually asks far-reaching questions about pressing issues, current challenges, and future opportunities, and one that willingly examines complex and provoking issues by looking at each from various angles and perspectives. As explained in *The Handbook of Nonprofit Governance* (2010), strategically-minded boards,

are not just looking backward to see where the organization has come from, or forward when they engage in strategic planning, but over, under, and around the issues. They ask why, what if, and what do others do? They react to and interpret information in ways that lead to clear choices, decisions, and action. (p. 190-191)

In *Governance as Leadership*, authors Chait et al. (2005) explore a new framework for governance of nonprofit boards, suggesting that there are three types of governance that constitute governance as leadership: 1) Fiduciary, where the board focuses primarily on ensuring the tangible assets of the organization; 2) Strategic, where the board's attention "shifts from conformance to performance" focusing on long-range sustainability; and 3) Generative, where the Board is able to reframe the knowledge, information and data to create meaning and sense (p. 51). The authors describe the generative mode in this way:

Generative thinking provides a sense of problems and opportunities. When individuals produce a new sense of things through generative thinking, others admire their wisdom, insight, or creativity. When an entire field or profession gains a new perspective, we recognize it as a paradigm shift. (p.79-80)

Ideally, boards can move their operations and procedures into this third type or mode of governance where the board truly operates in a generative manner.

Yet, while the sentiment that trustees not meddle in the affairs of the school by staying in their lane and keeping the focus of their work long-term and strategic holds true, so too does the responsibility of the board to ensure that the head is doing all she can to safeguard the school from the ever growing number of risks, by insisting that the school establish and implement essential policies, protocols, and principles around operations and current practices (NAIS, 2017).

Undoubtedly, the potential for something bad to happen is alive and well at all non-profits, but independent schools – and schools in general – pose significant and wide-spread risk

as they are in the business of ensuring the health, safety, and physical and emotional wellness of

children. Rather than finding themselves reacting to a crisis, or worse yet simply hoping nothing

bad ever happens, the board can best serve the school in its operations by placing a premium on

the critical work of developing and integrating what Laughlin and Andringa (2007) refer to as

the Board Policies Manual (BPM). Along with essential credentials such as the articles of

incorporation, mission statement, and core values, the BPM will include a variety of critical

documents, policies, and protocols (e.g., conflict of interest and whistleblower policies, gift

acceptance and naming policies, non-discrimination policy, insurance coverage, roles and

responsibilities of trustees, etc.) that, if adhered to, can help allay risk and potential harm to the

school.

> As Laughlin and Andringa (2007) put it,
>
> any organization can move its governance from good to great if its board of
> directors develops policies that cover every aspect of the organization's business
> and documents them in a Board Policies Manual that it reviews at every Board
> meeting and updates frequently. (p. 14)

And while no amount of policy work can eradicate all risk, chances are that this critical

work of the board may well prevent those accidents, oversights, or indiscretions from ever

occurring by simply asking the right questions and crafting the necessary policies to best protect

and support the school.

Head and Board Chair Partnership

The board of trustees, charged with holding the school in "trust," is ultimately

responsible for the governance of the independent school. Among other responsibilities, the

Board of Trustees serves as guardian of the school's unique educational mission, focusing their

time, talent, and treasure on long-range, strategic issues that advance the mission and vision of

the school. Trustees also have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure sound financial management. Tantamount to all of these key responsibilities is the board's ability to successfully hire, support, and retain the head. In truth, nothing is more critical to the success of the board, and, thereby, the success of the school.

Unfortunately, for the large majority of independent school boards, supporting and retaining a successful head is neither an area of expertise nor one in which sufficient time and resources are invested. Considering the startling number of head transitions in the independent school community continues to experience[5], many of which are unexpected or unexplained, boards across the country will likely find themselves in the search and/or retention business sooner rather than later.

In his article, *Changing Horses Midstream*, Lee Quimby (2015) indicated that the vast majority of these unplanned transitions are due to a breakdown in governance, in one or two areas, and sometimes both. According to Quimby, the first and most common cause, "involves a pattern of conflict between the board chair and head of school, with a misreading of school culture or insufficient understanding of best practices" (p.1). In other words, there is a misalignment between the expectations of the head and the board around purpose and vision, and/or a lack of shared understanding around decision-making.   The second cause that often leads to an untimely head departure "involves a major breakdown in Board-Head relations" (p.1). Quimby goes on to reinforce the need for the board to invest time, attention, and constant care into this partnership, as well as honor the best practices of good governance. Failing to do so

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[5] In his study, Levinson provided the following snapshot of head transitions around the country between 2009 and 2014. During this five-year period, 64% of schools in Florida, 77% of schools in Georgia, 82% in North Carolina, and 45% in Connecticut endured a head transition. Similarly, of the 115 schools in the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS), 52% of the schools were hiring a new head during that same period.

will more often than not result in an unplanned head transition, in which the entire school can

weaken.

And while boards work with the school to put a positive spin on the unplanned transition,

the reaction from the school community is often one of suspicion and distrust due to the lack of

clear and specific information relating to the transition. Quimby (2015) concedes that when a

school announces an unplanned head transition, no matter how sanguine and upbeat the delivered

message may be, school communities will read this commonly used euphemism for firing a head.

In his study of NAIS independent school heads and administrators, long-time and

recently retired headmaster of Punahou School, James Scott (1997) found that over 60% of the

respondents attributed working with a board as the primary or greatest perceived threat to the job

security of a head. His research found that the top three threats to job security all concerned the

board relations; specifically, "'arbitrary or poorly governed boards', 'board turnover' including

turnover of the board chair, and 'board members with private/personal agendas causing political

factions'" (p.25).

Building and maintaining a strong partnership between the head and the board, and, more

importantly, between the head and the board chair, is vital to the success of the head and the

school. Indeed, it is the single most important relationship in the school, and for this partnership

to flourish it needs constant care and attention. According to research conducted by NAIS

(2019), "In the non-profit world, it is widely accepted that a solid relationship between the CEO

of an organization and the board – and particularly between the CEO and the board chair – is

critical to long-term viability" (p.70). Independent schools are no exception; based on research

conducted by long-time search consultant James Wickenden (1996), solidifying the relationship

between the board and the head ranked highest among the five keys to effective trusteeship (p.2).

In particular, Wickenden advises that, "individual trustees can contribute to a healthy board-head relationship by viewing themselves as both an intellectual and an emotional support system for the head" (p.3).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, NAIS took note of the rising number of conflicts that seemingly arose from the unhealthy relationships between independent school heads and their boards, or, more specifically, their chairs. As noted by Bradley and Gibbs (1993), those heads experiencing sustained access in their respective schools were "supported in their work by equally committed and effective boards, of course, the reverse is also true ..." (p. 1).

> Unfortunately, the authors noted, all too frequently we hear of difficulties, crises even, that arise when the head and the board (often, specifically the board chair) are not communicating, don't seem to be on the same "wavelength," or perhaps are stepping across unseen boundaries between governance and administration. (p.1)

In an effort to address this growing concern, NAIS, in concert with the Esther A. and Joseph Klingenstein Foundation, initiated the Governance Through Partnership Program in the fall of 1993. The mission of the initiative was to forge a strong working partnership between the board and the head through workshops and conferences for heads, trustees, and board chairs that provide tools and skills necessary to build and sustain a partnership that NAIS believed should serve as "the byword for independent school governance" (p.1).

According to NAIS Trustees Handbook (2017),

> The best head-board relationships derive from a shared understanding of the school's strategic position, a vision of the school's possibilities, and a commitment to its growth and success. The head and board should work actively together as trusted partners in developing ways to strengthen the school's financial health and its value to students, their families, and the community. (p. 1)

NAIS goes on to note that the strength of the relationship between the chair and the head serves as a key indicator of an independent school's effectiveness and potential for success. "It is

marked by mutual respect, frequent and open communication, and candor. The head and board work together to set important agendas and prioritize key strategic directions" (p. 1).

Critical to the success of the partnership are clear lines of delineation around the respective roles of the head and the board. In 2019, NAIS captured the demarcation of roles and responsibilities using the following graph (see Figure 1) which highlights the appropriate allocation of time and attention the head and the board should commit to the key areas of oversight and responsibility: strategy (mission, survival, and leadership); partnership (authorizations, finance policies, enrollment, employment terms); and operations (admissions, staffing, program, and systems).

Figure 1

Understand the Difference Between the Board's and Head's Responsibilities (NAIS, 2019)

Along with clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school and the board, this healthy board-head partnership is fortified through a shared vision for the school, a commitment to regular and ongoing formative and summative evaluation of the head by both the board and the board chair using effective tools and strategies. Also, open, honest, and regular communication, and a significant investment of time and resource into the professional development of the head are essential. According to BoardSource (2010), "Three basic principles are the foundation of a strong partnership: mutual respect, trust, and support for each other and the partnership; reciprocal communications; and shared purpose" (p.82). Unquestionably, boards that maintain a deep and abiding commitment to this partnership can help ensure the success of the head – success that is essential to the short- and long-term stability of the school. As noted by NAIS (2020):

> The relationship of the board chair and the school head is especially crucial. The chair is the person whom the head regularly interacts with between board meetings, and unless that relationship is a strong one, the head will have little chance of success. Trust and good communication between the two individuals are vital and will help foster a partnership in which roles and boundaries are clearly understood. (p. 1)

In his article, *How to Keep Your Head: Great Schools and Long-Term Headship*, Al Adams (2002) insisted that boards need to make hiring, supporting, and retaining heads "one of its top and enduring priorities" (p.1). Adams posits the clear correlation between strong schools and well-supported long-term heads. Adams goes on to say, "Schools with long-term heads generally exhibit healthy growth and thoughtful, intentional change within a stable environment" (p.1). In the Board Chair Handbook, author Jack Creedon (2019) puts it candidly: "No head can be successful without having a trusting and honest relationship with the chair" (p.9).

NAIS (2019b) offers sage advice to building a healthy relationship between the head and board chair, beginning with designing explicit norms that will inform how the two work together effectively. As a starting point, NAIS insists that,

> heads and board chairs should consider sitting down at the beginning of each fiscal year to explicitly set expectations for culture, norms, and discuss how to communicate them to the full board and put them into practice. Setting mutual expectations for this key working relationship can prevent problems down the line. (p.1)

Other tips for maintaining a healthy partnership offered up by NAIS (2019b) include, having a rule of no surprises to acknowledging the gray areas and communicating openly with each other. Above all else, for this partnership to succeed, it is imperative the chair understand that their relationship to the head must including serving as their "chief listener, confident, public advocate, and critic when necessary" (p.2).

Scott (1991) described the creative tension that exists between the board and the head, noting that the head is employed by the board and answerable to it, but the board also looks to the head for leadership and direction. The board is responsible for setting policy, but the school head usually guides the board in developing policy. Thus, learning to effectively manage this delicate relationship begins and ends with open and honest communication, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, a deep and abiding mutual respect, and a commitment from the board to the head that they are willing to invest to time, effort, and resource into the ongoing growth and development of the head through a comprehensive and transparent professional development and evaluation process (p.1).

In a 2016 survey of 207 school heads and 59 trustees in which the authors queried what each thought the head needed and valued most, Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen (2016) discovered that, "Heads and trustees shared nearly identical five top responses to this question,

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though in different order, with trustees identifying an additional priority" (p.1). For heads, the list read (in order of priority): moral support; respect for expertise; advice and guidance; less operational involvement; and open communication. For trustees, the list read (in order of priority): advice and guidance; strategic support; respect for expertise; moral support; open communication; and (tie) public appreciation. The survey data affirmed the notion that a strong board-head partnership demands clear lines of delineation between the work of the head and that of the board. According to the authors, "head and trustee respondents understand the need to separate day-to-day operational matters from board-level strategic issues" (p.2).

Finally, according to the NAIS (2013), a key component to supporting the head is administering a comprehensive and fair annual evaluation. This evaluation is designed around key aspects of the job description, such as: carrying out the school mission; providing board with necessary information to inform policy decisions; overseeing the financial management of the school; and recruiting, retaining, and developing faculty and staff. The evaluation should also include annual goals agreed upon by the board and head at the start of the year. The feedback should be honest and constructive, and shared only with the head.

In his article, *Caring for Your Head*, Dane Peters (2014) notes that an annual evaluation should be presented "as an opportunity for growth and professional development for the head and not as an instrument of accountability to decide pay increases or future employment" (p.1). Accountability occurs best for both parties when it takes place in real-time, through regular check-ins and ongoing conversations between the head and the chair.

Motivation Theory

Motivation, in its simplest form, is the "why" to our actions, choices, and behaviors. Motivation answers the question of why we do what we do; what is the reason, the purpose, the

intention, or the root cause of one's action. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), "motivation is highly valued because of its consequences: Motivation produces. It is therefore of preeminent concern to those in roles such as manager, teacher, religious leader, coach, healthcare provider, and parent that involve mobilizing others to act" (p. 69).

And while motivation involves the whole person – emotional, social, biological, and cognitive – our true motivations are not easily observable, recognizable, or identifiable. Instead, people have to infer the reasons why people do the things that they do based on observable behaviors (Nevid, 2013). The theory of motivation, therefore, is concerned with trying to uncover to the answer what truly drives people to act (Beck, 1994).

Content Motivation Theories

The research on motivation – that which drives individuals to work in a certain way – has been broadly classified into content and process theories. In short, content theories attempt to identify what motivates an individual, focusing on the individual's needs and wants, while process theories focus on the how or the method by which people are motivated. For the purpose of this study, I will frame my initial research within the context of the content theories (also referred to needs theories) of motivation as the focus of my research deals with the potential factors – specifically, the needs and the wants – that influence the degree to which heads are satisfied with their job.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1943) is credited with the earliest known research around understanding human motivation. Now referred to as *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, this content theory of motivation is arguably the most widely known today. In his groundbreaking work, Maslow identified five fundamental states or needs that drive human motivation and ordered them according to their

primal need. Maslow's hierarchy of needs – physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization – argued that before one can advance to the next level, they must first experience a level of satisfaction of having the preceding need met. Individual behavior, then, is determined first by our pursuit of our most basic needs, what Maslow refers to as lower order needs. Once these lower order needs have been met, we can then pursue our higher order needs, the final stage of which is self-actualization.

This pursuit – what Maslow refers to simply as growth – of self-actualization (Maslow, 1962) is our fundamental human need for personal growth and discovery. For Maslow, we are constantly 'becoming' in our quest for moments of happiness, joy, and fulfillment. And while some mistake this for a pursuit of perfection where one reaches a state of 'happy ever after' (Hoffman, 1988), Maslow is quick to correct this notion, reminding us that self-actualization is a continual process of becoming our highest, most fulfilled self. For Maslow, self-actualization is a matter of degree: "There are no perfect human beings" (Maslow,1970, p. 176). In its purest form, this process of growth and discovery is about achieving one's potential. Maslow describes it this way: "'It refers to the person's desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially" (Maslow,1970, p. 176).

Alderfer's ERG Theory

American psychologist, Alderfer (1969), created a new motivational construct by consolidating Maslow's hierarchy into three distinct categories: existence needs (physiological and safety); relatedness needs (social and esteem); and growth needs (esteem and self-actualization). Commonly referred to as the *ERG (Existence, Relatedness, Growth) Theory*, it has been used to study human motivation, job satisfaction, and the identification of incentives. A significant contribution of Alderfer's adaptation of Maslow's theory was the idea that the

hierarchy of needs was not a simple one-way progression. Instead, Alderfer maintained that there

is both progression and regression along the hierarchy. In other words, once a need is met it does

not presume that it will always be met and, therefore, never again need to be needed.

Furthermore, Alderfer noted, since the needs aren't in any pre-determined, chronological

order the desire to fulfill any given need can be activated at any point in time. (Furnham, 2004)

As such, lower order needs do not necessarily need to be fully met in order to satisfy a higher

order need.

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

In his research of what motivates workers – specifically, what accountants and engineers

define as good and bad work experiences – Herzberg (1968) concluded that there are two

conditions of the workplace, independent of one another, that affect the behaviors, or

motivations, of workers differently. Referred to as Herzberg's *Motivation-Hygiene Theory*

(1968), Herzberg argues that satisfaction is based on hygiene factors (primarily extrinsic

conditions such as work policies, job security, salary, interpersonal relationships) and

motivational factors (sometimes called satisfiers) that are primarily intrinsic in nature –

achievement, recognition, advancement, work-itself, possibility of growth, and responsibility.

In the final analysis, Herzberg posited that it was these six motivational factors that

positively influence individual satisfaction. Concerning motivation, Herzberg's most significant

addition was the notion that hygiene factors do not increase motivation; rather, they only lessen

dissatisfaction. (Herzberg et al., 1959). Conversely, Herzberg argued, only motivators – and not

hygiene factors – could truly motivate. For Herzberg, individuals are only truly motivated if they

are empowered to reach for and satisfy their real motivators, such as achievement, advancement,

development, etc., all of which represent a far deeper level of meaning and fulfillment (Eastman & Williams, 1993).

McClelland's Needs Theory

Based on the work of his 1961 book, "The Achieving Society", David McClelland identified three fundamental human motivators: a need for achievement, a need for affiliation, and a need for power. McClelland's motivation theory – sometimes referred to as the *Learned Needs Theory* – holds that every human being irrespective of their distinctive identities will have one dominant motivating driver that is largely dependent on our culture and unique life experiences. McClelland further suggested that all of our activities, decisions, and outputs are inextricably influenced by these three specific needs. In other words, McClelland's *Learned Needs Theory* posits that our level of effectiveness and motivation is greatly influenced by these three basic needs. Therefore, knowing that different needs are going to require different forms of motivation, it is critical for those in a position to influence others understand intimately the individual's motivation.

Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Motivation

In his research to determine what, if any, affect external reinforcements had on human motivation, Edward Deci (1971) first distinguished between two broad classes of motivation to perform an activity: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation.

> Extrinsic rewards are ones such as money and verbal reinforcement which are mediated outside of the person, whereas intrinsic rewards are mediated within the person. We say a person is intrinsically motivated to perform an activity if there is no apparent reward except the activity itself or the feelings which result from the activity. (Deci, 1972, p. 217)

According to Deci, while these extrinsic motivators or tangible rewards satisfy what Maslow (1943, 1970) referred to as our lower order needs, these extrinsic motivators alone,

however, do not meet our other needs including self-actualization and self-esteem, or what Maslow (1943, 1970) refers to as our higher order needs. It would follow, then, according to Deci (1971) that while people's behaviors can be motivated by extrinsic rewards and punishments, there exist other intrinsic motivators that satisfy a deeper human need that extrinsic motivators cannot satisfy but can also potentially diminish.

Self-Determination Theory

In collaboration with Ryan, Deci (1985) put forth the first full statement on what is now the meta-theory, *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT). For many in the field, SDT unseated the generally established theory that human behavior and performance are fundamentally motivated by extrinsic rewards. The most significant theory being Skinner's operant conditioning which purports that humans makes associations between behavior and a consequence, what Skinner referred to as positive and negative reinforcers (Skinner, 1938).

In short, SDT serves as a framework for human motivation and personality, which recognizes the influence of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators and, most importantly, the interplay of their respective roles and their influence on human behavior. As explained by The Center for Self-Determination Theory (2020), "The interplay between the extrinsic forces acting on persons and the intrinsic motives and needs inherent in human nature is the territory of Self-Determination Theory" (p.1).

Daniel Pink's Drive Theory

In Drive (2011), author Daniel Pink debunks the antiquated paradigm that rewards and punishments stimulate and motivate and instead doubles-down on the appeal to intrinsic motivators or higher ideals: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. While Pink does admit that extrinsic motivators still result in production from mechanical and repetitive tasks or algorithmic

tasks – those that depend on following an existing formula to its logical conclusion, for more right-brain undertakings – those that demand flexible problem-solving, inventiveness, or conceptual understanding, extrinsic motivators are actually counterproductive. For example, offering money to donate blood led to a reduction in donations. Why? According to Pink, offering a cash reward for socially responsible act turned it from an act of altruism to a financially motivated one making it less appealing to people who were originally motivated by intrinsic drivers.

Pink explains that when extrinsic motivators like the carrot and the stick become the primary reason for completing a task, they begin to crowd out good behavior and erode any possible pleasure associated with the task itself. Extrinsic motivators such as cash incentives and bonuses can focus our attention on a specific outcome distracting one from a bigger picture and may result in diminishing creativity and insight. "Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity; controlling extrinsic motivation is detrimental to creativity" (Pink, p. 29). For example, artists who create art for art's sake are admittedly more creative than when painting for a commission. According to Pink, "For artists, scientists, inventors, schoolchildren, and the rest of us, intrinsic motivation-the drive to do something because it is interesting, challenging, and absorbing-is essential for high levels of creativity" (p.45).

Referencing the three innate psychological needs put forth by SDT (competence, autonomy, and relatedness), Pink agrees that human beings "have an innate inner drive to be autonomous, self-determined, and connected to one another. And when that drive is liberated, people achieve more and live richer lives" (p.71). For Pink, there are three essential elements to our inner drive: (1) autonomy—the desire to direct our own lives; (2) mastery—the urge to get

better and better at something that matters; and (3) purpose—the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

When we are able to discover true autonomy, mastery, and purpose in our work and in our life we discover "the highest, most satisfying experiences," an experience which Pink refers to as being "in flow" (p. 112). These moments of flow might be what Maslow refers to as higher order needs, what Alderfer calls growth needs, or what Herzberg calls satisfiers. In any case, they are moments when we are acting out of intrinsic motivation entirely. For Pink it comes down to understanding that performance, success, and happiness can only result from the pursuit of our true intrinsic motivators:

> The science shows that the secret to high performance isn't our biological drive or our reward-and-punishment drive, but our third drive—our deep-seated desire to direct our own lives, to extend and expand our abilities, and to live a life of purpose. (p. 145)

Limitations and Critique of Existing Literature

While there is general agreement in the research and literature around the critical relationship between the head and the chair, considering the rising number of heads leaving their current posts and the impact motivation has on our decision-making, what is clearly lacking in the literature is any evidence pointing to why these heads are leaving. We also do not know to what extent, if any, their motivation to leave is due to their relationship with their board chair and, if so, which aspects of their relationship are important, in particular.

It is important to note that the majority of the literature related to best practices in independent school governance is based primarily on descriptive data and anecdotal accounts. In their 2014 mixed-methods research study *Independent School Leadership: Heads, Boards and Strategic Thinking,* the authors noted that not only is the majority of the research on independent

school leadership and governance "dominated by assumptions and claims based on eminence rather than empirical findings." (p. 13), but they also found that much of the existing literature pertaining to independent school leadership "is rich in case studies and anecdotal evidence" (p. 18). In other words, while the findings in the literature and supporting research which are rooted in descriptive, qualitative data positively informs the reader on best practices in independent school governance, the absence of a deep repository of data-rich quantitative analysis invariably limits the integrity and authority of the findings.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used for this mixed-methods research study regarding which factors may influence the level of job satisfaction of heads which, in turn, motivates heads to remain in their current position. This particular approach to the research allowed for a deeper understanding of the significance any one (or more) of those factors might have in general as well as an opportunity to drill down on the factors' potential influence specific to a purposeful sampling of current heads.

This study used a mixed methods design, gathering, analyzing, and blending together both qualitative and quantitative data in an effort to comprehend the research problem more completely. Specific to this study, I employed the sequential explanatory mixed methods design, consisting of two distinct phases (Creswell, 2002). In the first phase, the quantitative data was gathered using a web-based survey in an effort to identify variables and factors that potentially influence the behaviors and attitudes of the heads. For the second phase, the qualitative data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews. For my research, priority in this design is given to the qualitative method, because the qualitative research represents the major aspect of data collection and analysis in the study, though not at the expense of the quantitative data analysis and findings.

Purpose of the Chapter

A discussion of the research plan, including discussions of the methodological design, descriptions of the research site, participation selection, data collection procedures, and the methods make up the primary components of this chapter. The chapter begins, however, with a brief review of the study's purpose and research questions.

Purpose and Research Questions

The research challenge, then, is to identify motivating factors – including, and most especially, aspects of the head and board chair partnership – that appropriately support, professionally satisfy, and successfully retain heads. The purpose of this study is to identify potential motivating factors, including, and most especially, the relationship between the head and the board chair, and investigate to what extent, if any, these factors influence the behaviors and attitudes of heads as they relate to their job satisfaction and, ostensibly, their decision to remain at their school.

Only heads who have been in their current position (and at their current school) for a minimum of four years will be included in the study. The underlying assumption is that these heads have been in their current positions long enough to have had the opportunity (or opportunities) to contemplate their level of job satisfaction and, as such, reaffirm their decision to remain at the school.

To achieve the stated purpose, the following research questions will guide the study, at least initially:

> **(R1):** To what extent, if at all, do various motivating factors and select demographics influence the head's level of job satisfaction?
>
> **(R2):** To what extent, if at all, does the board chair and head partnership influence the head's job satisfaction in their current posts and, if it does, what aspects – both intrinsic and extrinsic – of this partnership appear to be of greatest importance?

Research Design

With a stated purpose of examining the potential relationship between motivating factors and heads' job satisfaction, I employed a mixed-methods research design due to the design's

ability to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and the advantages associated with collecting and analyzing both types of data. As noted by Johnson et al. (2007), mixed-methods, "combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e. g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (p.123).

Explanatory Sequential Design

Specifically, for this research project, I employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. In the first phase of the study, I used a web-based quantitative survey followed, in phase two, by semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants. These in-depth surveys would allow me to potentially extend and further explain specific quantitative findings, relationships, differences, or unexpected results (Creswell, 2002). According to Creswell (2012), explanatory sequential designs are characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The key purpose of the qualitative results is to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of a quantitative study.

The first phase of research (quantitative) attempted to examine the general attitudes of the participants concerning their current job satisfaction and their satisfaction with their relationships with the board chair, as well as other motivating factors that might influence them to continue in their current jobs. This quantitative study included a 45-question survey relying primarily on the use of Likert scale responses.

The second phase of research (qualitative) utilized a semi-structured interview containing both follow-up questions consistent with the survey content and questions emerging from a purposeful and informed analysis of the quantitative portion of the study. Ideally, these interview

questions effectively deepened the quantitative research findings, and provided context and perspective generally.

Researcher Positionality

I am currently completing my eleventh year as head of a National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) school located in San Diego, California. I have completed all of the requisite study and research training as a student in the PhD program at the University of San Diego and have acquired the skills necessary to carry out the research. While I do possess varying degrees of professional relationships with some of the participants as a result of crossing paths at various annual meetings, symposiums, and/or events sponsored by NAIS focusing on the ongoing professional development of heads in independent schools, none of the participants in the research study have a direct relationship with me that could represent a conflict of interest or that may have imparted any type of clear bias in my research.

<div align="center">

Research Site and Participant Selection

</div>

Phase 1: Quantitative Research (Survey)

The participants in the study self-selected to be part of the study by responding to a general invitation sent by NAIS to NAIS independent school heads from across the country. With over 1,600 independent schools all of which are led by a head, invitations to participate in the study were limited to those heads who have served for a minimum of four years in their current position and school.

The initial survey was emailed to 888 NAIS heads on August 3, 2020, and it remained open for three weeks. NAIS emailed a reminder to all schools on August 17, 2020 and the survey closed August 24, 2020. In total, there were 294 surveys completed with 18 partials for a total of 312 responses representing a 35% response rate.

In an effort to determine the ability to generalize to the larger population of NAIS member schools, a comparison of the demographic characteristics of the schools in the sample (school type and school location) to the characteristics of the NAIS membership as a whole is provided.

Table 1 details, among other particulars, the total number of surveys sent, the total received, and the response rate. With a 35% response rate, it is reasonable to conclude that the data collected and the subsequent analysis can be considered representative of the general population surveyed.

Table 1

Breakdown of Quantitative Survey Responses

Surveys Sent	Opt-out	Bad email address	Total Received	Surveys Completed	Surveys Partially Completed	Total	Response Rate
888	3	2	883	294	18	312	35%

Phase 2: Qualitative Research (Semi-Structured Interviews)

Since the intent of the design of the second phase of research was to follow-up on the quantitative results and to explore the results in more depth, interview participants were drawn from the same pool of survey participants (Creswell, 2012). The number of participants for the second phase of research was determined, in part, by the number of volunteers who indicated, in the first phase survey, a willingness to be interviewed. Ideally, the number of volunteers would be significant enough to form a diverse and representative demographic (e.g., school size, geographic location, ages of students, etc.) group through purposeful sampling.

Following the lead of Patton (2002), the in-depth interviews attempted to "ask questions of the data," to provide a "source of focus in looking for themes and patterns" to "illuminate the

people behind the numbers and put faces on the statistics ... to deepen understanding" (p. 477).

The initial approach to the qualitative research was influenced by the quantitative findings. If, for

example, there was a significant variance between two demographics (e.g., length of tenure or

gender identity) around one or more of the discrete motivating factors, then the interview

questions were to be structured for that particular group of respondents in an attempt to

understand this apparent nuance. Or, if the outcome of the quantitative results uncovered

findings that were inconsistent with the literature and general research, the survey and interview

questions attempted to clarify or reconcile these apparent differences. For example, if the

quantitative findings suggested that the heads are generally more extrinsically motivated when it

comes to their job satisfaction, a qualitative study that drills down on understanding why this is

would be warranted. Finally, whether or not discrepancies were uncovered in the quantitative

data, at a minimum the interview questions would attempt to drill down deeper into the general

quantitative findings.

Participants for the second phase of the research were informed that any information

provided and/or identifying records would remain confidential and be kept in a locked file on my

password protected personal computer as well as on a separate password protected thumb drive

with access restricted to only those who have permission to access the materials. All data

collected from participants would be coded with a number. The participant's real names and

schools were not used in the research; instead, participants and their respective schools were

assigned a number that was used throughout the research to maintain confidentiality. Each

participant was provided with a copy of a *Written Consent Form* (see Appendix D).

Data Collection Procedures

Phase 1: Quantitative Research (Survey)

As mentioned previously, the quantitative phase of the study was structured as a web-based survey relying primarily on the use of Likert scale responses. The electronic survey, which can be found in Appendix A, was launched with an email invitation to participants that included a genuine thank you, a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, and a direct link through which the respondents could access the survey. An email reminder was sent to all participants fourteen days after the initial email invitation was sent. The reminder included a thank you to all who have completed the survey and a word of encouragement to those who had yet to complete the survey. The survey itself was made available across all types of devices, platforms, and browsers as access to the survey via desktop, laptop, and/or mobile device would hopefully encourage participation.

As this was a national survey, the web-based survey approach minimized geographic limitations and was cost effective. The survey was reasonably short (45-questions) and, by design, there were no questions that might have caused respondents to provide incomplete or inaccurate responses (i.e., socially unacceptable behaviors). Also, all of the questions centered on very familiar terrain, and the statements were straightforward and written using notably common words and terms. As such, I expected a generally favorable response rate which ultimately occurred (35%).

Additionally, because the questions were arguably about a potentially sensitive topic (i.e., job satisfaction and board/chair relationship), the self-administered survey provided the greatest anonymity, eliminating potential interviewer bias – unlike, for example, if the survey was being administered and reviewed by the board chair – and helped mitigate any concern for potential

(real or perceived) retribution to the head resulting from them providing a negative response regarding their attitudes or beliefs about their current status vis-à-vis the board.

The order and design of the survey questions – including beginning with general perceptions about job satisfaction then moving to more potentially controversial topics such as board chair relations – was intended to positively influence survey completion. For example, the first question, which asked about the respondents' overall satisfaction of their current job, was salient and of interest to the respondent. Moreover, there were no overtly controversial or genuinely objectionable questions, and many of the statements in the first multi-item scale section were non-threatening and inviting. Finally, the convenience and relative simplicity of the survey was designed specifically to be well received by most participants considering, at the very least, the demands on their time and attention that come with running an independent school.

Phase 2: Qualitative Research (Semi-structured Interviews)

The interview questions were designed to follow up on the major areas of focus from the quantitative survey. The questions contained in the interview guide (see Appendix B) were intended to better understand the participants' perspective, and to elicit opinions, views, and assessments of their specific reasons to remain at their current school. Fifteen purposely selected heads from a volunteer group of 193 heads, completed the written surveys. See Table 28 for a breakdown of the significant characteristics of the interview participants. Also, a few of the interview questions were purposely open-ended allowing participants to speak freely, use language with which they are most comfortable, and have the space to form their own developing thoughts and perceptions that ideally address the research questions.

For the interviews, I took the approach espoused by Brinkmann and Kvale in which the interview is seen fundamentally as "an interpersonal situation, a conversation between partners

about a theme of mutual interest" (p. 149). In setting the stage for the interviews, I embraced the

mindset that, if my aim was to engender genuine conversation, I must begin by establishing trust.

The best way to build trust is to first listen, and to listen intently. Accordingly, the interviewer

must "showing interest, understanding and respect for what the subject says"(p.150), allowing

the subject to open up and speak freely.

Furthermore, I needed to be clear about the purpose and instructions setting the

interviewers at ease. Also, the questions that I asked needed to be at once dynamic, promoting "a

positive interaction, keep the flow of the conversation going, and stimulate the subjects talk

about their experiences and feelings." (p. 157), as well as being simple, clear, with purpose,

whether they be introductory, probing, or specifying.

I also set an intention of active, thoughtful listening with an ear toward both what is being

said in the moment and cues that might prompt the next question or a new question. Much like

the expert chess player,

> the expert interviewer is likewise immersed in the concrete situation and is
> sensitive and attentive to the situational cues that will allow him or her to go on
> with the interview in a fruitful way that will help answer the research question,
> instead of focusing all of the attention on the interview guide, on methodological
> rules of interviewing, or on what question to pose next. (Brinkmann & Kvale,
> p.165)

I assured the interviewees that anything they shared would be held in strict confidence

(not to be shared beyond my coursework), and any reference to a specific school, person, or

other identifying factors would not be included in the final project without their consent. Any

information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file

and/or password-protected computer file in my office for a minimum of five years, and all data

will be stored on my password protected personal computer as well as on a separate password

protected thumb drive with access restricted to only those who have permission to access the materials which is included on this protocol.

Participants were also assured that all data collected from participants will be coded with a number, and the participant's real names will not be used. It is difficult to imagine what the risks would be in this study, especially since the identities of participants will be kept confidential. Consequently, it seems clear that the potential benefits of the study far exceed any risks.

Finally, each participant was informed that the interview would last no more than 60 minutes with the possibility of a follow up interview to last no more than 20 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. During the interviews, I recorded our conversation using iRecorder on my iPhone and on my laptop. I transcribed the interviews verbatim by myself with the help of both recordings to ensure that, as accurately as possible, I captured our conversations. Because my iPhone and laptop are password-protected, I followed the ethical guidelines to secure and protect the data I gather based on recommendations by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015). Once my interviews were transcribed and verified, I erased the recordings that were no longer of use (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Data Analysis Procedures

Phase 1: Quantitative Research Analysis (Survey)

Two separate multi-item scales were used to measure two discrete constructs. For each, a series of statements were presented to the participants who were asked to respond using a standard Likert agreement scale with a fixed number of vague quantifier response options. The first construct measured was the degree to which heads perceive various motivating factors – both extrinsic and intrinsic – influence their decision to remain at their current school.

For this construct, the participants were asked to both rank and rate traditional extrinsic motivators and intrinsic motivators in terms of how important, if at all, each is when considering whether to remain as head at their current school. Extrinsic motivators included: compensation, length of contract, professional development opportunities, and public accolades. Intrinsic motivators combine two underlying factors of head retention – strong board chair partnership and a healthy work/life balance – with three key intrinsic motivators based primarily on the work of Daniel Pink (autonomy, mastery, and purpose). Specifically, the three aspects that Pink purports are the greatest intrinsic motivators were defined as follows: 1) autonomy – the desire to direct our own lives; 2) mastery—the urge to get better and better at something that matters; and 3) purpose—the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

For the second construct I took the five areas of greatest need based on the findings from the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen survey and created five statements for each that attempted to determine the validity of each. The 25 statements (listed in Table 2) were randomized within the survey and coded appropriately. The scores (or codes) for the individual items within the multi-item scales were added together to derive individual total scores for the five discrete "needs and wants," with the higher scores indicating a greater degree of importance and lower scores a lesser degree of importance.

As was the case with the first construct, I asked participants to both rate *and* rank these five factors in terms of how important, if at all, each is when considering their level of job satisfaction and, consequently, whether to remain as head at their current school. Finally, I cross-reference their ranking with the overall weighted scores of the clustered statements corresponding to each to determine their validity.

A number of these 25 statements were derived loosely from two other significant studies on healthy head and board chair relations – *Head turnover at independent schools: Sustaining school leadership* (NAIS, 2020) and *Independent school leadership: Heads, boards and strategic thinking* (Baker et al., 2015) – as well as from the NAIS *Principles of Good Practice for Trustees* (2018).

Table 2

Statements Attempting to Validate 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgenson Survey Findings

Survey Statements	Moral Support	Respect for Expertise	Advice and Guidance	Less Operational Support	Open Communication
My board chair cultivates a constructive partnership with me.	X				
My board chair fosters a relationship of trust between me and him/her.	X				
My board chair respects the difficult decision I make as head.	X				
My board chair encourages me to maintain healthy work/life balance.	X				
My board chair supports me fully as the head, giving me the maximum authority to run the operations of the school.	X				
My board chair consults with me on school matters.		X			
My board chair works collaboratively with me on setting board agenda.		X			
My board chair notifies me of parental concerns, redirecting them to me.		X			

My board chair understands the demands placed on me as head.		X			
My board chair defers to me on operational matters.		X			
My board chair gives me the appropriate personal support.			X		
My board chair collaborates with me on setting my annual goals.			X		
My board chair provides periodic, informal feedback (formative) to me on progress in meeting my annual goals.			X		
My board chair provides annual, formal feedback (summative) to me on progress in meeting my annual goals.			X		
My board chair gives me the appropriate professional guidance.			X		
My board chair focuses the board on long-range, strategic issues avoiding becoming involved directly in specific management issues.				X	
My board chair understands the most important issues facing my school.				X	
My board chair takes care to separate the interests of the school from the specific needs of a particular constituency.				X	
My board chair works with board members on ongoing basis to ensure they understand their role as trustees.				X	
My board chair separates day-to-day operational matters from board-level strategic issues.				X	
My board chair maintains open communication with me.					X
My board chair holds regularly scheduled meetings (in person or by phone).					X

My board chair is honest with me in our communications.					X
My board chair accepts responsibility for their mistakes.					X
My board chair maintains confidentiality.					X

Phase 2: Qualitative Research Analysis (Semi-structured Interviews)

Analysis of the interview transcripts attempted to identify emergent themes, patterns,

similarities, and differences in the responses. Open data coding (Neuman, 2011. Pp. 283-284)

was used to identify key patterns by cataloging an inventory of key words, terms, ideas, and

definitions, as well as connecting what was repeated in two separate responses from select

participants (those who also participated in the interview). Coding also aided in integrating

and/or separating the responses of different survey participants and interviewees.

Codes were assigned to each feature – as well as any other features not explicitly

included in one of the interview questions – mentioned by the participant. Also, the following

three criteria were taken under consideration: 1) the number of times each participant mentions a

feature in the interview responses and/or interview; and 2) the amount of written and/oral

commentary given to that particular feature; and 3) the emphasis placed on the feature by the

participant/interviewee. All of the qualitative text coding and analysis was done using the

MAXQDA software.

While Saldana (2016) openly admits that coding is "just one way of analyzing qualitative

data, not the way" (p.2), for the purposes of my research I chose to employ the method of open

data coding, which Miriam & Tisdell simply define as "nothing more than assigning some sort of

shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific

pieces of data" (p.199). Knowing that my primary goal in coding was to find "repetitive patterns

of action and consistencies as documented in the data" (p.5), I attempted to identify key patterns

by cataloging an inventory of key words, terms, ideas, and definitions, as well as connect what

was repeated in two separate responses from a single participant.

Following the initial coding of the interviews, I attempted to move the similar or related

codes into more inclusive categories. For instance, did a set of codes (i.e., x,y,z, etc.) roll up into

one larger category (i.e., trust). Thereafter, the goal was to consolidate the categories in various

themes and concepts. The transcripts of each interview were uploaded into the MAXQDA

software for analysis. Each of the fifteen interviews was coded manually resulting in 353

individual sub codes captured, categorized, and sorted into eight discrete codes shown below in

Table 3.

Table 3

Codes and Sub Codes Using MAXQDA

	Codes and Sub Codes	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Board Chair Behaviors**	15	4.25
1.1	Limit operational influence	8	2.27
1.2	Open and honest communication	8	2.27
1.3	All of the above	7	1.98
1.4	Respect of expertise	7	1.98
1.5	Moral support	3	0.85
1.6	Sound advice and guidance	3	0.85
2	**Chair Term Limits**	14	3.97
2.1	Strong partnership trumps term limits	12	3.40
2.2	Three-year term, renewable once	4	1.13
2.3	Two-year or three-year term, renewable indefinitely	3	0.85
2.4	No term limit	2	0.57
2.5	One three-year term	2	0.57
2.6	One-year term with extension up to ten years	1	0.28
2.7	One-year term with tradition of extending to two or three years	1	0.28
2.8	Two-year term with option of third year	1	0.28
3	**Head Involvement in Selection**	14	3.97
3.1	Highly and appropriately involved	13	3.68

3.2	Limited involvement	1	0.28
4	**Impediments**	15	4.25
4.1	Inability to maintain line between board work and operations	6	1.70
4.2	Lack of trust	4	1.13
4.3	Insufficient time spent together	3	0.85
4.4	Unrealistic expectations of school and/or head	3	0.85
4.5	Difference of opinion or understanding on core issues	1	0.28
4.6	Dishonesty	1	0.28
4.7	Lack of clear and timely communication	1	0.28
4.8	Lack of control over trustee behavior	1	0.28
4.9	Lack of self-awareness	1	0.28
4.1	Open to receiving and giving advice	1	0.28
4.11	Transitioning to a new board chair	1	0.28
5	**Incentives to Remain**	15	4.25
5.1	Purpose	12	3.40
5.2	Autonomy	10	2.83
5.3	Compensation	9	2.55
5.4	Strong partnership	9	2.55
5.5	Mastery	3	0.85
5.6	Public accolades	3	0.85
5.7	Work/life balance	2	0.57
5.8	Kids at school with me	1	0.28
5.9	Term of contract	1	0.28
6	**Most valuable Aspect of Partnership**	15	4.25
6.1	Steady and wise leadership and counsel	8	2.27
6.2	Trust and understanding	8	2.27
6.3	Effectively leads the board	6	1.70
6.4	Mutual respect	6	1.70
6.5	Open communication and transparency	5	1.42
6.6	Chair is accessible	4	1.13
6.7	Respect boundaries b/w board and administration	4	1.13
6.8	Support	4	1.13
6.9	Honors autonomy of the Head	1	0.28
6.1	Demonstrates care and affection	1	0.28
6.11	Leads by example/character	1	0.28
6.12	Not a current parent at the school	1	0.28
6.13	Sense of humor	1	0.28
7	**Other Thoughts on Successful Partnership**	14	3.97
7.1	The myth of the work/life balance	6	1.70
7.2	Positive relationship with the chair influenced decision to stay	5	1.42
7.3	Healthy, positive, and supportive relationship with chair	3	0.85
7.4	Clear goals and common pace of change	2	0.57
7.5	Board chair as my champion	1	0.28

7.6	Heads experience greater board pressure at "elite" schools	1	0.28
7.7	Job of being a head is getting harder and harder	1	0.28
7.8	Micro-management will drive heads out	1	0.28
7.9	Successful heads are servant leaders first	1	0.28
7.1	Would not say if I did not get along with chair	1	0.28
8	**Relationship with Board Chair**	15	4.25
8.1	Excellent/Outstanding	8	2.27
8.2	Very good/Very strong	3	0.85
8.3	Supportive	2	0.57
8.4	As good as it gets	1	0.28
8.5	Strained	1	0.28
	TOTAL	353	100.00

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Purpose of the Chapter

This chapter contains the results of the mixed-methods research study which attempted to identify potential factors that are perceived to be related to retaining heads of independent schools and to investigate to what extent, if any, these factors influenced the behaviors and attitudes concerning their level of job satisfaction. Specifically, the research attempted to respond to the following questions:

> **(R1):** To what extent, if at all, do various motivating factors and select demographics influence the head's level of job satisfaction?

> **(R2):** To what extent, if at all, does the board chair and head partnership influence the head's job satisfaction in their current posts and, if it does, what aspects – both intrinsic and extrinsic – of this partnership appear to be of greatest importance?

In this first section of the chapter, following an overview of the sampling procedures and participants, I reviewed the descriptive statistics of the research sample, looking at a discrete set of demographics, three of which (school location, grades served, and school type) were benchmarked against the NAIS population.

Next, I analyzed two separate survey results of the research sample, the heads overall job satisfaction and heads' pride in their work. I then investigated the reliability of the five constructs identified previously in the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen study by first analyzing the mean and the standard deviation for each of the five statements associated with each of the five constructs, and then computed the mean and standard deviation for each construct, thus allowing me to test the reliability of these constructs using a Cronbach's Alpha test.

Then, I analyzed both the results and rankings of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, and interpreted the ranking results through a series of simple independent samples t-tests. Doing so provided greater certainty of the degree of significance between the various factors beyond their simple rank.

Thereafter, in an effort to determine to what extent, if any, various extrinsic and intrinsic motivating factors and select demographics influence the heads level of job satisfaction, I evaluated a series of regression analysis using the heads level of job satisfaction as the dependent variable and the following factors as the independent variables: the five constructs; years of service; locations of the school; grades the schools serves; and type of school.

And, finally, using the Spearman rank correlation test, I tested whether there were meaningful correlations between any of the nine fundamental intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

In the second section of the chapter, I first reviewed the descriptive statistics of a diverse and representative demographic group of heads selected from the research sample who agreed to participate in a semi-structured interview, and compared the same set of demographics (school location, grades served, and school type) of this smaller sample to both the research sample and the NAIS population. Thereafter, through the process of selective coding, I attempted to identify themes emerging from an informed analysis of the interviews conducted with this smaller research sample.

<div align="center">

Phase 1 Quantitative Results

</div>

Sampling Procedures and Participants

For this research project I employed an explanatory sequential design that began with using an electronic survey with 312 participants and in the study's second phase, interviews with 15 survey respondents who were chosen through a multiple variation selection process from

survey respondents who indicated a willingness to be interviewed. Through the assistance of the

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), I created a 45-question survey (see

Appendix A) that was sent to 888 current heads serving for at a minimum of four years in

independent schools across the country. The initial survey was mailed on August 3, 2020 which

resulted in three potential respondents explicitly opting out of the survey process and two

requests bouncing back due to incorrect or out-of-date addresses. A reminder email was sent on

August 17, also with a link to the survey, and, at the close of the survey (August 24, 2020), there

were 294 surveys completed with 18 partial responses for a total of 312 responses representing a

35% response rate.

Descriptive Results

Descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the results of the survey. In this section

I will highlight the statistics that quantitatively summarize characteristics and demographics of

the data set used in this study. I will also compare some of those demographics of the research

sample to the NAIS population.

Heads' Years of Service

As captured in Table 4, of the 312 heads who responded to the survey, roughly half of the

heads (50.2%) had served four to seven years in their current school. Of those who had served

longer than seven years, just over 20% had served 15 years or longer. Of the 240 heads who had

served between 4 and 14 years, the average tenure was seven years. Interestingly, the number of

heads that had served between 4 and 14 years is on a steady and consistent decline (see Table 4).

Table 4

Heads' Years of Service at Current School
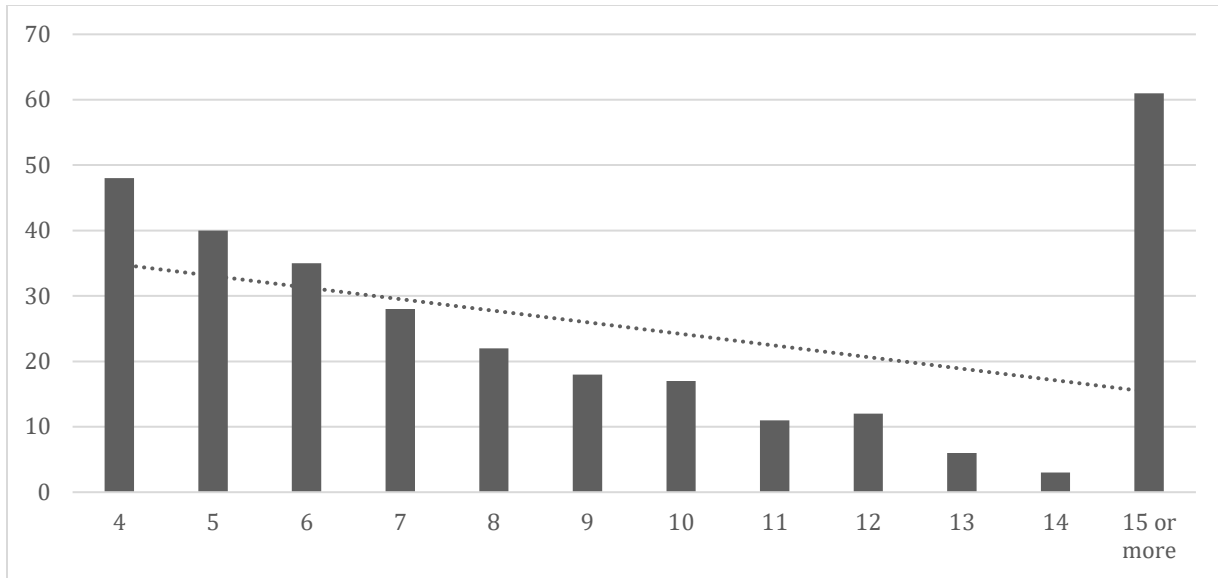
Slightly more than two thirds of the heads surveyed (68.2%) were in their first headship, and the overwhelming majority (90.6%) of those heads were working in either a Day School (81.8%), which has less than 5% of their students boarding at their school, or a Day-Boarding School (9.8%), which enroll between 51% and 94% day students, with the balance of the students boarding at the school.

Comparisons of Demographics: Research Sample and NAIS Population

For both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research, I used a sample of heads from the National Association of Independent School (NAIS). Following are the comparisons of demographics of the quantitative research sample (312 survey respondents) and the NAIS population. Tables 5, 6, and 7 highlight the comparisons of three key demographics: school location; grades served; and school type.

Table 5 summarizes the locations of the 312 schools led by the heads who participated in the quantitative phase of the study. The breakdown of the 312 heads who participated in the survey closely reflects the regional breakdown of all NAIS schools, with the largest deviation

(+3.2%) found in schools located in the East/Mid-Atlantic. The six geographic locations used for this study were established by NAIS.

Table 5

Comparison of Demographics: Research Sample to NAIS Population (School Location)

	East/Mid-Atlantic	New England	Southeast	Southwest	West	Midwest
Research Sample	31.2%	12.8%	14.1%	7.4%	22.8%	11.7%
NAIS Population	28%	16%	15%	10%	20%	11%

East/ Mid-Atlantic *(New Jersey, New York, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia)*
New England *(Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)*
Southeast *(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)*
Southwest *(Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)*
West *(Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)*
Midwest *(Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin)*

As shown in Table 6, compared to all NAIS schools, the breakdown in terms of the grades of students served also closely mirrored the 312 schools at which the participating heads serve. There exists a slight deviation between the demographic breakdown of the research sample and the NAIS population in both the Elementary Schools (-5.0%) and the Elementary-Secondary Schools (+5.9%).

Table 6

Comparison of Demographics: Research Sample to NAIS Population (Grades Served)

	Elementary Schools (PreK to 8)	Elementary/Secondary Schools (PreK to 12)	Secondary Schools (9 to 12)
Research Sample	32%	55.9%	12.1%
NAIS Population	37%	50%	13%

As noted in Table 7, the comparison of the quantitative research sample and NAIS highlights a relatively small deviation between the two, with the quantitative research sample representing a few more Boarding or Boarding-Day Schools (+3.4%). While I was able to distinguish between the four types of schools offered, NAIS statistics consolidate the four categories into two, preventing me from including a more granular comparison.

Table 7

Comparison of Demographics: Research Sample to NAIS Population (School Type)

	Boarding School [1]	Boarding-Day School [2]	Day School [3]	Day-Boarding School [4]
Research Sample	2.7%	5.7%	81.8%	9.8%
NAIS Population	5% [5]		95% [6]	

[1] Boarding School (enrolling 95% or more boarding students)
[2] Boarding-Day School (enrolling between 51 and 94% boarding students, with the balance day)
[3] Day School (enrolling 95% or more day students)
[4] Day-Boarding School (enrolling between 51 and 94% day students, with the balance boarding)
[5] includes Boarding-Day Schools
[6] includes Day-Boarding Schools

On balance, the breakdown of these three discrete characteristics of the schools captured in my sample of 312 heads were largely representative of the general population of NAIS schools, suggesting a high level of external validity and the ability to generalize any reasonable findings to the larger NAIS school head population.

Analysis of the Quantitative Results (Survey)

The first phase of quantitative research attempted to examine the general attitudes of the participants concerning their current job satisfaction and their satisfaction with their relationship to and with their board chair, as well as a select group of extrinsic and intrinsic factors that might have motivated them to continue in their current jobs.

Heads' Overall Job Satisfaction

As shown in Table 8, there was a relatively high level of overall satisfaction amongst the participating heads, with approximately 90% noting some degree of satisfaction with their current job. The breakdown of those heads experiencing some degree of satisfaction had 35.7% responding with a *strongly agree* and 42.4% responding with *agree* to the following statement: "Overall, I am satisfied in my current position as head." The remaining 11.6% who felt some degree of satisfaction with their current job noted that they *somewhat agree* with the statement.

Table 8

Heads' Level of Satisfaction at Current School
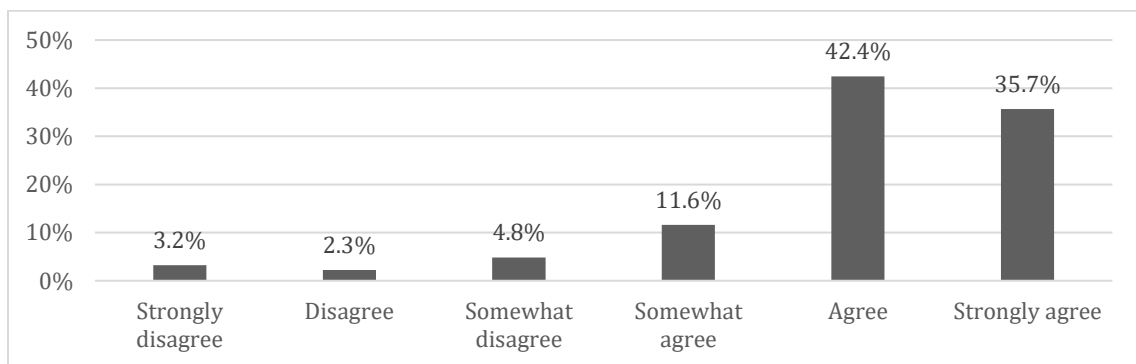
When considering the generally high level of overall job satisfaction amongst the majority of heads, it is not surprising to discover that the level of pride that the heads have in their work is equally high (see Table 9). In fact, the percent of heads who *strongly agreed* with the statement, "I am proud of my work as head" was considerably higher (68.3%) than those who *strongly agreed* (35.7%) with the statement, "Overall, I am satisfied in my current position as head." What is even more striking is how few of the heads disagreed with the statement. In fact, no heads responded with *somewhat disagree* or *disagree*, and only 13 of the 312 (4.2%) selected the option of *strongly disagree*.

Table 9

Heads' Level of Pride at Current School
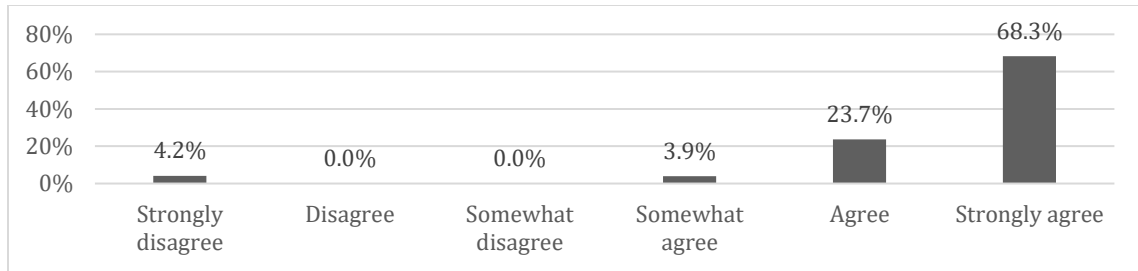
Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivating Factors

A significant section of the survey attempted to validate the findings of the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen study, whose research identified five constructs of the relationship between the heads and their respective board chairs that are of greatest importance to heads: *Moral Support*; *Respect for Expertise*; *Advice and Guidance*; *Less Operational Involvement*; and *Open Communication*. The survey I created for my research study included 25 statements that attempted to measure the reliability of each construct, as well as to flesh out the meaning and significance of each construct according to the heads based on both the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Establishing the Five Constructs

In an effort to investigate the reliability of these five constructs, I psychometrically explored the survey instrument I was using. In the survey, I included 25 statements that were randomly ordered throughout, and the participants responded to each according to a standard 6-point Likert scale. The participants were not aware of the relationship between the 25 statements and the five discrete constructs. Also, the statements were randomly ordered throughout the survey and they did not include any headings or explanations that might reveal the relationship between the statements and the constructs.

I first analyzed the mean and the standard deviation for each of the five statements associated with each of the five constructs. I then computed an average score for each of the five

constructs. Thereafter, I looked at the average mean and the average standard deviation of each

in order to test the degree of reliability. Finally, using the mean and standard deviation, I was

able to test the reliability of the constructs using a Cronbach's Alpha test.

For each of the 25 statements, the survey participants responded to one of six Likert scale

responses. Table 10 captures those six Likert scale responses and the numeric score I applied to

each for the purpose of my analysis. It is important to note that I deliberately excluded a

traditional middle response option for a Level of Agreement Likert Scale that normally reads

neither agree nor disagree. I did this in order to force the participants to either agree or disagree,

at least to some degree, with each statement.

Table 10

Likert Scale Responses (Numeric Score)

	Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Somewhat agree*	*Somewhat disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
Score	*6*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*

Table 11 capture the percentage of respondents who responded to each of the 25

statements, as well as the average response rate for of each for the five constructs.

Table 11

Responses to 25 Likert Scale Statements Based on the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen Aspects of Heads' Relationship to the Board Chair (Percentages)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My board chair cultivates a constructive partnership with me.	56.57%	24.92%	12.79%	3.70%	1.35%	0.67%
My board chair fosters a relationship of trust between me and him/her.	59.60%	26.26%	8.75%	1.35%	2.69%	1.35%
My board chair respects the difficult decision I make as head.	70.13%	17.79%	8.39%	1.34%	0.34%	2.01%
My board chair encourages me to maintain healthy work/life balance.	28.62%	26.26%	29.29%	7.41%	6.06%	2.36%

My board chair supports me fully as the head, giving me the maximum authority to run the operations of the school.	62.63%	22.22%	8.75%	3.03%	1.68%	1.68%
Moral Support Construct (average score)	**55.51%**	**23.49%**	**13.59%**	**3.37%**	**2.42%**	**1.61%**
My board chair consults with me on school matters.	63.09%	26.85%	5.37%	2.01%	1.68%	1.01%
My board chair works collaboratively with me on setting board agenda.	47.47%	32.32%	12.79%	5.05%	1.68%	0.67%
My board chair notifies me of parental concerns, redirecting them to me.	56.08%	25.34%	11.15%	3.72%	2.03%	1.69%
My board chair understands the demands placed on me as head.	49.16%	24.58%	15.82%	5.72%	2.36%	2.36%
My board chair defers to me on operational matters.	62.96%	24.24%	7.74%	1.68%	1.01%	2.36%
Respect for Expertise Construct (average score)	**55.75%**	**26.67%**	**10.57%**	**3.67%**	**1.75%**	**1.62%**
My board chair provides me with helpful advice.	46.31%	28.86%	16.44%	4.70%	2.35%	1.34%
My board chair collaborates with me on setting my annual goals.	42.42%	26.26%	17.17%	6.06%	5.05%	3.03%
My board chair provides periodic, informal feedback (formative) to me on progress in meeting my annual goals.	21.21%	27.27%	28.96%	12.79%	7.07%	2.69%
My board chair provides annual, formal feedback (summative) to me on progress in meeting my annual goals.	42.23%	27.03%	16.22%	7.43%	4.39%	2.70%
My board chair gives me the appropriate professional guidance.	21.55%	36.7%	24.92%	8.75%	5.72%	2.36%
Advice and Guidance Construct (average score)	**34.74%**	**29.22%**	**20.74%**	**7.95%**	**4.92%**	**2.42%**
My board chair focuses the board on long-range, strategic issues avoiding becoming involved directly in specific management issues.	40.07%	31.31%	15.49%	7.74%	2.69%	2.69%
My board chair understands the most important issues facing my school.	47.47%	38.38%	10.10%	1.35%	2.02%	0.67%
My board chair takes care to separate the interests of the school from the specific needs of a particular constituency.	46.46%	31.31%	10.44%	7.07%	2.69%	2.02%
My board chair works with board members on ongoing basis to ensure they understand their role as trustees.	20.95%	34.8%	27.03%	8.11%	6.42%	2.70%
My board chair separates day-to-day operational matters from board-level strategic issues.	45.45%	31.99%	14.48%	2.69%	3.03%	2.36%
Less Operational Support Construct (average score)	**40.10%**	**33.56%**	**15.51%**	**5.39%**	**3.37%**	**2.09%**
My board chair maintains open communication with me.	61.41%	23.83%	9.06%	2.68%	2.01%	1.01%

My board chair holds regularly scheduled meetings (in person or by phone).	51.18%	22.90%	14.48%	5.05%	4.38%	2.02%
My board chair is honest with me in our communications.	63.64%	28.28%	4.04%	2.36%	0.67%	1.01%
My board chair accepts responsibility for their mistakes.	44.11%	33.0%	12.12%	5.72%	3.70%	1.35%
My board chair maintains confidentiality.	72.73%	18.18%	5.39%	1.35%	1.35%	1.01%
Open Communication Construct (average score)	**58.61%**	**25.24%**	**9.02%**	**3.43%**	**2.42%**	**1.28%**

Table 12 shows the breakdown of the means and standard deviations of each of the 25 statements, as well as the mean and the standard deviation for of each for the five constructs. It also includes the number of valid responses, noting the number of responses that were missing for each of the 25 statements.

Table 12

Responses to 25 Likert Scale Statements Based on the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen Aspects of Heads' Relationship to the Board Chair (Mean and Standard Deviation)

	Valid Responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
My board chair cultivates a constructive partnership with me.	297	5.30	.993
My board chair fosters a relationship of trust between me and him/her.	297	5.35	1.039
My board chair respects the difficult decision I make as head.	298	5.50	.972
My board chair encourages me to maintain healthy work/life balance.	297	4.57	1.272
My board chair supports me fully as the head, giving me the maximum authority to run the operations of the school.	297	5.36	1.063
Moral Support Construct (average score)	**297**	**5.22**	**1.056**
My board chair consults with me on school matters.	298	5.45	.939
My board chair works collaboratively with me on setting board agenda.	297	5.17	1.019
My board chair notifies me of parental concerns, redirecting them to me.	297	5.25	1.103

My board chair understands the demands placed on me as head.	297	5.05	1.212
My board chair defers to me on operational matters.	297	5.39	1.044
Respect for Expertise Construct (average score)	**297**	**5.31**	**1.063**
My board chair provides me with helpful advice.	298	5.08	1.113
My board chair collaborates with me on setting my annual goals.	297	4.86	1.328
My board chair provides periodic, informal feedback (formative) to me on progress in meeting my annual goals.	297	4.35	1.288
My board chair provides annual, formal feedback (summative) to me on progress in meeting my annual goals.	297	4.87	1.303
My board chair gives me the appropriate professional guidance.	297	4.53	1.219
Advice and Guidance Construct (average score)	**297**	**4.74**	**1.250**
My board chair focuses the board on long-range, strategic issues avoiding becoming involved directly in specific management issues.	297	4.90	1.239
My board chair understands the most important issues facing my school.	297	5.26	.925
My board chair takes care to separate the interests of the school from the specific needs of a particular constituency.	297	5.06	1.191
My board chair works with board members on ongoing basis to ensure they understand their role as trustees.	296	4.48	1.243
My board chair separates day-to-day operational matters from board-level strategic issues.	297	5.07	1.165
Less Operational Support Construct (average score)	**297**	**4.95**	**1.153**
My board chair maintains open communication with me.	298	5.37	1.011
My board chair holds regularly scheduled meetings (in person or by phone).	297	5.05	1.256
My board chair is honest with me in our communications.	297	5.49	.870
My board chair accepts responsibility for their mistakes.	297	5.04	1.159
My board chair maintains confidentiality.	297	5.57	.895
Open Communication Construct (average score)	**297**	**5.30**	**1.038**

As part of the quantitative study, the survey asked each participant to rank in order of importance the five constructs. Table 13 captures the rank order of importance (from highest to lowest) of the five constructs according to the mean score. As shown in the table the *Respect for Expertise* construct had the highest average score, while the *Advice and Guidance* construct the lowest average score.

Table 13

Average Mean Score and Average Standard Deviation of the Five Constructs

Construct	Mean (Average Score)	Standard Deviation (Average Score)
Respect for Expertise	5.31	1.25
Open Communication	5.30	1.15
Moral Support	5.22	1.06
Less Operational Support	4.95	1.06
Advice and Guidance	4.74	1.04

Reliability Testing of the Five Constructs

In order to determine whether the survey actually measured what it intended to measure, I ran a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha noting that values over .7 were considered sufficiently reliable and values over .85 were considered highly reliable (see Table 14). The Cronbach's Alpha test confirmed the relatively high reliability of the twenty-five randomized questions for each of the five constructs, as all five saw a value greater that .85.

Table 14

Reliability Test of Five Constructs Using Cronbach's Alpha

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	# of Statements in Subset
Moral Support	.89	5
Respect for Expertise	.86	5
Advice and Guidance	.86	5
Less Operational Support	.91	5
Open Communication	.87	5

Heads Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivators: Responses and Rankings

In response to the second research question which asks, "To what extent, if at all, does the board chair and head partnership influence the head's job satisfaction in their current posts and, if it does, what aspects – both intrinsic and extrinsic – of this partnership appear to be of greatest importance?", the survey participants were asked how important, if at all, four key extrinsic motivators (*Compensation, Professional Development Opportunities, Public Accolades from Board Chair,* and *Term of Contract*) and five key intrinsic motivators (*Autonomy, Healthy Work/Life Balance, Mastery, Purpose,* and *Strong Partnership with Board Chair*) were when considering their level of job satisfaction. The participants were also asked to rank each of these two subsets of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

Extrinsic Motivators Responses and Rankings. For the four extrinsic motivators, the results of the Likert scale responses were mirrored in the results of the rankings, with *Compensation* earning the number one position and rank in both cases (see Tables 15 and 16). Approximately 56% of the heads considered their compensation to be *extremely important* or *very important*. Equally convincing was the consistency with which the heads placed *Public Accolades* at the bottom of their extrinsic motivators in terms of the rank and the degree to which it is important to them. In short, *Public Accolades* appeared to be a largely insignificant motivator when it came to job satisfaction and the decision to remain at their current school.

Table 15

Heads' Rating of Extrinsic Motivators
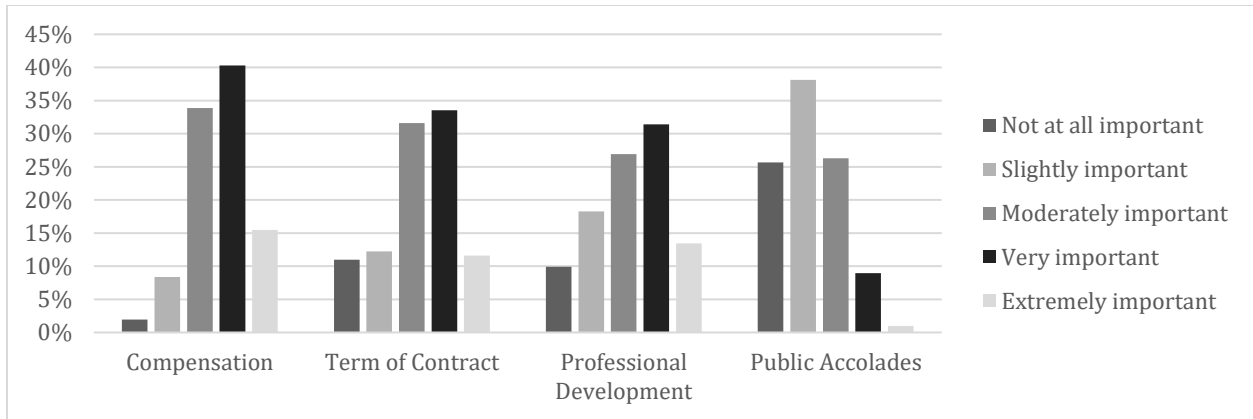
Table 16

Heads' Ranking of Extrinsic Motivators
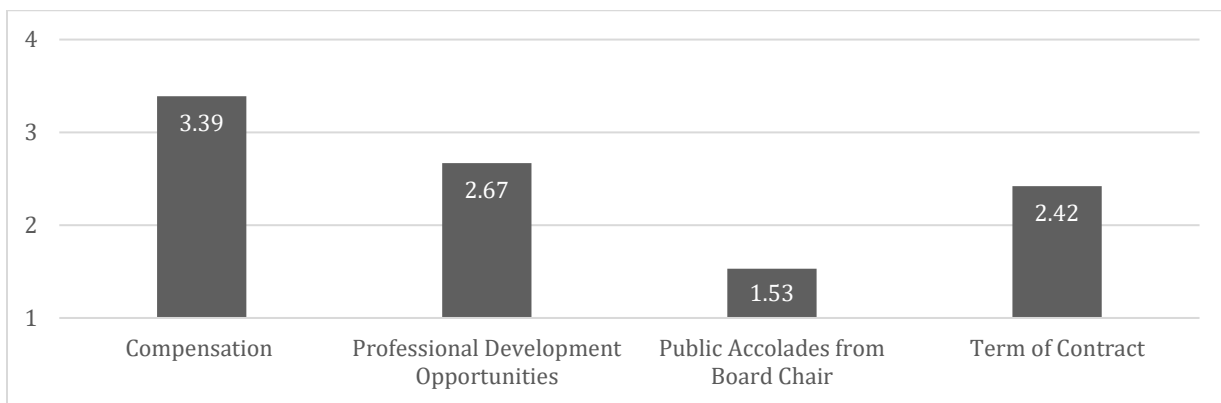
Intrinsic Motivators Responses and Rankings. Similar to the results of the extrinsic motivators, when comparing the ratings of the intrinsic motivators to the rankings given to each by the 312 heads, there was significant consistency. In both cases, *Purpose* was the clear and convincing number one positioned and ranked aspect (see Tables 17 and 18). Not only was *Purpose* the highest ranked – and convincingly so – it also garnered the highest degree of importance with over 95% of the heads considering it to be either *extremely important* (61.9%) or *very important* (33.3%). For *Autonomy*, which garnered a strong number two ranking, 89% of the heads considered it to be either *extremely important* (48.4%) or *very important* (40.7%). On

the other end of the rankings and ratings, *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance* was a distant

fifth place rank, as well as the one intrinsic factor that received the fewest number of heads

believing it to be *extremely important* (30.5%) or *very important* (24.4%).

Table 17

Heads' Rating of Extrinsic Motivators
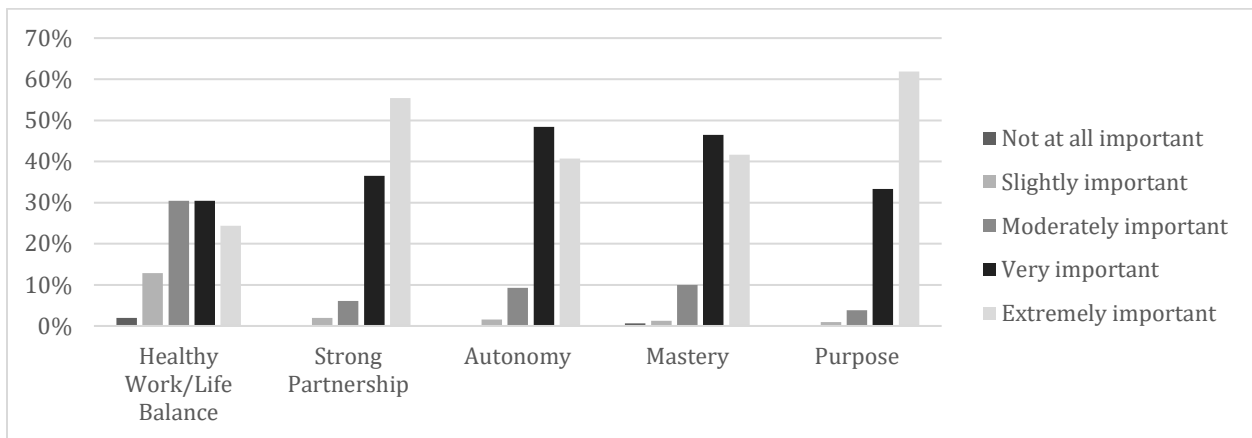
Table 18

Heads' Ranking of Intrinsic Motivators
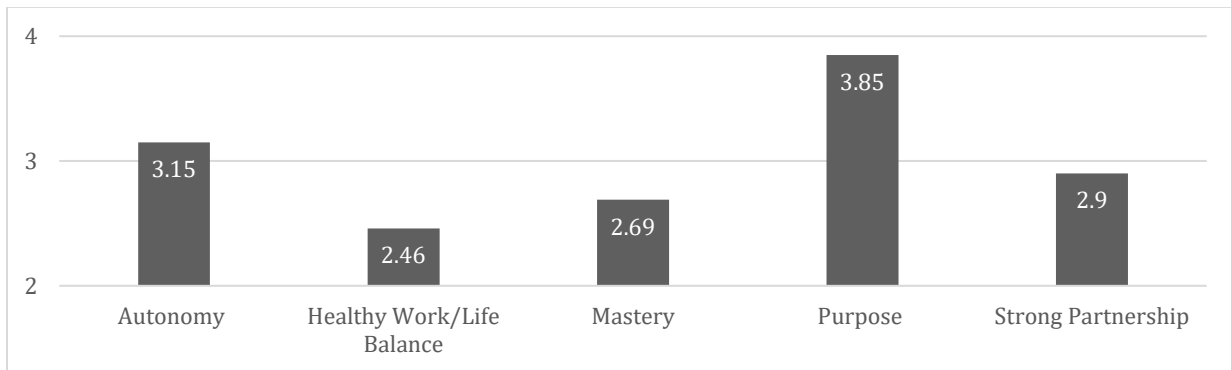
Determining the Significance Between the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivators Rankings

      I also ran a series of simple independent-samples t-tests to compare each of the adjacent

ranking means for both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. In doing so, I was able to

determine whether the difference in means between any two adjacent ranks was statistically

significant, or whether the difference was simply due to chance. For example, I ran independent

sample t-tests between the top ranked motivator and the second-ranked motivator, between the

second ranked motivator and the third-ranked motivator, and between the third-ranked motivator

and the fourth-ranked motivator. For each of these comparisons, a t-statistic revealed to what

extent the differences in mean scores were significant, and when the absolute value of that t-

statistic exceeded the p=.05 critical value of 1.96, I was able to reject the null hypothesis that

there was no significant difference between the adjacent means. In other words, if there was a

statistically significant difference between the top-ranked mean and the second-highest mean

then I was able to say definitively that the top-ranked mean was number one and that the second-

ranked mean was number two; simply stated, there was not a statistical tie between the top two

ranked means.

Table 19 shows the results of the independent-samples t-tests for the four extrinsic

motivators, and Table 20 shows the results of the independent-samples t-tests for the five

intrinsic motivators. To read the table, note that the relevant t-statistic appears on the top line of

the two motivators being compared.

Table 19

Independent-samples t-Tests for the Four Extrinsic Motivators

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-statistic
Motivator			
Compensation	1.61	.794	2.42
Professional Development Opportunities	2.33	.966	.083
Term of Contract	2.58	.989	.580
Public Accolades	3.47	.843	N/A

Table 20

Independent-samples T Tests for the Four Intrinsic Motivators

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-statistic
Motivator			
Purpose	2.15	1.29	1.56
Autonomy	2.85	1.36	.54
Partnership	3.10	1.37	.48
Mastery	3.31	1.19	.52
Work/Life Balance	3.54	1.43	N/A

Of the nine comparisons, the only one that resulted in a significant difference was between the top-ranked extrinsic motivator, *Compensation*, and the second-ranked motivator, *Professional Development Opportunities*. As shown in Table 19, the t-statistic associated with the comparison was 2.42 (p=.02), revealing that with 98% confidence one can conclude that *Compensation* was a clear number one and *Professional Development Opportunities* was a clear number two in terms of importance.

Testing for Correlations Between Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivators

Using the Spearman rank correlation test, I also tested whether there were any meaningful correlations between any of the nine fundamental extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Negative correlations between these would be consistent with heads recognizing a potential trade-off between these motivators. Values more extreme than .35 or -.35 were of interest, because that magnitude meant that more than 10 percent of the variation in one was explained by the other (see Table 21).

Table 21

Spearman Rank Correlation Test Between Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivators

	Compensation	Term of Contract	Professional Development	Work/Life Balance	Public Accolades	Partnership with Chair	Autonomy	Mastery	Purpose
Compensation	1.00								

Term of Contract	.39	1.00							
Professional Development	.20	.32	1.00						
Work/Life Balance	.19	.21	.28	1.00					
Public Accolades	.19	.21	.28	.21	1.00				
Partnership with Chair	.17	.27	.32	.07	.19	1.00			
Autonomy	.04	.12	.11	.01	.03	.19	1.00		
Mastery	.04	.09	.33	.002	.05	.25	.44	1.00	
Purpose	.02	.06	.22	.07	.03	.24	.22	.53	1.00

The test results (see Table 21) highlighted some mildly significant correlations between a few of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The correlations that saw a value greater than .35 included: *Compensation* and *Term of Contract* (.387). This finding makes sense intuitively as the desire to have as high as compensation as possible for as long as possible seem to go hand-in hand; and *Mastery* (defined as "the urge to get better and better at something that matters") saw a significant correlation with both *Autonomy*, defined as "the desire to direct our own lives" and *Purpose*, defined as "the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves." The suggested correlation of *Mastery* to both *Purpose* and *Autonomy* seems natural and predictable as both are inner-driven motivations seeking to improve oneself. There were no negative correlations between any of the nine motivators, suggesting that, possibly, heads simply value all motivations equally and do not see any prospect of trade-offs between one motivation and another.

Linear Regressions of the Five Constructs and Various Demographic Variables

My initial research question asks, "To what extent, if at all, do various motivating factors and select demographics influence the satisfaction level of the head?". In order to confidently measure any potentially significant relationship between the heads level of job satisfaction and

each of the five constructs – which are considered major motivating factors – as well as select demographic variables, I ran a series of stepwise regression analyses at the p ≤.05 level.

To begin, I set the level of the heads job satisfaction as the dependent variable and then ran regressions with each of the following independent variables: the five constructs (Moral Support, Respect for Expertise, Advice and Guidance, Less Operational Support, and Open Communication); years of service; locations of the school (East, Middle Atlantic, Midwest, New England, Southeast, Southwest, and West); years of service (4 to 14 years, and 4 to 15 years or more); grades the schools serves (grades 6/7 to 12, grades 9 to 12, grades PreK to 12, grades PreK to 6; or grades PreK to 8); and type of school (Day School, Boarding-Day School, Day-Boarding School, or Boarding School).

Table 21 shows only those findings from all of the regression analysis that were deemed significant (p < .05).

Table 22

Significant Findings from Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Significance Level
Job Satisfaction	Moral Support	.078	.000
Job Satisfaction	Grades 9 to 12	-.410	.047

What the empirical data from the regression analysis suggests is that heads who receive an increase in the amount of moral support from their board chair experience a significant increase in their level of job satisfaction. Specifically, every one-point increase on the *Moral Support* index is associated with a .078 increase on the job satisfaction score. The analysis also reveals that heads who are running a school that serves grades 9 to 12 are associated with job satisfaction scores that are .41 lower (6.8%) than heads serving in the school that offer additional

and/or different grades (grades 6/7 to 12, grades PreK to 12, grades PreK to 6; or grades PreK to 8). Other than these two results, there were no other significant findings when all of the other independent variables listed above were tested against the dependent variable of job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Having analyzed the data from the first phase of the research, responses to a 45-question survey completed by 312 heads largely representative of NAIS, the quantitative survey results provided a number of not so surprising results along with a few findings that the second phase of the research provided greater context and interpretation.

Generally speaking, the overwhelming majority of heads surveyed are satisfied with their work and take great pride in their jobs. The results validated the reliability of the five priority aspects of the heads relationship with their respective board chairs from the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen study, and affirmed their sense of the importance of maintaining open communication with their board chair and ensuring that the board chair promotes respect for the expertise of the head.

In response to one of my two research questions which asks, "To what extent, if at all, does the board chair and head partnership influence the head's job satisfaction in their current posts and, if it does, what aspects – both intrinsic and extrinsic – of this partnership appear to be of greatest importance?", in first considering the influence discrete extrinsic motivators might have on the job satisfaction of the heads, the research convincingly concluded that compensation matters. Approximately 56% of the heads considered their *Compensation* to be *extremely important* or *very important*. Equally convincing was the consistency with which the heads placed receiving public accolades from their board chair at the bottom of their ranking, suggesting that *Public Accolades* appear to be largely insignificant motivation to remain as head.

Similarly, the results demonstrated the significant influence that a few of the intrinsic motivators had on the heads. In particular, *Purpose* was the clear and convincing number one ranked intrinsic motivator with over 95% of the heads considering it to be either *extremely important* (61.9%) or *very important* (33.3%). *Autonomy*, which garnered a strong number two ranking, saw 89% of the heads consider it to be either *extremely important* (48.4%) or *very important* (40.7%). On the other end of the rankings, *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance* was a distant fifth place rank, as well as the one intrinsic factor that received the fewest number of heads believing it to be *extremely important* (30.5%) or *very important* (24.4%).

Finally, in response to the other research question which asks, "To what extent, if at all, do various motivating factors and select demographics influence the head's level of job satisfaction?" the empirical data gleaned from a series of regression analysis suggests that one motivating factor (moral support) and one select demographic (leading a school which serves grades 9 to 12) do, in fact, impact the overall job satisfaction of heads. Specifically, the data shows that heads who receive a unit increase in the amount of moral support from their board chair experience a significant increase in their level of job satisfaction (.078). The analysis also shows that the negative coefficient for heads who are running a school that serves grades 9 to 12 (-.410) suggests that the job satisfaction of these heads is less than heads serving in the school that offer additional and/or different grades (grades 6/7 to 12, grades PreK to 12, grades PreK to 6; or grades PreK to 8).

Phase 2 Qualitative Results

In this section of the chapter, following an overview of the sampling procedures and participants, I reviewed the descriptive statistics of a diverse and representative demographic

group of heads selected from the qualitative research sample, each of whom agreed to participate

in a semi-structured interview. Thereafter, I compared the same set of demographics (school

location, grades served, and school type) of this smaller sample to both the quantitative research

sample and the NAIS population. Then, through the process of selective coding, I attempted to

identify themes emerging from an informed analysis of the interviews conducted with this

smaller research sample, which could effectively deepen the quantitative research findings,

provide context and perspective generally, and surface themes unique to the qualitative findings.

Sampling Procedures and Participants

The number of participants for the second phase of research was determined, in part, by

the number of volunteers who indicated, at the end of the survey they filled out, a willingness to

be interviewed. Ideally, the number of volunteers would be significant enough to form a diverse

and representative demographic group through purposeful sampling.

Of the 312 heads who chose to participate in the first phase of the research, 193 agreed to

be included in the second phase of research if selected, and willingly provided their contact

information. In the end I contacted 20 individual heads from across the country, 15 of whom

agreed to participate in the interview phase of the research. The five who did not agree to

participate in the interviews never responded to my invitation. Table 23 provides a demographic

breakdown of the interview participants, while maintaining the appropriate level of

confidentiality.

Table 23

Characteristics of Interview Participants

Participant	School	School Region	School Grades	School Type	Years as Head	Gender Identity
Participant 1	School 1	West	PreK to Grade 12	Day	12	Male
Participant 2	School 2	West	PreK to	Day	5	Female

			Grade 8			
Participant 3	School 3	West	Grades 9 to 12	Day	10	Male
Participant 4	School 4	West	Grades 7 to 12	Day	10	Male
Participant 5	School 5	New England	PreK to Grade 12	Day	10	Female
Participant 6	School 6	West	PreK to Grade 8	Day	13	Male
Participant 7	School 7	Southeast	PreK to Grade 12	Day	16	Male
Participant 8	School 8	West	PreK to Grade 12	Day-Boarding	6	Male
Participant 9	School 9	New England	PreK to Grade 12	Day-Boarding	3	Male
Participant 10	School 10	Southeast	PreK to Grade 12	Day	18	Female
Participant 11	School 11	Mid-Atlantic	PreK to Grade 12	Day	8	Male
Participant 12	School 12	Southeast	PreK to Grade 12	Day	5	Male
Participant 13	School 13	Southeast	PreK to Grade 12	Day	7	Male
Participant 14	School 14	West	Grades 6 to 12	Day	8	Male
Participant 15	School 15	West	PreK to Grade 8	Day	12	Male

The selection process aimed at creating a research group of heads with both as much demographic variation as possible and one that was as representative of the population as possible with an n of 15. For the purposes of my selection process, the demographics I considered when identifying the 15 from the 193 willing participants included: the current length of tenure; the grades offered at the respective schools; school location; and gender identification.

Comparisons of Demographics: Qualitative Research Group, Quantitative Research Group, and NAIS Population

For both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research I used a group of heads from the National Association of Independent School (NAIS) heads. Following are the comparisons of the demographics of the qualitative research group with the quantitative research

group and the NAIS population. Tables 24, 25, and 26 highlight the comparisons of three key

demographics: school location; grades served; and type of school.

Table 24 reflects the regional breakdown of the locations of the schools for the qualitative

research group, the quantitative research group, and the NAIS population. Of the five heads who

did not respond to the invitation to participate in the qualitative research (interviews), all five

currently run schools that are located in the East, Southwest, or Midwest. Compared to both the

survey cohort from my first phase of research and to the NAIS population, I had a slight surplus

of heads who currently lead schools located in the West.

Table 24

*Comparison of Demographics: Qualitative Research Group, Quantitative Research Group, and
NAIS Population (School Location)*

	East/Mid-Atlantic	*New England*	*Southeast*	*Southwest*	*West*	*Midwest*
Qualitative (Interview) Research Group	6.7%	13.3%	26.7%	0%	53%	0%
Quantitative (Survey) Research Group	31.2%	12.8%	14.1%	7.4%	22.8%	11.7%
NAIS Population	28%	16%	15%	10%	20%	11%

East/ Mid-Atlantic *(New Jersey, New York, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia)*
New England *(Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)*
Southeast *(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)*
Southwest *(Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)*
West *(Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)*
Midwest *(Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South
Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin)*

As shown in Table 25, unlike with the quantitative research group, compared to all NAIS

schools the qualitative research does not closely mirror the NAIS population. And while the

difference in each classification is significant, a difference ranging from 6% to 23%, due to the

relatively small number of participants in the qualitative study (15 participants) the percentages can swing significantly based on just one or two of the participants' demographic information. Unfortunately, three of the 20 heads to whom I reached out and who subsequently did not respond to my invitation to participate in the interview currently lead schools that are PreK to Grade 8. Also, the other two heads who did not respond to my invitation to participate in the interviews lead secondary schools with grades 9 to 12. As a result, and as noted in Table 25, those two categories of schools were underrepresented in my study compared to the NAIS population.

Table 25

Comparison of Demographics: Qualitative Research Group, Quantitative Research Group, and NAIS Population (School Grades)

	Elementary Schools (PreK to 8)	Elementary/Secondary Schools (PreK to 12)	Secondary Schools (9 to 12)
Qualitative (Interview) Subset	20%	73.3%	6.7%
Quantitative (Survey) Subset	32%	55.9%	12.1%
NAIS Sample	37%	50%	13%

Table 26 shows the comparison of the type of school between the qualitative research group, the quantitative research group, and the NAIS population. For my qualitative research group I was unsuccessful in getting heads who currently run Boarding Schools or Boarding-Day Schools to participate in my interviews. However, since those two school types make up only 5% of the total NAIS schools, I do not think that the absence of heads from those school types in my study had any material impact on my findings.

Table 26

Qualitative Research Group, Quantitative Research Group, and NAIS Population (School Type)

	Boarding School [1]	Boarding-Day School [2]	Day School [3]	Day-Boarding School [4]
Qualitative (Interview) Subset	0%	0%	86.7%	13.3%
Quantitative (Survey) Subset	2.7%	5.7%	81.8%	9.8%
NAIS Sample	5% [5]		95% [6]	

[1] Boarding School (enrolling 95% or more boarding students)
[2] Boarding-Day School (enrolling between 51 and 94% boarding students, with the balance day)
[3] Day School (enrolling 95% or more day students)
[4] Day-Boarding School (enrolling between 51 and 94% day students, with the balance boarding)
[5] includes Boarding-Day Schools
[6] includes Day-Boarding Schools

The Qualitative Data: Enhancing the Quantitative Results and Emerging Themes

The second phase of research (qualitative) utilized a semi-structured interview format containing both follow-up questions consistent with the survey content and questions emerging from an informed analysis of the quantitative portion of the study. Ideally, responses to these interview questions effectively deepened the quantitative research findings, and provided context and perspective generally, all in an effort to surface emergent themes.

The surfacing of emergent themes was accomplished by analyzing the interview transcripts to identify developing patterns and by focusing on similarities and consistencies in the responses from the 15 interviewees. Open data coding (Neuman, 2011. Pp. 283-284) was used to identify key patterns by cataloging an inventory of key words, terms, ideas, and definitions, as well as connecting what was repeated in the responses from the interview participants. Coding also aided in integrating and/or separating the responses of different survey participants and interviewees. All of the qualitative text coding and analysis was done using the MAXQDA software.

Thereafter, I employed the strategies of selective coding in an attempt to identify significant, weighty, and substantial themes that emerged from the similarities, the significance, and the relative preponderance of specific themes identified in the open coding.

In a number of instances, the qualitative results shed additional light on the quantitative results, strengthening the overall research findings. However, as it turned out, the second phase of the study that entailed the collection and analysis of qualitative data did not just shed light on the quantitative results. The coding and thematic analysis process alluded to above also revealed findings that did more than map onto the quantitative results generated during the first phase of the study; they also lead to the emerging of other, relevant themes that were not addressed in the quantitative phase of the research.

Qualitative Data Enhanced the Phase 1 Quantitative Results

This first section focuses on four themes that emerged during the analysis of the qualitative data which validated findings from the quantitative phase of the study, provided greater clarity and context to those findings, and provided insights and first-hand perspectives that accentuated specific findings from the first phase of research. The four major theses are summarized below, highlighting both the findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research.

Open and Honest Communication Rules the Day. The qualitative phase of the research included an analysis of the heads' responses to and rankings of the five key aspects to building and sustaining a healthy head and board chair partnership identified in the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen study. The results of this analysis clearly support the notion that *Open Communication* is among the most important aspects of a healthy and successful head and board chair partnership. In fact, according to the 312 heads surveyed, *Open Communication* was ranked

as the number one most important aspect to maintaining a healthy partnership. When rating this same aspect, 58.6% of the 312 heads *strongly agreed*, 25.2% *agreed*, and 9.0% *somewhat agreed*.

In the second phase of the study, the qualitative findings captured all 15 of the participants commenting specifically on the critical importance of maintaining open and honest communication. In response to one of the open-ended questions pertaining to the qualities critical to maintaining a healthy partnership between the head and the board chair, eight of the 15 heads singled out "open and honest communication" as the most important quality, while the other seven all noted open communication was at least as important as the other four aspects of the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgenson study.

During the qualitative research phase, analysis of the responses also shed light on the specific qualities inherent in communication between the head and board chair. In the words of the interviewees, there were a number of different qualifiers used to further define communication, including: "consistent" communication (Interview 8); "transparent" communication (Interview 5 and Interview 9); "clear lines" of communication (Interview 2); "timely" communication (Interview 8); " open and honest communication" (Interview 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, and 14); and "consistent" communication (Interview 8).

The qualitative phase of the study also provided some color to the critical importance of open and honest communication between the head and the board chair. One head emphasized the importance of understanding each other's communication behaviors and tendencies:

> *There are two questions that I ask my incoming chair: One, what do you look like when you are mad? Two, what do you lose sleep over? If I can understand the behaviors of the chair before they arise, then I can better manage and work within our partnership. And*

the same is true of them knowing my responses to those same two questions. The answers

to those questions help us understand how we can best be in relationship with one

another understanding what our behaviors will look and feel like. (Interview 9)

This practice of understanding behaviors, designing norms, and investing in the

relationship between head and chair in consistent with the keys to a healthy partnership as

described by NAIS (2019b) which insists that,

> heads and board chairs should consider sitting down at the beginning of each
> fiscal year to explicitly set expectations for culture, norms, and communication
> and discuss how to communicate them to the full board and put them into
> practice. Setting mutual expectations for this key working relationship can
> prevent problems down the line. (p.1)

Another head straightforwardly noted direct connection between strong communication

and their own well-being and success: "I think there is open and honest communication, which I

believe is hugely important to my well-being and success" (Interview 5).

While Money Matters, the Sense of Purpose and Autonomy are Priceless. In the first phase

of the research, for the four extrinsic motivators, the results of the Likert scale responses

mirrored the results of the rankings with *Compensation* earning the number one position and

rank in both cases (see Tables 15 and 16). Approximately 56% of the heads considered their

compensation to be *extremely important* or *very important*. Moreover, based on the results of the

t-tests of the nine intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, the only motivator that resulted in a

significant difference was the extrinsic motivator *Compensation*.

Information gathered during the qualitative phase of the study helped identify the specific

reasons why *Compensation* was rated and ranked so highly. Based on the findings from the

second phase of research, the primary reason why *Compensation* was considered such a strong

extrinsic motivator was due to the undeniable fact that the demands placed of the head of school are unrelenting and dogged, and, according to all fifteen of the heads interviewed, are only getting worse.

Aside from compensation off-setting – or, at least, *compensating* for – the unremitting pressures and mounting stresses that come with being a head of school, other reasons why *Compensation* was the resounding number one extrinsic motivator according to the heads, include: the desire to take care of my familial obligations, "the financial needs of my family and for my future planning" (Interview 2); feeling a need for fair pay and higher compensation, "I am underpaid and I work very hard" (Interview 5); and fighting for gender pay equity, "As a woman of color, compensation definitely matters to me because I am well aware of the history of pay discrepancies between while and male counterparts" (Interview 4).

The undeniable influence of compensation as a chief motivation notwithstanding, no other extrinsic motivator came close to its rating or ranking. And, unlike compensation, the other two most popular influencers, based on the quantitative findings, were both intrinsic motivators – *Purpose* and *Autonomy*.

In the quantitative phase of the research, when asked to rate and rank the five intrinsic motivators, the 312 heads surveyed rated and ranked *Purpose* as the clear and convincing number one (see Tables 17 and 18). Not only was *Purpose* the highest ranked – and convincingly so – it also garnered the highest degree of importance with over 95% of the heads considering it to be either *extremely important* (61.9%) or *very important* (33.3%). For *Autonomy*, which garnered a strong number two ranking, 89% of the heads considered it to be either *extremely important* (48.4%) or *very important* (40.7%).

In the qualitative phase of the research the heads were asked which, if any, of the five intrinsic motivators most significantly impacted their level of job satisfaction and their decision to remain at their current school. There were two clear top motivators among the 15 heads. Twelve of the heads mentioned *Purpose* (defined as "the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves"), and 10 mentioned *Autonomy* (defined as "the desire to direct our own lives").

Excerpts form select interviews captured the weight of conviction some heads hold when it comes to the importance of leading with purpose. Her are a few examples highlighting what some of the interviewees said about this matter:

> *There is no question in my mind that purpose is the most important influence on my decision to be - and remain - the head of a school.* (Interview 4)

> *More than anything, the head needs to be valued, have autonomy, and be trusted.* (Interview 6)

> *I think a key to my longevity is the excellent relationship that has been cultivated with each chair at [my school]. We enter into a place of mutual respect, build an understanding of what we both lose sleep over and understand how we show up when under stress. We share our commitment to the institution and work hard to build and maintain alignment in support of the mission.* (Participant 9)

The qualitative analysis gave rise to a few of the heads providing their own unique take on the true meaning of *Purpose*. One defined purpose as " being involved in developing students, faculty, staff, and parents" (Interview 6), while another saw it as building "enduring relationships in the school community" (Interview 9). One head in particular likened their purpose to that of a

ministry, noting that the fundamental purpose of heads is to humbly operate in the service of

others:

> When I think about our responsibility as heads, I realize that we really have to
> have faith in all people (parents, students, faculty, trustees). Our job is like a
> ministry in a way. We are serving other people. And we have to be humble.
> (Interview 6)

The Myth of the Work/Life Balance. One of the more surprising findings from the first phase

of the research was how heads rated and ranked *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance*.

When asked to rank the five intrinsic motivators, *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance* was

a distant fifth and last place, and it was the one intrinsic factor of the five that received the fewest

number of heads believing it to be *extremely important* (30.5%) or *very important* (24.4%).

After analyzing the qualitative responses, not only was this finding validated, but I

discovered critical information which explained the primary reason why this factor carried so

little influence in the minds of heads. According to the heads, the reason is less that they do not

long for a healthy work/life balance and more that the very notion of this type of balance is, in

the real-life experiences of leading an independent school, simply impossible to achieve.

During the interviews, a number of heads literally chuckled at the notion of actually

maintaining even a semblance of said balance.

> *I smiled at the work/life balance bit. Do you know any heads with work/life balance? I'd*
>
> *like to talk with them!* (Participant 1)
>
> *I haven't had breakfast or lunch more than a dozen times in the last 30 years, so I guess*
>
> *the "healthy work/life" balance is out, right?* (Participant 10)

Others demonstrated a much more cynical and resigned response to the nearly impossible notion of actually maintaining any balance; a reality that one head admitted would ultimately lead to an early departure from the profession.

I think heads need to commit to the absurdity of the job in terms of the time demands. My partner always reminds me that heads don't have jobs they have lifestyles. And any notion of a life/work balance is a fallacy. (Participant 8)

A healthy work/life balance would certainly also help, but I don't feel I've been able to always achieve that, which may be the ultimate reason I decide to retire in a few years. (Participant 12)

Two of the heads added rather bleak and defeatist responses, noting that the imbalance is getting worse and worse due to changing external factors and pressures that are out of their control.

Good luck with work/life balance. It just isn't possible. It is only getting worse due to many factors out of our control including the growing complexity of job, parental expectations, and the world. And, sadly, the ever-increasing litigious nature of our society. (Participant 12)

The notion of maintaining a healthy work/life balance is not a reality; it is a myth. (Participant 3)

I will speak at greater length to the significance of the quantitative and the qualitative research around *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance* in Chapter 5.

Lead the Board, Not the School. The second phase of the study revealed some very strong feelings amongst heads that one of the greatest ways a board chair can demonstrate their support of a head comes from their commitment to always prioritizing focus on leading the board and not

trying to lead the school. And while the fact that the results of the quantitative research have the 312 heads ranking *Less Operational Support* as one of the least significant aspect of maintaining a healthy head and board chair partnership, because their ratings were relatively high – 40.1% *strongly agreed*, 33.6% *agreed*, and 15.5% *somewhat agreed* – one can infer that *Less Operational Support* matters more than its low rank might suggest. Fortunately, the results of the qualitative research shed significant light on this particular matter that, in the end, resulted in a high degree of clarity about the relative importance of this particular aspect of the head and board chair partnership.

In the second phase of research, all 15 heads made it abundantly clear that when boards and board chairs begin to lean too far into the operational aspects of the school, the heads confidence in the support of the chair began to wane. Based on the findings from the interviews, one of the fundamental beliefs held by all 15 heads concerning the role of the chair – and the entire board – vis-à-vis the day-to-day operations of the school was this: The line between school operations and strategy, policy, and governance cannot be drawn in the sand. All heads agreed that the chair is at their best when they are leading the board and not trying to run the school. Doing so, allows the head to do their job even more successfully. As one head noted, "…strong leadership of the board by the chair, allows me to lead the school most effectively" (Interview 13).

During the interviews, the heads were asked which, if any, of the following approaches to you and your work by your board chair (based on the 2016 research conducted by Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgenson) most significantly influence your level of job satisfaction and your decision to remain at your current school: (1) provide moral support; (2) limit operational influence in day-to-day activities; (3) maintain open and honest communication; (4) show respect for your

expertise as the leader; or (5) provide sound advice and guidance. Along with maintaining open and honest lines of communication, the other most common board chair behavior noted by the heads was the ability of the chair to limit their operational influence in day-to-day activities. Not only was it one of two that received the highest rank, but it garnered the greatest amount of commentary in the interviews and it came with the greatest amount of conviction both in terms of how good it is when it is working well and how detrimental it can become when the board has overstepped its boundaries and moved from the fiduciary and strategic work into the day-to-day operations of the school. As one head noted:

> This one single precept is most important: The difference between operations and policy, strategy, mission, and supervising the head. When trustee(s) feel equipped to cross over the line and get involved in areas outside of their purview, I am very strong-minded and cognizant of how important it is to defend that line (which is often hard to define, which is all the more reason to defend). Onboarding and orientation are keys to this success, and it needs to be articulated by board chair. (Interview 10)

One head captured the ideal head and board chair partnership – and the discrete roles and responsibilities of each that not only complement one another but ensure the success of the school – using the metaphor of baseball. "I like to look at the head as pitcher and chair as catcher. I had one chair who wanted to instead be my pitching coach and it was a disaster. He spent all his time tapping my shoulder, stepping into sacred space that was a clear violation of the relationship" (Interview 9).

Another head called out the chair's ability to successfully run the board and maintain a clear division of labor as one of the primary reasons for his decision to remain at his current school. "All of those [approaches] are vital and each of them strongly influences my commitment to remain at my current school, but above all else maintaining the difference between operations and strategy" (Interview 10).

As critical as it is for the board chair to maintain clear lines of division between operations and board policy and strategy work, what is of equal, if not greater, importance is ensuring that the other trustees under their care and direction do the same. The chair is the gatekeeper who must ensure that every trustee honor this demarcation. This leadership skill is essential and demands that the chair constantly, consistently, and judiciously manage their board. This is no easy task, especially considering that those who are often attracted to serve on an independent school board (not to mention sought after) are highly talented, dedicated, and successful individuals who care deeply about the life and health of the school, and whose child(ren) are likely attending the school. Variations of this point can be seen in the following quotations from two interviewees:

> *Finally, I have found the best chairs to be those who are willing to "run" the board. To successfully manage, coach, guide, direct, and correct trustees, including rogue trustees. There is the old saying that the head is just one crazy board member away from being fired.* (Interview 8)

> *From time to time (fortunately not frequently) a board member or two will get too much into the weeds, or veer towards management and away from governance. I had a former board chair who was reluctant to address such instances, and it fell on me to do so, which at times created tension between me and some members of the board. The current chair, her second year, has so far been great about taking that on, and understands that I shouldn't be put in a position to call out a trustee.* (Interview 12)

Unique Themes Presented Exclusively in the Qualitative Data

This second section captures two significant themes that emerged exclusively from the qualitative phase of the research.

Take Some Time to Date Before Getting Married. No matter how long the partnership between the head and chair (though it is again worth noting that the findings in my research suggests that the longer the partnership, the higher the likelihood of the head staying), 13 of the 15 participants shared their profound and considerable influence in the selection or nomination process for the board chair. (Note: One of the participants felt it was not appropriate for them to comment.) The majority of heads commented on the generally accepted understanding among their boards of the critical importance of working in concert with the head, taking the time necessary to consider which potential successor is the right match at the right time for the head. They also agreed that in order to be able to successfully identify the chair-elect, there needs to be a substantial investment of time and thought early on in the selection process. Here are some examples of how different interviewees made this point:

> *This time around, I just recently made the initial calls of inquiry to those I thought*
>
> *interesting and interested and then provided significant input into final decision,*
>
> *understanding that the Committee on Trustees still possessed veto power, though I think*
>
> *it would be highly unlikely they would do so.* (Interview 2)
>
> *I am consistently building relationship with prospective future chairs and can ultimately*
>
> *make a strong recommendation to the ad hoc selection committee that consists of two*
>
> *current and two former trustees.* (Interview 5)
>
> *The current chair asks me who I want or think might serve well in this role, and then*
>
> *board provides the space and time to allow me to cultivate future board chair. Early on, I*
>
> *am working closely with the chair of governance to always be thinking about succession*
>
> *planning.* (Interview 10)

We come to a collective agreement on successor, and we talk about who will be successor

now rather than wait until the position is open so that we can be as thorough and as

thoughtful as possible. We want to get it right for the sake of all. It is critical that we find

someone who shares a similar philosophical mindset and someone with whom there is

complete and mutual trust, and possesses those skills that will complement the head.

(Interview 11)

While all of the heads acknowledged the ultimate decision to approve the board chair

rests in the hands of the board itself per the written by-laws or the generally accepted

institutional practice, all felt they had always been appropriately and sufficiently engaged in the

exploratory and vetting stages of determining the next board chair, as is suggested by the

following quotations from interviewees:

I have a good deal of involvement and it is done in an open and transparent manner with

the chair. The more mature boards and heads have come to an understanding of who has

what it takes to serve on the board and to serve as chair; it is the greatest unspoken and

unwritten rule of schools that are striving. (Interview 1)

Ultimately, it is a healthy consultation with the board chair to make decision. (Interview

3)

I believe that the head should play big part of decision, and my board has always made

my voice heard in selecting the next chair. Let's just say that the process is very humane

me as head. And getting it right is key because a strong, intimate relationship with the

chair is critical to health and survival of head. (Interview 6)

While the governance committee ultimately drives decision, as head I have a significant

amount of influence in who is ultimately selected to serve as chair. (Interview 8)

I am very involved in selection process. Ultimately, I will come to a mutual agreement

with board chair on who will be the successor. To my good fortune – and that of the

School – the current board understands the importance of doing all they can to ensure a

healthy partnership. (Interview 12)

Strong Partnership Trumps Term Limits. Based on the results of my qualitative research, the

perspective shared by 12 of the 15 heads – whose tenure at their current school ranged from 5 to

18 years – is that hard and fast term limits (most commonly set at two or three years)

significantly arrested the development of a strong partnership between the head and board chair.

Generally speaking, the heads agreed that the strength of the partnership between the head and

the chair is "*a win for both sides*" (Interview 6) as it benefits considerably the head, the chair

(and, by default, the entire board), and the school.

Twelve of the 15 participants spoke directly and openly of the critical importance of not

allowing term limits to inhibit the continuation of a strong partnership between the head and

board chair. To that end, all but two of the heads' schools have some variation in their by-laws,

or, in some cases, precedents, though not necessarily written-down policies, that will allow for a

board chair to remain at the conclusion of the term. As one head put it, they have "term limits"

but no "time limits" for the chair to serve (Interview 2).

According to the heads who were interviewed, generally speaking, the rationale for

placing greater importance on the strength of the partnership than on the rigidity of a seemingly

arbitrary term limit came down to seeing the greater good for all, most especially the head, the

chair (and by default, the entire board), and the school. Here are examples of what interviewees

actually said about the time-limit issue:

I like this [i.e., flexibility about contract renewal rather than mandated time limits] because it allows for a good partnership to continue which is a win for both sides. (Interview 6)

Along with the board we have built flexibility into policies. I operate according to a fundamental belief that I share with my team all the time; namely, all rigid policies are bad. This is true for board chair terms. While trustees serve two three-year terms, in order to allow for some to stay longer, the chair has "at large" appointments. As for the board chair, there is a stated three-year term with option of extending indefinitely based on current needs. Why would a school choose to have a leadership transition when there may be current realities that would benefit from strong, consistent leadership? (Interview 10)

The goal is to keep it open year after year so it can be extended if the relationship is working. (Interview 11)

A number of heads spoke to the positive impact an extended term for the chair – one that allows for the extension of a term, most commonly set at two or three years – has on schools that are undergoing any number of significant events or moments during a year when a strict term limit would otherwise force a transition in board leadership. Instead, the ability to extend the term when the partnership is strong is exponentially better for the school as nothing matters more during times of institutional change or crisis than the effectiveness and equanimity of a partnership defined by strength, continuity, and reliability. Here are some examples of how interviewees made this point:

Unequivocally, I believe that nothing is more critical to the school and what great schools can accomplish (enrollment, capital campaigns, philanthropy, educational

excellence) than a strong partnership between governance and leadership. Defined most

clearly by the relationship between the head and board chair. It needs to be seen as a

side-by-side partnership. It is a mutual agreement – vows were exchanged – and so the

desire to see it through and make it work is great on both sides. Much like a good

marriage. (Interview 1)

I like having some clear term limits with the flexibility to extend the term as long as

necessary in the event that the relationship is working well and/or the school is in the

middle of a significant event such as a capital campaign, a construction project, a

leadership transition, or some important milestone in the life of the school. (Interview 5)

Also, if the school is in the middle of a particularly significant project or period (for

example, a capital campaign, COVID-19, a head transition, etc.) it is best to have

consistency and predictability. A longer term gives the community a sense of stability and

assurance; proven leader in place during times of anxiety and uncertainty. (Interview 8)

Conclusion

The significant findings from the second phase of my research will be discussed in

Chapter 5, especially those findings that either influenced or were influenced by the research

from the first phase of the study. Nevertheless, a few of those significant findings, along with

other results of the qualitative research are briefly summarized here.

One of the more significant findings from the 15 individual heads from across the country

who participated in the interviews that was not included in the first phase of the research was the

overwhelming agreement that placing greater importance on the strength of the partnership

between the head and the current board chair than on the rigidity of a seemingly arbitrary term

limit. All of the 15 heads agreed that their current practice, and in the case for a few schools,

their current policies which allowed for the extension of the current board chair term – most typically two or three years in length – was undeniably beneficial to all.

The qualitative research confirmed rather vigorously the critical importance of open communication between the head and the board chair. The results of the survey from the first phase of the research highlighted the strong conviction held by the heads that open communication is the single most important aspect of the head/chair partnership, and the results of the interviews from the second phase of my research confirmed its critical importance. The research from the second phase also confirmed compensation as the chief extrinsic motivating factor.

Two other significant themes that emerged from the analysis of interviews in the second phase of the research were: 1) in order to be able to successfully identify the next board chair, there needs to be a substantial investment of time and thought early on in the selection process from both the board chair and the head, and the head needs to have significant influence in that decision; and 2) the success of the partnership between the head and the board chair is heavily predicated on the establishment and maintenance of clear delineation between the roles and responsibilities of the head and the board chair.

Finally, one significant finding from the phase one research, for which the interviews provided much-needed context, was the notion that maintaining work/life balance was not highly revered by heads. However, what was learned in phase two of the research was that this finding is less about heads not being attracted to the idea of maintaining some semblance of balance between the demands of their work and the pleasure of life outside of work, and more about the perceived absurdity of this ideal. As one head put it; "The notion of maintaining a healthy

work/life balance is not a reality; it is a myth" (Participant 3). Further discussion about this

finding is included in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Brief Review of the Study's Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to identify potential factors that heads of independent schools perceive as being related to their job satisfaction and to investigate to what extent, if any, these factors influence the behaviors and attitudes of the heads as they think about their decision to continue working at their current school. Only heads who have been in their current position at their current school for a minimum of four years were included in the study. The underlying assumption for setting this criterion was that heads who have been in their positions for four or more years had been in their positions long enough to have had the opportunity to reaffirm their decision to remain at the school.

Specifically, the study attempted to respond to the following research questions:

(R1): To what extent, if at all, do various motivating factors and select demographics influence the head's level of job satisfaction?

(R2): To what extent, if at all, does the board chair and head partnership influence the head's job satisfaction in their current posts and, if it does, what aspects – both intrinsic and extrinsic – of this partnership appear to be of greatest importance?

This chapter highlights what is important about the study's findings and compares these findings to what has been discussed in the literature, articulates the limitations of the study's findings, and considers implications of the study's results for both practice and research that could be conducted in the future.

Discussion of the Study's Most Important Findings

and Their Relationship to the Existing Literature

The Head/Board Chair Partnership

This study's results, in both the quantitative and qualitative phases, reinforce the idea that building and maintaining a strong partnership between a school's head and its board chair is vital to the success of the head, the board, the board chair, and the school. In the literature, a compelling argument has been made time and again that the head and board chair partnership is the single most important relationship in the school. This study provides systematically generated empirical evidence to support this claim.

The literature, in fact, has consistently suggested that, in order for the head/board chair partnership to flourish – and thereby the school itself to flourish – this partnership between the head and the board chair requires constant care, attention, and enrichment. NAIS (2017), the leading authority in independent school governance, contends strongly that the strength of the partnership between the head and the board chair serves as "a key indicator of an independent school's effectiveness and potential for success. It is marked by mutual respect, frequent and open communication, and candor" (p. 1). Indeed, findings from research conducted by NAIS (2019) that included independent schools confirmed that "it is widely accepted that a solid relationship between the CEO of an organization and the board – and particularly between the CEO and the board chair – is critical to long-term viability" (p.70).

Research conducted by Baker et al. (2015) confirmed that not only is a healthy and productive partnership between board chair and school head necessary for board effectiveness, but "for the heads of school, the ability to effectively work in partnership with boards of trustees is crucial to both school success and career longevity" (p.83).

It would follow, then, that when this partnership is strong, the overall job satisfaction of the head, the likelihood of the head remaining in partnership with the chair, and, thereby the

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desire to continuing to serve the school, would seemingly increase. This, in turn, would benefit the overall health, stability, and success of the school. Conversely, when this partnership is unstable, fractured, and/or unhealthy the risk of a head departure seemingly increases, inevitably leading to some degree of disruption, uncertainty, and strain on the school community.

What has been made abundantly clear in the findings from both the quantitative and the qualitative research in this study is that of the various aspects that make up the job of an independent school head, their relationship with the board chair is an essential and inescapable component of their work and their success, and a significant influencing factor in their job satisfaction and, ostensibly, their decision to remain in their current position.

This study set out to identify to what extent, if at all, various motivating factors impact the heads level of job satisfaction. While my research investigated various motivators, what those factors have in common – whether they be intrinsic or extrinsic in nature – is that each is impacted in meaningful and lasting ways through the partnership a head has with their board chair.

Using the five key aspects to building and sustaining a healthy head and board chair partnership identified in the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgensen study, the findings from the first phase of the research clearly support the notion that *Open Communication* is among the most important aspects of a healthy and successful partnership. In fact, according to the 312 surveyed, *Open Communication* was ranked number one. In the second phase of the study, qualitative survey findings captured all fifteen participants commenting on the critical importance of maintaining open and honest communication. Of the 15 heads interviewed in the qualitative phase of my research, eight singled out "open and honest communication" as the most

important, while the other seven all noted it was as important as the other four aspects of the 2016 Pernambuco-Wise and Jorgenson study.

Another critical factor to a healthy head and board chair partnership that surfaced in the second phase of the research was the notion that this partnership needs to be nurtured long before the formal appointment of the board chair is made. No matter how long the partnership between the head and chair is, 13 of the 15 heads shared not only their profound and considerable influence in the selection or nomination process for the board chair, they also contended that in order to be able to successfully identify the next board chair, there needs to be a substantial investment of time and thought early on in the selection process. This is, after all, a partnership which will be grounded in mutual trust, respect, and support. To that end, heads were resolute in their conviction that like any healthy relationship, the future partnership between the head and the board chair needs to have the time to grow, develop, and earn the very trust upon which is rests.

Again, the study provided empirical support for an idea found in the existing literature. Baker, et. al. (2015) noted the critical importance of the head and chair building and sustaining a healthy, collaborative, and mutually supportive partnership starting with "a paradigm shift from the traditional, top-down concept of board governance for independent schools to one that regards governance as a concept of shared leadership" (p. 83). Until recently, the appointment of the board chair was conducted in the absence of the head and without any formal input into the ultimate selection. With the exception of one head, all of the heads interviewed testified personally that the practice of engaging the head in the identification, cultivation, and ultimate selection of the board chair-elect was one that they believed influenced significantly both their effectiveness as head and their decision to continue in their current position.

Based on the findings from the qualitative research, the overwhelming majority of the heads felt appropriately engaged in the exploratory and vetting stages of determining the next board chair, while agreeing that the ultimate decision is and should rest in the hands of the board itself and its appropriate committee (e.g., Nominating Committee, Board Governance Committee, Committee on Trustees, etc.). And, most significantly, all 15 heads commented on the positive impact this open, inclusive, and transparent process had on their decision to remain at their current school. As one head noted,

> I believe that the head should play big part of decision, and my board has always made my voice heard in selecting the next chair. Let's just say that the process is very humane to me as head. And getting it right is key because a strong, intimate relationship with the chair is critical to health and survival of head. (Interview 6)

Admittedly, as a current head who must endure the selection of a new board chair every two years, I was heartened by the research that demonstrated convincingly that full and appropriate engagement of the head in the board chair selection process can, in fact, fortify leadership continuity in independent schools. By operating according to the fundamental belief that the head and board chair relationship is not one that should be viewed as boss to employee or subject to object, but rather must be viewed as a partnership defined by a sense of mutual consent and commitment, it makes perfect sense to ensure that the head of school plays a major role in recruiting and selecting the new board chair. Just as the board will ultimately choose the head, so too should the head, at least to an appropriate degree, participate in the selection of the board chair. After all, they are—or, at least, hope to become—partners in leadership.

Other Motivating Factors

Another significant discovery in both phases of the research that answers directly one of the primary research questions of this study – To what extent, if at all, do various motivating factors and select demographics influence the head's level of job satisfaction? – is the extent to

which heads are professionally stimulated by two key intrinsic motivators: *Autonomy* and *Purpose*.

And while this study suggests that at least one extrinsic motivator – *Compensation* – factors in on the heads' level of job satisfaction, this research suggests that what carries equal, if not greater, weight in terms of whether heads decide to stay at their school and for how long they stay is whether they truly experience a sense of *Purpose* and *Autonomy* in their work.

In phase one of the study, when ranking the intrinsic motivators the 312 heads, *Purpose* was the highest ranked, and convincingly so. In fact, it garnered the highest degree of importance with over 95% of heads considering it to be either *extremely important* (61.9%) or *very important* (33.3%). *Autonomy*, was a strong number two intrinsic motivator. Based on the survey results, 89% of the heads considered it to be either *extremely important* (48.4%) or *very important* (40.7%).

Analysis of the results from the second phase of the research confirmed these findings. Twelve of the 15 heads called out *Purpose* as one of the, if not the, driving force behind their continued work, with one head stating matter-of-factly, "there is no question in my mind that purpose is the most important influence on my decision to be—and remain—the head of a school" (Interview 4). *Autonomy*, which is understood to be the desire to direct our own lives, was specifically called out by nine of the 15 interviewees as one of the top intrinsic motivators to remain in their current position.

If motivation answers the question of why we do what we do—i.e., what is the reason, the purpose, the intention, or the root cause of my action—then it is clear that, above all else, the heads generally agree that to be granted the *Autonomy* to work toward a clear *Purpose*—whether

it be working to build relationships, develop and nurture individuals, or humbly serve their community—is one of the most impactful motivating factors to remain in their current position.

This finding is consistent with discussions, in this case, theoretical discussions, in the literature. This research, for example, strongly suggests that all people, heads notwithstanding, ultimately seek to discover in our work and in our life what Daniel Pink (2011) calls "the highest, most satisfying experiences" (p. 112). These meaningful experiences we seek are what Maslow (1943) refers to as higher order needs, what Alderfer (1969) calls growth needs, and what Herzberg (1968) calls satisfiers. In every case, these experiences are defined by the moments when we are acting out of intrinsic motivation entirely.

Work/Life Balance

One of the most curious discoveries that resulted from the mixed-methods research study dealt with the perceptions of *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance*, and the extent to which this concern influenced the decisions of the heads to remain at their current school. In my original design of the qualitative study, I categorized *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance* as one of five primary intrinsic motivating factors. Admittedly, I embarked on the study with the assumption that this factor would garner significant influence in terms of its impact on the decisions of the heads to remain at the school. In other words, when given the choice between enjoying a healthy work-life balance or coping with an unhealthy balance between the two aspects of a head's life, I anticipated heads would choose the healthy options. This assumption seemed commonsensical as much as an assumption supported by existing literature focused on other positions and contexts. However, what came across loud and clear in both phases of the research was the apparent lack of significance and weight this particular motivator carried when it came to the decisions of heads to remain in their jobs.

When I analyzed the results of the survey, for example, it was clear that *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance* carried a relatively small amount of sway in terms of the influence it had on the decision to remain in their current position. When asked to rank the five intrinsic motivators, *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance* was a distant fifth and last place, and it was the one intrinsic factor of the five that received the fewest number of heads believing it to be *extremely important* (30.5%) or *very important* (24.4%).

Interestingly, after analyzing the qualitative responses not only was this finding validated, but I discovered critical information offering the fundamental reason why this factor carries such little influence in the minds of heads; namely, the reason is less that heads do not long for a healthy work/life balance and more that the very notion of this type of balance is, in the real-life experiences of the heads, simply impossible to achieve.

The interviews in the second phase of the research confirmed this widely accepted belief amongst heads that the idea of maintaining even a semblance of balance in nearly impossible due to the nature and relentless demands of the job. During the interviews, a number of the heads literally chuckled at the notion of actually maintaining even the slightest likeness of said balance. For example, one head commented, "I smiled at the work/life balance bit. Do you know any heads with work/life balance? I'd like to talk with them" (Participant 2). Another head shared,

> I think heads need to commit to the absurdity of the job in terms of the time demands. My partner always reminds me that heads don't have jobs they have lifestyles. And any notion of a life/work balance is a fallacy. (Participant 8)

To be sure, there is no shortage of articles written by health and career experts promoting the importance of *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance*. And many of these experts happily put forth simple suggestions that presumably guarantee that even in the most demanding of jobs one can discover that illusive work life balance if we just make some basic changes. Whether it

be Forbes (2016) encouraging us to "let go of perfectionism," "unplug," and "meditate," the Mayo Clinic (2020) imploring us to "learn to say no" and "relax," or Mental Health America (2021) appealing to our need to focus on our overall health by "staying active," "taking five," and "giving yourself a break," they all seem to agree that each of us can achieve this balance by simply changing up our attitude, approach, and commitment to our work. Aspiring though they may be, according to the findings of my research, making these basic changes in order to achieve the balance they purport can't ever truly be achieved.

In commenting on this notion of *Maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance*, two of the heads offered up rather bleak and fatalistic responses, noting that the imbalance is getting worse and worse due to changing external factors and pressures that are out of their control. According to one head,

> Good luck with work/life balance. It just isn't possible. It is only getting worse due to many factors out of our control including the growing complexity of job, parental expectations, and the world. And, sadly, the ever-increasing litigious nature of our society (Participant 12).

Still another, wrapped it up by simply concluding that "the notion of maintaining a healthy work/life balance is not a reality; it is a myth" (Participant 3).

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in its scope as I only had access to those independent schools associated with NAIS. There are thousands of other independent (or non-public) schools that operate under similar governance structures and in which, central among the responsibilities of the respective boards is the hiring, evaluation, and retaining the head. And well beyond the world of independent schools, there are over 100,000 public schools located across the country. Granted, the governance structure of public schools varies substantially from that of non-public school governance in that, among other aspects, the governing board is publicly elected. But the

issue of retention is still an issue, even though it is likely there will be significant contextual differences which make it unlikely that the findings from this study will transfer to public school context.

Also, limiting participation to heads who have been in their current position and school for four years says nothing about those heads with less than four years of experience in their current positions who are enjoying strong relations and are potentially experiencing effective retention strategies earlier on in their tenure. Similarly, the study does not include heads who, while early on in their tenure at their current school, have potentially completed a long and successful tenure at their previous school but happen to be in years one, two, three, or four of serving at their current school.

Another notable limitation to this study is that it does not take into consideration other potential factors leading to the departure of a head that may not necessarily be tied to the relationship between the board and the head, or to linked to the nine intrinsic and extrinsic motivators focused on in my research. Other possible factors that may influence a decision can range from what we might categorize as personal matters (e.g., medical, familial, emotional, etc.) to those that might simply fall into a miscellaneous category (e.g., career change, loss of interest, timing, dissatisfaction, new direction, etc.).

Additionally, the study is limited in that it operates under the presumption that the reason(s) for a head to decide whether to return to their school for another year can be quantified neatly into the finite factors considered in this research study. In the final analysis, the overall decision for a head to stay (or leave) their school may be much more nuanced and intricate, and may involve interactions even among the discrete factors focused on in this study.

Finally, it is important to note that my research into the partnership between the head and board chair, along with the influence various motivating factors might have on the decision for heads to remain at their current school, included only those perspectives and experiences of heads, and not the perspectives and experiences of board chairs. As a result of having only interviewed one half of the partnership, one could rightly argue that this study's findings and conclusion are partial, at best. In truth, since the ultimate decision to remain at the school is a mutual decision, as both parties are entitled – legally and otherwise – to terminate the partnership at will, having only researched the attitudes, experiences, perceptions of the heads is debatably restricting in terms of the degree to which one can state definitively that these factors identified in this study absolutely influence the ultimate decision of the head.

Implications for Practice

Primacy of the Head and Board Chair Partnership

Over the last decade, research conducted by NAIS (2020) has revealed a noticeable rise in the percentage of schools dealing with head turnover in independent schools across the country, escalating from 8% in 2010-2011 to 21% in 2019-2020. The reasons why an increasing number of heads are departing at a disquieting rate are in many cases as enigmatic as the departures themselves.

As part of its governance responsibilities, the board has unconditional authority over the employment of the head, including, most especially, the ability to influence the short- and long-term retention of the head. Unfortunately, information about the reasons behind the departure of a head is hard to come by due to both the need for preserving confidentiality as well as the desire for schools to communicate these decisions in as amenable and mutually beneficial manner as

possible, in order to minimize the inevitable disruption to the school community such departures create.

The findings of this research have, to some extent, at least, identified motivating factors– including, and most especially, aspects of the head and board chair partnership – that appear to influence, at least to some degree, the level of job satisfaction experienced by heads and, as a result, their decision to remain at their current school. The findings of this research, should remind boards of the primacy of the head and chair partnership, and encourage boards to continue and, possibly, increase the amount of time and resource invested in supporting and fostering this partnership.

Moreover, the research could serve as a reminder to boards of the weight and magnitude the partnership has in the overall success of the school. Mindful of the fact that the research has shown that head retention at independent schools strengthens school culture, promotes student academic achievement, bolsters student re-enrollment and retention, and improves general morale, boards and board chairs – those who are entrusted with the health and success of the school – would be inspired to invests heavily and appropriately in the partnership a board, and, especially, its chair has with the head.

Partners in a Pandemic

In my final year of completing my PhD (and researching and writing this dissertation), like all heads across the country and globe, I have been leading my school through a pandemic. Arguably this has been the most complex, wide-ranging, and unpredictable crisis I have experienced during my eleven years as head. And throughout this crisis, like all heads I was reminded time and again of what many, including Eric Peterson (2020), knows to be true: Unlike

anything else, a crisis will test the strength and fortitude of that most essential head and board

chair partnership; consequently,

> an effective board chair/head partnership is the cornerstone of a successful school, but nothing undermines that success faster than when the chair and the head are moving in different directions, especially when the school and community are under stress due to some type of crisis. (p.1)

Among other suggestions of how to avoid letting the crisis destabilize the partnership,

Peterson encourages board chairs to be sure to stay in their lane, and publicly and privately

support the work of the head in running the school. Peterson warns, "If the board is perceived to

have taken over during the crisis, the head's authority and leadership is significantly weakened,

and the school is generally worse for it" (p.1).

Ideally, the head and the board should seize the opportunity to take a collaborative and

adaptive approach to crisis management, with the head maintaining responsibility for all

operational plans and execution, while the board review and respond to policy, strategy, risk

management, long-term financial impact, and crisis communications. If ever there were a time to

know your respective roles, maintain open and honest communication, and cooperate in a true

spirit of partnership, alliance, and collaboration, that time is now. As Anne Cohen notes (2020),

now more than ever we need to look to the partnership between the head and the chair if we are

ever to successfully navigate our way through this extraordinary crisis. Cohen explains,

> Exceptional boards govern in constructive partnership with the chief executive, recognizing that the effectiveness of the board and chief executive are interdependent. The board is a powerful force supporting the organization, while the CEO sees the board as a strategic asset. (p.1)

This is a time for the head and the board chair to first see on another as true allies united

together for the sake of the greater good which, in some cases, is the very survival of the school.

Implications for Future Research

This mixed-methods research study only begins to try and identify various extrinsic and intrinsic motivating factors that influenced to some degree the level of job satisfaction of heads which, presumably, influences, at least to some degree, their decision to remain at their current school. While several, critical findings emerged from this study, the opportunity exists to further research the topic of potential factors that influence the job satisfaction of heads and the decision to remain at their school.

For example, future research could include other potential motivating factors such as a school's financial state and the heads ability to successfully negotiate the challenges of a school struggling financially, or leading the school through specific issues or major events that need to be addressed (e.g., capital campaign, centennial celebration, enrollment downturn, widespread parental dissatisfaction, etc.) for which the head is simply not equipped.

Other examples of areas for further research that would strengthen the research in this study include: investigating heads who are only in their first three years of service at their respective schools; studying the influence of the current socio-economic and political environment and its potential pressures on the head; and conducting a follow up longitudinal research project to validate the findings of this research project.

These studies and other future research studies should increase the scope of the quantitative and qualitative research to include the other half of the partnership – the board chairs – in order to shed light on the integrity and authenticity of the findings of this study which is limited to heads only. Also, adding heads from a broader range of schools – public, private, charter, religious, etc. – could potentially strengthen the generalizability of the findings from this study.

Another potential future study could focus on the possible correlation between head turnover and any number of the variables highlighted in the study that may have suggested a negative correlation based on the qualitative research between certain variables and the decision to potentially walk away from their current position, such as the lack of substantive involvement by the head into the selection of the board chair.

And, finally, one study that could be extremely timely is an investigation into the primacy of the head and board chair partnership during a time of crisis, such as a global pandemic. As noted by Peterson (2020), unlike anything else, a crisis will test the strength and fortitude of that most essential head/chair partnership; consequently, an effective board chair/head partnership is the cornerstone of a successful school, "but nothing undermines that success faster than when the chair and the head are moving in different directions, especially when the school and community are under stress due to some type of crisis" (p.1).

Conclusion

This study sought to identify potential motivating factors, including, and most especially, the relationship between the head and the board chair, and to investigate to what extent, if any, these factors influence the behaviors and attitudes of heads as they relate to their job satisfaction.

The mixed-methods study, which included both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, focusing solely on the experiences and perceptions of a select group NAIS heads from across the country, producing results that shed light on what really matters to heads of school when it comes to their job satisfaction and, ostensibly, their decision to remain at their current school.

Above all else, the results of this study reaffirm the primacy of the head and board chair partnership and the significant influence it has on the level of satisfaction heads experience

leading their school. Mindful of the substantial weight a head places on this partnership as it relates to their job satisfaction, boards and board chairs should continue to, and even increase, the amount of time and resource invested in supporting and fostering this partnership. In particular, and based on the results of this study, those discrete aspects of the head and board chair partnership that are shown to have the most positive impact on the heads job satisfaction should be given the greatest amount of care and attention by the board chair.

In particular, and according to the results of this study, there are four aspects of the partnership that are, according to the heads, of highest priority and greatest influence as they relate to the level of job satisfaction. First, maintaining lines of open and honest communication with the board chair. The results of the qualitative research were as overwhelming as they were convincing; more than anything, a strong and healthy partnership between the head and chair is characterized by open and honest communication. Once there is a breakdown in the communication, it begins to quickly and dangerously erode the trust that cements the foundation of a strong, healthy, and lasting partnership. As one head put it, the constant line of open communication between him and his chair "is hugely important to my well-being and success" (Interview 5).

Second, the desire of heads to be driven by a sense of purpose – a yearning to do what heads do in the service of something larger than themselves, combined with the desire to lead with a high degree of autonomy – the ability to set the vision, make informed and uncoerced decisions, and lead the school ably and confidently, free from the pressures of undue influence. When asked to rate the importance of a series of intrinsic motivators, heads overwhelmingly rated purpose as the clear and convincing number one ranked intrinsic motivator with over 95% of the heads considering it to be either *extremely important* (61.9%) or *very important* (33.3%).

Autonomy, which garnered a strong number two ranking, saw 89% of the heads consider it to be either *extremely important* (48.4%) or *very important* (40.7%). In short, heads desire to be free to lead their school and serve their constituencies.

Third, one theme emerged from the qualitative research that together serves as a strong testament to open and honest communication being paramount in a healthy and successful head and board chair partnership. In order to be able to successfully identify the next board chair, this study suggests the need for the heads, in partnership with the board chairs, to participate meaningfully and appropriately in the selection process and the ultimate decision of the future board chair.

Finally, one significant finding from the quantitative phase of research, for which the interviews provided much-needed context, was the finding that maintaining work/life balance was not highly revered by heads. However, what was learned in qualitative phase of the research was that the heads apparent lack of interest in maintaining a healthy work/life balance is less about heads not being attracted to the idea of maintaining some semblance of balance between the demands of their work and the pleasure of life outside of work, and more about the perceived absurdity of this ideal. As one head put it; "The notion of maintaining a healthy work/life balance is not a reality; it is a myth" (Participant 3).

As the old adage reminds us, not only can the job of a head be a lonely one, but the demands placed on the role of leading an independent school, where various constituencies are competing for their time, attention, and influence, can be so tremendous that, based on the findings from this research, the absence of a few key elements to the experiences of heads may well lead to an decrease in their level of job satisfaction which, in turn, may result in an even

greater number of heads vacating their posts than we are currently experiencing in NAIS schools across the country.

There is no doubt in my mind that independent school boards, and their board chairs in particular, want nothing more than to see their schools thrive. And they understand intimately that the success of the school begins with the hiring and supporting of the head of school. To that end, if the findings from this research are accurate, then a deeper and more focused investment in those discrete aspects of the head and board chair partnership and the preferred manner in which heads choose to lead – and lead most successfully – should always remain at the top of the list of board priorities.

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APPENDIX A

Quantitative Survey Questions

Overall, I am satisfied in my current position as head.

In general, I am proud of my work as a head.

How important, if at all, is your compensation (salary and benefits) when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is the term of your contract (length in years) when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is the access to professional development opportunities from the Board when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is maintaining a healthy work/life balance when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is receiving public accolades your board chair when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is maintaining a strong partnership with your board chair when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is maintaining a sense of professional autonomy (defined as "the desire to direct our own lives") when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is maintaining a sense of professional mastery (defined as "the urge to get better and better at something that matters") when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

How important, if at all, is maintaining a sense of professional purpose (defined as "the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves") when considering whether to remain as head at your current school?

Please rank in order of importance ($1 = 1^{st}$, $2 = 2^{nd}$, $3 = 3^{rd}$, $4 = 4^{th}$) the following four factors that influence your decision to remain as head at your current school:
      compensation (salary and benefits)
      professional development opportunities
      public accolades from your board chair
      term of your contract (length in years)

Please rank in order of importance ($1 = 1^{st}$, $2 = 2^{nd}$, $3 = 3^{rd}$, $4 = 4^{th}$, $5 = 5^{th}$) the following five factors that influence your decision to remain as head at your current school:

     autonomy
     healthy work/life balance
     mastery
     purpose
     strong partnership with your board chair

How would you rate your relationship with your board chair?

Moral Support

My board chair cultivates a constructive partnership with me.

My board chair fosters a relationship of trust between me and him/her.

My board chair respects the difficult decision I make as head.

My board encourages me to maintain healthy work/life balance.

My board chair supports me fully as the head, giving me the maximum authority to run the operations of the school.

Respect Expertise

I believe my board chair consults with me on appropriate school matters.

My board chair works collaboratively with me on setting board meeting agendas.

When a parent(s) approaches my board chair with operational concerns, my board chair notifies me of concern, redirecting the parent(s) to me.

My board chair understands the demands placed on me as head.

My board chair defers to me on matters of school operations.

Advice and Guidance

My board chair provides me with helpful advice.

My board chair collaborates with me on setting my annual goals.

My board chair provides periodic, informal feedback (formative) on my progress in meeting my annual goals.

My board chair provides annual, formal feedback (summative) on my progress in meeting my annual goals.

My board chair provides me with helpful professional guidance.

Less Operational Support

My board chair focuses on the long-range, strategic issues avoiding becoming involved directly in specific management issues.

My board chair understands the most important issues facing my school.

My board chair takes care to separate the interests of the school from the specific needs of a particular constituency.

My board chair works with board members on an ongoing basis to ensure they understand their role as trustees.

My board chair effectively separates day-to-day operational matters from board-level strategic initiatives.

Open Communication

My board chair maintains open communication with me.

My board chair holds regularly scheduled meetings with me (in person or by phone).

My board chair is honest with me in our communications.

My board chair accepts responsibility for their mistakes.

My board chair maintains confidentiality.

Please rank in order of importance (1 = 1st, 2 = 2nd, 3 = 3rd … 5 =5th) what you value most in your relationship with your board chair:
    advice and guidance
    less operational support
    moral support
    open communication
    respect for your expertise

How long have you served as head at your current school?

Where is your school located?

    East (New Jersey, New York)
    Middle Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia)
    New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)

Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)
Southwest (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)
West (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)
Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin)

Is your current school a boarding, boarding-day, day, or day-boarding school?

Boarding School (enrolling 95% or more boarding students)
Boarding-Day School (enrolling between 51 and 94% boarding students, with the balance day)
Day School (enrolling 95% or more day students)
Day-Boarding School (enrolling between 51 and 94% day students, with the balance boarding)

What grades does your school currently serve?
PreK/K-6
PreK/K -8
PreK/K -12
6-12/7-12
9-12

Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview?

What is the name of your school? (NOTE: Sharing school name will contribute to the strength and quality of research findings. The actual name of your school will not be shared in any published study and will be used for internal research purposes only.)

APPENDIX B

Qualitative Interview Questions

In general, how would you describe your relationship with your board chair?

What are the most valuable aspects of your professional relationship with your board chair?

What, if anything, is an impediment to building and sustaining a positive board/head partnership?

Which, if any, of the following incentives most significantly influence your level of job satisfaction and your decision to remain at your current school?
- compensation (salary and benefits)
- professional development opportunities
- public accolades from your board chair
- term of your contract (length in years)
- autonomy (defined as "the desire to direct our own lives")
- healthy work/life balance, mastery (defined as "the urge to get better and better at something that matters")
- purpose (defined as "the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves")
- mastery (defined as "the urge to get better and better at something that matters")
- strong partnership with your board chair

Which, if any, of the following approaches to you and your work by your board chair most significantly influence your job satisfaction and your decision to remain at your current school?
- Provide moral support
- Limit operational influence in day-to-day activities
- Maintain open and honest communication
- Show respect for your expertise as the leader
- Provide sound advice and guidance

What, if any, limits does your school (and its bylaws) place on the term or length of the board chair?

How involved, if at all, are you in the selection of the board chair?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me in regards to your relationship with your board chair as it relates to your job satisfaction and your short- and long-term employment decisions of the head?

APPENDIX C

Interview Invitation

Thank you in advance for helping out a fellow head. I have served as the head of school at Francis Parker School (San Diego, CA) for the past decade and am currently completing my PhD at the University of San Diego. My research focuses of head of school retention, and I would be extremely grateful if you would participate in my research by agreeing to speak with me about the reasons you choose to remain at your school in your current position as head.

Your participation in my study will assist independent school heads and boards - current and future - in understanding critical motivating factors to successfully retaining heads. With regards to your opinions, there are no wrong or right responses, and rest assured that all responses are anonymous and confidential.

The initial interview lasting approximately 60 minutes with the option of a 20 minute follow-up interview, resulting in a potential maximum total time equal to 1 hour and 20 minutes. Also, these interviews will be audio recorded.

And if you are interested and willing to participate, please respond positively to this email. Thereafter, I will send you a Written Consent Form, and set up a time and date to hold the interview. Again, thank you for your time.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at kyaley@sandiego.edu.

With much gratitude,
Kevin

APPENDIX D

Written Consent Form

University of San Diego
Institutional Review Board
Research Participant Consent Form

For the research study entitled:
Head of School Retention in Independent Schools

I. Purpose of the research study
Kevin Yaley is a student in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study he is conducting. The purpose of this study is to identify potential retention factors, and to investigate to what extent, if any, these factors influence the behaviors and attitudes of the heads of independent schools as it relates to their job satisfaction and their short- and long-term employment.

II. What you will be asked to do
If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a private interview about your experience serving as Head of School. You will be audio recorded during the interview.

Your initial interview lasting no more than 30 minutes.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts
This study involves no more risk than the risks you encounter in daily life.

IV. Benefits
While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand the reasons why Heads may stay or leave their current schools.

V. Confidentiality
Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office for a minimum of five years. All data collected from you will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group, and not individually.

The information or materials you provide will be cleansed of all identifiers (like your name) and may be used in future research.

VI. Compensation
You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to, like your health care, or your employment or grades. You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

VIII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:

1) Kevin Yaley
Email: kyaley@sandiego.edu
Phone: 619-977-7194

2) Robert Donmoyer
Email: donmoyer@sandiego.edu
Phone: 619-985-9309

My appearance at the scheduled interview time will be an indication that I have read and understood this form.

APPENDIX E

Interview Narratives Broken into Codes and Sub Codes

	Codes and Subcodes	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Board Chair Behaviors**	15	4.25
1.1	Limit operational influence	8	2.27
1.2	Open and honest communication	8	2.27
1.3	All of the above	7	1.98
1.4	Respect of expertise	7	1.98
1.5	Moral support	3	0.85
1.6	Sound advice and guidance	3	0.85
2	**Chair Term Limits**	14	3.97
2.1	Strong partnership trumps term limits	12	3.40
2.2	Three-year term, renewable once	4	1.13
2.3	Two-year or three-year term, renewable indefinitely	3	0.85
2.4	No term limit	2	0.57
2.5	One three-year term	2	0.57
2.6	One-year term with extension up to ten years	1	0.28
2.7	One-year term with tradition of extending to two or three years	1	0.28
2.8	Two-year term with option of third year	1	0.28
3	**Head Involvement in Selection**	14	3.97
3.1	Highly and appropriately involved	13	3.68
3.2	Limited involvement	1	0.28
4	**Impediments**	15	4.25
4.1	Inability to maintain line between board work and operations	6	1.70
4.2	Lack of trust	4	1.13
4.3	Insufficient time spent together	3	0.85
4.4	Unrealistic expectations of school and/or head	3	0.85
4.5	Difference of opinion or understanding on core issues	1	0.28
4.6	Dishonesty	1	0.28
4.7	Lack of clear and timely communication	1	0.28
4.8	Lack of control over trustee behavior	1	0.28
4.9	Lack of self-awareness	1	0.28
4.1	Open to receiving and giving advice	1	0.28
4.11	Transitioning to a new board chair	1	0.28
5	**Incentives to Remain**	15	4.25
5.1	Purpose	12	3.40
5.2	Autonomy	10	2.83
5.3	Compensation	9	2.55

5.4	Strong partnership	9	2.55
5.5	Mastery	3	0.85
5.6	Public accolades	3	0.85
5.7	Work/life balance	2	0.57
5.8	Kids at school with me	1	0.28
5.9	Term of contract	1	0.28
6	**Most valuable Aspect of Partnership**	15	4.25
6.1	Steady and wise leadership and counsel	8	2.27
6.2	Trust and understanding	8	2.27
6.3	Effectively leads the board	6	1.70
6.4	Mutual respect	6	1.70
6.5	Open communication and transparency	5	1.42
6.6	Chair is accessible	4	1.13
6.7	Respect boundaries b/w board and administration	4	1.13
6.8	Support	4	1.13
6.9	Honors autonomy of the Head	1	0.28
6.1	Demonstrates care and affection	1	0.28
6.11	Leads by example/character	1	0.28
6.12	Not a current parent at the school	1	0.28
6.13	Sense of humor	1	0.28
7	**Other Thoughts on Successful Partnership**	14	3.97
7.1	The myth of the work/life balance	6	1.70
7.2	Positive relationship with the chair influenced decision to stay	5	1.42
7.3	Healthy, positive, and supportive relationship with chair	3	0.85
7.4	Clear goals and common pace of change	2	0.57
7.5	Board chair as my champion	1	0.28
7.6	Heads experience greater board pressure at "elite" schools	1	0.28
7.7	Job of being a head is getting harder and harder	1	0.28
7.8	Micro-management will drive heads out	1	0.28
7.9	Successful heads are servant leaders first	1	0.28
7.1	Would not say if I did not get along with chair	1	0.28
8	**Relationship with Board Chair**	15	4.25
8.1	Excellent/Outstanding	8	2.27
8.2	Very good/Very strong	3	0.85
8.3	Supportive	2	0.57
8.4	As good as it gets	1	0.28
8.5	Strained	1	0.28
	TOTAL	353	100.00

1) Board Chair Behaviors

1.1 Limit operational influence (8)

"limit operational influence" [Interview 3]

"Limiting operational influence comes to mind first, likely because my board exerts a great deal of influence over operations rights now." [Interview 4]

"The Board does not overstep their bounds; they are focused on the big picture and do not engage in the day-to-day activities of the school." [Interview 5]

"My current chair is not a current parent - and so we can truly focus on making the school better without day to day politics" [Interview 7]

"Limit operations influence" [Interview 8]

"I like to look at the head as pitcher and chair as catcher. I had one chair who wanted to instead be my pitching coach and it was a disaster. He spent all his time tapping my shoulder, stepping into sacred space that was a clear violation of the relationship." [Interview 9]

"All of those are vital and each of them strongly influences my commitment to remain at my current school, but above all else maintaining the difference between operations and strategy." [Interview 10]

"In this order, but all are important: Limit operational influence in day-to-day activities, show respect for your expertise as the leader, and maintain open and honest communication"

[Interview 14]

1.2 Open and honest communication (8)

"When it comes to communication, I have not found them to be completely up front with me about what is happening behind the scenes with the other trustees, and the establishment of a formal Executive Session at the end of board meetings has increased my concerns there too." [Interview 4]

"I think there is open and honest communication, which I believe is hugely important to my well-being and success." [Interview 5]

"Maintain open and honest communication" [Interview 6]

"Maintain open and honest communication" [Interview 8]

"There are two questions that I ask my incoming chair: One, what do you look like when you are mad? Two, what do you lose sleep over? If I can understand the behaviors of the chair before they arise, then I can better manage and work within our partnership. And the same is true of them knowing my responses to those same two questions. The answers to those questions help us understand how we can best be in relationship with one another understanding what our behaviors will look and feel like." [Interview 9]

"Open and honest communication" [Interview 11]

"maintaining open and honest communication" [Interview 12]

"In this order, but all are important: Limit operational influence in day-to-day activities; show respect for your expertise as the leader; and maintain open and honest communication." [Interview 14]

1.3 All of the above (7)

"All of them!" [Interview 1]

"All of these five relationship assets have helped keep me at ACDS, including one year when I was wooed by a "top tier school" and was incredibly turned off by its chair and trustees, where I would NOT have enjoyed those five assets." [Interview 1]

"Yes - all of the above." [Interview 7]

"All of these are key approaches and I am fortunate to experience them all." [Interview 9]

"All of those are vital and each of them strongly influences my commitment to remain at my current school." [Interview 10]

"All of the above -- for sure!" [Interview 13]

"All fall into this category. Do I have to choose?" [Interview 15]

1.4 Respect of expertise (7)

"He is a strong advocate, has good boundaries, and has a great deal of respect for me and my leadership" [Interview 2]

"respect for my expertise" [Interview 3]

"Showing respect for my expertise is a close second, especially because I have a deep background in equity and justice work, including a doctoral degree, and the Board has not seen or used me as a resource since we have been dealing with issues at school around racial injustice." [Interview 4]

"There is also respect for my expertise and ability as a leader, which is validating and helpful." [Interview 5]

"Show respect for my expertise" [Interview 8]

"respecting my expertise as a leader" [Interview 12]

"In this order, but all are important: Limit operational influence in day-to-day activities; show respect for your expertise as the leader; and maintain open and honest communication." [Interview 14]

1.5 Moral support (3)

"moral support" [Interview 3]

"provide moral support" [Interview 8]

"providing moral support" [Interview 12]

1.6 Sound advice and guidance (3)

"He also provides advice and guidance when asked." [Interview 2]

"provide sounds advice" [Interview 8]

"sound advice and guidance" [Interview 11]

2) Chair Term Limits

2.1 Strong partnership trumps term limits (12)

"Unequivocally, I believe that nothing is more critical to the school and what great schools can accomplish (enrollment, capital campaigns, philanthropy, educational excellence) than a strong partnership between governance and leadership. Defined most clearly by the relationship between the head and board chair. It needs to be seen as a side-by-side partnership. It is a mutual agreement – vows were exchanged – and so the desire to see it through and make it work is great on both sides. Much like a good marriage." [Interview 1]

"I lucked into a place where there was a culture that understood and embraced the benefit of having a long-standing board chair. Granted, the downside is head becoming complacent or not being challenged because of strong ties of loyalty to the sitting board chair. Nevertheless, I believe that the rewards well outweigh the risks." [Interview 2]

"I think longer terms benefit the school especially during periods defined by major issues including the transition of a new head." [Interview 3]

"I like having some clear limits with the flexibility to extend in the event that the relationship is working well and/or the school is in the middle of a significant event (capital campaign, building, transition, etc.)." [Interview 5]

"I have worked for three Board Chairs and will start with my fourth in the summer; that will be four chairs in eight years. I do not find this to be optimal and I think for most people, it would likely lead to a move. I think fewer transitions would be easier to manage, but even though the personalities and styles have been different, each of the Chairs has supported me and had my back." [Interview 5]

"I like this [longer terms] because it allows for a good partnership to continue which is a win for both sides."[Interview 6]

"On two occasions I have had a chair serve for three years and I found it to be so much more beneficial. The reason being is that a longer term allows me to build trust capital with the chair. Also, if the school is in the middle of a particularly significant project or period (for example, a capital campaign, COVID-19, a head transition, etc.) it is best to have consistency and predictability. A longer term gives the community a sense of stability and assurance; proven leader in place during times of anxiety and uncertainty." [Interview 8]

"My current board chair just agreed to do a third year. This is huge as the normal term is two years and it is challenging to learn how to work with a new board chair every two years. I am very appreciative of the consistency, especially during these times. With the shorter terms, as head I find myself constantly building relationship that will soon terminate and it is tiring." [Interview 8]

"Along with the board we have built flexibility into policies. I operate according to a fundamental belief that I share with my team all the time; namely, all rigid policies are bad. This is true for board chair terms. While trustees serve two three year terms, in order to allow for

some to stay longer, the chair has "at large" appointments. As for the board chair, there is a stated three-year term with option of extending indefinitely based on current needs. Why would a school choose to have a leadership transition when there may be current realities that would benefit from strong, consistent leadership?" [Interview 10]

"My Chair has been flexible regarding his tenure at the helm, and this is important to my own success and the success of a comprehensive campaign that we have just launched. I strongly believe that, while "fresh blood" is occasionally needed in Board leadership roles, preserving a highly functional, sustainable relationship is critical. Therefore I would urge Heads to make sure the bylaws permit the flexibility to extend a term if that best meets the strategic needs of the organization." [Interview 10]

"The goal is to keep it open year after year so it can be extended if the relationship is working." [Interview 11]

"The thinking here is that why should the school and board let an arbitrary term limit end a healthy partnership. In the end, if it is working well, then it is to the benefit of all – school, board, and head." [Interview 12]

2.2 Three-year term, renewable once (4)

"Board chair is three-year term that is renewable. And your time served on the board doesn't toll when you are on executive committee." [Interview 4]

"Currently, we have a three-year term with the possibility of an extension at board discretion." [Interview 5]

"As it now stands, we have a three-year term with option to extend for another three years." [Interview 12]

"Three-year term with the option of continuing for a fourth year" [Interview 15]

2.3 Two-year or three-year term, renewable indefinitely (3)

"We have a two-year term that is renewable indefinitely. The current chair is in their fourth year and will continue on at least two more years." [Interview 3]

"We have a two-year renewable term. My first chair stayed for a total of five years. The current bylaws do not state maximum length term." [Interview 6]

"As for the board chair, there is a stated three-year term with option of extending indefinitely based on current needs." [Interview 10]

2.4 No term limit (2)

"While our term is three years, we got rid of term limits. If a board is operating at a high level, there should be no limit to chair term. I believe that the limited liability of a long-standing board chair is outweighed by the benefits. When the partnership is strong, then nothing matters more for sake of school and head." [Interview 1]

"At our school, there are no time limits, just terms. In other words, the term for a chair is three-years with the option of renewing repeatedly. The current board chair could reup, but he has

decided not to do so. The no time limit is true for the trustees so we have some very long-standing trustees." [Interview 2]

2.5 One three-year term (2)

"The term for the chair is limited to a three-year term"

[Interview 9]

"Three-year term."

[Interview 13]

2.6 One-year term with extension up to ten years (1)

"We will allow up to ten one-year terms" [Interview 11]

2.7 One-year with tradition of extending to two or three years (1)

"We have a one-year term with a tradition of signing for two years and with the option of extending." [Interview 8]

2.8 Two-year term with option of third year (1)

"Two years with the option of a third year" [Interview 7]

3) Head Involvement in Selection of Board Chair

3.1 Highly and appropriately involved (13)

"I have a good deal of involvement and it is done in an open and transparent manner with the chair. The more mature boards and heads have come to an understanding of who has what it takes to serve on the board and to serve as chair; it is the greatest unspoken and unwritten rule of schools that are striving." [Interview 1]

"When I first started as head, a long-term trustee talked to all trustees to get a sense of who is interested and willing. Three were identified as possibilities, and then I was given significant latitude to influence the final decision between the three. This time around, I just recently made the initial calls of inquiry to those I though interesting and interested and then provided significant input into final decision, understanding that the Committee on Trustees still possessed veto power, though I think it would be highly unlikely they would do so." [Interview 2]

"I had conversations with the then current chair about succession and identifying the appropriate candidate for partnership. Ultimately, it is a healthy consultation with the board chair to make decision." [Interview 3]

"Very involved. Now, I am consistently building relationship with prospective future chairs and can ultimately make a strong recommendation to the ad hoc selection committee that consists of two current and two former trustees." [Interview 5]

"I believe that the head should play big part of decision, and my board has always made my voice heard in selecting the next chair. Let's just say that the process is very humane me as head.

And getting it right is key because a strong, intimate relationship with the chair is critical to health and survival of head." [Interview 6]

"I have super high influence of Head in selecting new Head." [Interview 7]

"While the governance committee ultimately drives decision, as head I have a significant amount of influence in who is ultimately selected to serve as chair." [Interview 8]

"I work closely with committee on trustees to identify leadership, including future Board Chair. One tradition we have here is I will have lunch with the incoming chair and invite as many of the past chairs that are willing and able. It is a wonderful opportunity to show full support for the incoming chair, learn from past chairs, and share stories." [Interview 9]

"The current chair asks me who I want or think might serve well in this role, and then board provides the space and time to allow me to cultivate future board chair. Early on, I am working closely with the chair of governance to always be thinking about succession planning." [Interview 10]

"Highly and appropriately involved. We come to a collective agreement on successor, and we talk about who will be successor now rather than wait until the position is open so that we can be as thorough and as thoughtful as possible. We want to get it right for the sake of all. It is critical that we find someone who shares a similar philosophical mindset and someone with whom there is complete and mutual trust, and possesses those skills that will complement the head." [Interview 11]

"I am very involved in selection process. Ultimately, I will come to a mutual agreement with board chair on who will be the successor. To my good fortune – and that of the School – the current board understands the importance of doing all they can to ensure a healthy partnership." [Interview 12]

"The board chair and I do a lot of thinking together on determining who might best serve in the role. In the end, my conversations about potential successor officially end with the board chair and then they bring it to the Committee on Trustees for final approval." [Interview 13]

"I have a significant amount of influence in determining the board chair successor. I will speak openly and candidly with my board chair and chair-elect to determine who possesses the right skill set and temperament to lead the board and partner with me. If the board chair is selected without any consultation with the head, then I think that is a clear sign that the head should think about dusting off their resume." [Interview 15]

3.2 Limited involvement (1)

"Not very, though things are a bit strained now and we are not in a period of chair succession so it is hard to say." [Interview 4]

4) Impediments

4.1 Inability to maintain line between board work and operations (6)

"The Board still struggles to keep itself at the appropriate strategic levels when it comes to operations. Sometimes that is because they really are eager to be helpful partners to us, and other times it's because they would prefer to make the decisions, ultimately, because they don't

fully agree with ours. Their tendency during this very challenging year has been to call some decisions "strategic" in order to give themselves room to make final decisions, when my team and I clearly see the decision as operational. I know that we need to be very proactive in our building our relationships with them and communicating well, but it is also clear to us - especially me - that they are ready to step in at any time and take the reins because that is what has happened. This does not make for a healthy relationship." [Interview 4]

"The board was very operational and seemed to enjoy it. Our marketing campaign was undermined by trustee who didn't like the outcome as board felt 'unheard'. Board decided to do an entire do-over and the bad behavior of the one trustee was never addressed. Board felt a tag line was "Strategic". Anytime they did not like an operational decision, they would frame the matter as "strategic". When COVID hit, it exacerbated the lack of partnership and the board decided to overrun the task force and take control. When first plan didn't work, the board blamed the head." [Interview 4]

"During George Floyd matter, head was told board chair and vice-chair told head that they cannot say 'Black Lives Matter' in the communication." [Interview 4]

"More than anything, the head needs to be valued, have autonomy, and be trusted." [Interview 6]

"The is one single precept is most important: difference between operations and policy, strategy, mission, and supervising head. When trustee(s) feel equipped to cross over the line and get involved in areas outside of their purview. I am very strong-minded and cognizant of how important it is to defend that line (which is often hard to define which is all the more reason to defend). Onboarding and orientation are key to this success, and it needs to be articulated by board chair." [Interview 10]

"As things have become more complicated, a board might ask to me more involved in operational decisions. As schools have been questioned with COVID protocols, opening/closing of school, DEI issues, political issues, they may feel more strongly and might be getting pressure from parents. If they decide to try to influence day to day decisions, it could be bad for everyone." [Interview 14]

4.2 Lack of trust (4)

"Complete lack of trust in the leadership to run a school, including in a crisis. The board secretly hired a search firm in November to find an interim head. In January stripped Head of all authority and responsibilities. Total lack of confidentiality as trustees were talking with parents about the fate of Head." [Interview 4]

"More than anything, the head needs to be valued, have autonomy, and be trusted." [Interview 6]

"I believe it is all about mutual respect and trust. To me, trust is not earned it is given. Chairs need to trust the head. As soon as the chair and the board lose trust in head it is over." [Interview 6]

"I suppose if I felt like she was going behind my back…" [Interview 7]

4.3 Insufficient time spent together (3)

"My board chair did not reach out for first month. No welcome, no orientation, no investment in me, the new Head." [Interview 4]

"Lack of availability to talk to and with one another." [Interview 5]

"Ours is a positive relationship, but we never have enough time together." [Interview 6]

4.4 Unrealistic expectations of school and/or head (3)

"The only issue I've had with both chairs, and it's not a big enough deal to be actionable, is that these guys have been retired for some time, and they seem to lose a sense of the workweek. So, weekends are fair game -- they get a great idea, and text to set up a call on Sunday at 8:30pm. They're otherwise sensitive to the stress of the job, but man, I need some recovery time." [Interview 1]

"…lack of appreciation for the difficult nature of the job." [Interview 5]

"Also, at times the board's expectations are not realistic and it can be hard to interpret an educational culture to board members." [Interview 8]

4.5 Difference of opinion or understanding on core issues (1)

"He and I are on a different place in our understanding of issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion, and while he is supportive, sometimes he thinks I'm moving "too fast."" [Interview 3]

4.6 Dishonesty (1)

"Dishonesty? Lack of candor? Being indirect?" [Interview 15]

4.7 Open to receiving and giving advice (1)

"If board chair and head not receptive to contrarian advice, then the partnership will falter." [Interview 1]

4.8 Transitioning to a new board chair (1)

"I think that the transition to a new Board Chair will create a moment of potential challenge." [Interview 2]

4.9 Lack of clear and timely communication (1)

"It is frustrating to read in a review a concern without having heard about it earlier." [Interview 8]

4.10 Lack of self-awareness (1)

"Lack of self-awareness on the part of the head and/or chair…" [Interview 9]

4.11 Lack of control over trustee behavior (1)

"From time to time (fortunately not frequently) a board member or two will get too much into the weeds, or veer towards management and away from governance. I had a former board chair who was reluctant to address such instances, and it fell on me to do so, which at times created tension between me and some members of the board. The current chair, her second year, has so far been great about taking that on, and understands that I shouldn't be put in a position to call out a trustee." [Interview 12]

5) Incentives to Remain

5.1 Purpose (12)

"purpose…" [Interview 1]

"purpose…" [Interview 2]

"purpose…" [Interview 3]

"There is no question in my mind that purpose is the most important influence on my decision to be - and remain - the Head of a school." [Interview 4]

"Purpose - being involved in developing students, faculty, staff, and parents." [Interview 6]

"purpose…" [Interview 8]

"Purpose and enduring relationships in the school community…" [Interview 9]

"the mission of my school is purpose…" [Interview 10]

"purpose…" [Interview 11]

"purpose…" [Interview 12]

"Purpose, strong partnership, compensation, and the fact that my kids are still here!" [Interview 13]

"Purpose, mastery, and autonomy are my top three." [Interview 15]

5.2 Autonomy (10)

"autonomy…" [Interview 1]

"autonomy…" [Interview 2]

"autonomy…" [Interview 3]

"And because I do want to feel empowered to act with a certain level of autonomy as well, that alignment is quite important." [Interview 4]

"I have a high level of autonomy and we have been able to accomplish a great deal. Since my arrival, we have doubled the endowment and we have completed seven large capital building projects." [Interview 5]

"autonomy…" [Interview 8]

"autonomy…" [Interview 10]

"autonomy…" [Interview 11]

"In this order: autonomy, compensation, strong partnership with chair, and contract term." [Interview 14]

"Purpose, mastery, and autonomy are my top three." [Interview 15]

5.3 Compensation (9)

"compensation…" [Interview 2]

"While I would not have listed compensation in previous iterations, I would say that at this moment in my life I'm more conscious of the financial needs of my family and for my future planning." [Interview 2]

"compensation…" [Interview 3]

"As a woman of color, compensation definitely matters to me because I am well aware of the history of pay discrepancies between while and male counterparts." [Interview 4]

"All the while, I am underpaid and I work very hard. However, I enjoy my work, believe in our school, and realize that I have a healthy and happy school community compared to many." [Interview 5]

"a competitive evergreen contract…" [Interview 10]

"compensation…" [Interview 11]

"The two primary incentives are compensation and purpose." [Interview 12]

"In this order: autonomy, compensation, strong partnership with chair, and contract term." [Interview 14]

5.4 Strong partnership (9)

"strong partnership with your board chair…" [Interview 1]

"strong partnership…" [Interview 2]

"strong partnership with my board chair…" [Interview 3]

"There simply must be alignment between the Board and me when it comes to fundamental, non-fungible values. When there are serious gaps between the Board and me, I certainly want to do whatever I can to close them. But if there is a serious disagreement between a significant portion of the Board - and by extension, the school community - and me when it comes to the core values of the school, the relationship simply isn't tenable. The relationship with the chair is tied to this as well - it's the most important relationship I have at the school, and it certainly wouldn't be fair for the chair to have to run a lot of interference for me with other trustees or community members around values misalignment." [Interview 11]

"I love my job and the key components to enjoying the job is having a board chair who can really support when times are tough." [Interview 7]

"strong partnership with my board chair…" [Interview 10]

"strong partnership with board chair" [Interview 11]

"Purpose, strong partnership, compensation, and the fact that my kids are still here!" [Interview 13]

"In this order: autonomy, compensation, strong partnership with chair, and contract term." [Interview 14]

5.5 Mastery (3)

"mastery…" [Interview 1]

"mastery…" [Interview 8]

"Purpose, mastery, and autonomy are my top three." [Interview 15]

5.6 Public accolades (3)

"I'm of two minds about public accolades from the Chair - it's good for the community to know I have his/her/their support, of course, but I am much less comfortable than other Heads I know when I am the focus of accolades that I think are much more appropriately focused on teachers...the lifeblood of the school." [Interview 4]

"public accolades…"[Interview 8]

"I could care less about being praised and always deflect that to my team." [Interview 10]

5.7 Work/life balance (2)

"I also enjoy a healthy work/life balance, but that is because I know it is important to take time for myself." [Interview 5]

"balance…" [Interview 8]

5.8 Kids at school with me (1)

"Purpose, strong partnership, compensation, and the fact that my kids are still here!" [Interview 13]

5.9 Term of contract (1)

"the term of my contract…"[Interview 8]

6) Most Valuable Aspect of the Partnership

6.1 Steady and wise leadership and counsel (8)

"steady and wise leadership…" [Interview 2]

"He provides counsel…" [Interview 3]

" There is authenticity and understanding of our behaviors under stress." [Interview 9]

"He is an excellent sounding board for a range of challenges and opportunities." [Interview 10]

"He has perspective – he has a student in college and two high school age kids) – and wisdom." [Interview 11]

"She provides excellent counsel." [Interview 12]

"He is a sounding board, a good ear with good ideas when we get stuck…" [Interview 13]

"He demonstrates trust, communication, wise counsel, and perspective. " [Interview 15]

6.2 Trust and understanding (8)

"trust and understanding…" [Interview 2]

"mutual trust and affection…" [Interview 3]

"understanding" [Interview 5]

"Trust…" [Interview 6]

"I really trust and respect her." [Interview 7]

"Trust…" [Interview 11]

"Above all, she seems to have the utmost trust in me, which gives me the confidence I need to carry out my vision." [Interviews 12]

"trust, communication, wise counsel, perspective"

"He demonstrates trust, communication, wise counsel, and perspective. " [Interview 15]

6.3 Effectively leads the board (6)

"leads the board…" [Interview 1]

"I am able to ask her to intervene with a board member who may need some coaching." [Interview 8]

"Finally, I have found the best chairs to be those who are willing to "run" the board. To successfully manage, coach, guide, direct, and correct trustees, including rogue trustees. There is the old saying that the head is just one crazy board member away from being fired." [Interview 8]

"While he admits that he is not an educator and does not have expertise in that realm, he is a seasoned leader and change agent, with great instincts and counsel." [Interview 10]

"She manages the Board well." [Interview 12]

"…strong leadership of the board by the chair, allows me to lead the school most effectively." [Interview 13]

6.4 Mutual respect (6)

"mutual recognition and respect…" [Interview 1]

"He respects my judgment." [Interview 3]

"He is respectful..." [Interview 3]

"respect…" [Interview 6]

"I respect her…" [Interview 7]

"He gives me autonomy and respects my experience and judgment immensely. He is a huge advocate and cheerleader, and he keeps a lot of nonsense from reaching me." [Interview 14]

6.5 Open communication and transparency (5)

"open lines of communication…" [Interview 2]

"Honest communication…" [Interview 5]

"Clear lines of communication…" [Interview 8]

"Transparency…" [Interview 9]

"I have also developed a structured agenda format for our weekly meetings that touch on the important matters. I keep operational updates in the first four agenda areas, and our shared policy/strategy work occurs in the discussion area. If there are reports or analysis included, I place them in an appendix so we can refer to them easily. I also maintain this as a running agenda so you can refer back to prior meetings as needed. This is all bundled into a single PDF doc, so we never get off track." [Interview 10]

6.6 Chair is accessible (4)

"very accessible…" [Interview 4]

"We do not have a standing meeting, but call or text whenever necessary and this works well for us." [Interview 5]

"We have consistent communication. We meet once a week." [Interview 8]

"I have great accessibility to my chair as he is semi-retired." [Interview 11]

6.7 Respect boundaries b/w board and administration (4)

"He has respect for the boundaries between governance and administration." [Interview 1]

"He holds strong boundaries around what is an issue for me and what is an issue for the Board." [Interview 2]

"He honors our respective roles." [Interview 3]

"He is a sounding board, a good ear with good ideas when we get stuck…" [Interview 13]

6.8 Support (4)

"support…" [Interview 1]

"supports me…" [Interview 3]

"He always intends to be supportive of me." [Interview 4]

"She is incredibly supportive of my work and my vision." [Interview 12]

6.9 Honors autonomy of the head (1)

"He gives me autonomy and respects my experience and judgment immensely. He is a huge advocate and cheerleader, and he keeps a lot of nonsense from reaching me." [Interview 14]

6.10 Demonstrates care and affection (1)

"…he genuinely cares about me and my family." [Interview 3]

6.11 Leads by example/character (1)

"Leading by example when it comes to work ethic, devotion to the school, generosity and leadership with development efforts." [Interview 1]

6.12 Not a current parent at the school (1)

"Chair is not a current parent…" [Interview 3]

6.13 Sense of humor (1)

"humor…" [Interviews 11]

7) Other Thoughts on Successful Partnership

7.1 The myth of the work/life balance (6)

"I smiled at the work/life balance bit. Do you know any heads with work/life balance? I'd like to talk with them!" [Interview 1]

"The notion of maintaining a healthy work/life balance is not a reality; it is a myth. One thing that the board chair, and board in general, could do to help me out is to "mandate" an occasional break. In other words, publicly give permission to me to take a day off.
Granted, this year, COVID-19 has put the work/life balance off of everyone's radar." [Interview 3]

"I think heads need to commit to the absurdity of the job in terms of the time demands. My partner always reminds me that heads don't have jobs they have lifestyles. And any notion of a life/work balance is a fallacy." [Interview 8]

"I haven't had breakfast or lunch more than a dozen times in the last 30 years, so I guess the "healthy work/life" balance is out, right?" [Interview 10]

"Health work/life balance would certainly also help, but I don't feel I've been able to always achieve that, which may be the ultimate reason I decide to retire in a few years." [Interviews 12]

"Good luck with work/life balance. It just isn't possible. It is only getting worse due to many factors out of our control including the growing complexity of job, parental expectations, and the world. And, sadly, the ever-increasing litigious nature of our society." [Interview 12]

7.2 Positive relationship with the chair influenced decision to stay (5)

"He has definitely been a pull for me to remain at [my school] as long as I have." [Interview 2]

"My current board chair is a key factor in our success. We talk every day and enjoy each other." [Interview 7]

"I think a key to my longevity is the excellent relationship that has been cultivated with each Chair at [my school]. We enter into a place of mutual respect, build an understanding of what we both lose sleep over and understand how we show up when under stress. We share our commitment to the institution and work hard to build and maintain alignment in support of the mission." [Interview 9]

"I have worked for three board chairs in my eight years as a head. Two of the three have been superb (current included) and one was very good. While I suspect at some level, the successful nature of these relationships is in part a reflection of the work I invest to make them that way, some of it is just plain good luck/timing to have such great people who are engaged with the school as key volunteers during my tenure as a head. I certainly know of instances where heads work with board chairs who are difficult, inconsistent, and not good partners. A negative relationship like that would definitely have an impact on my employment decisions." [Interview 11]

"The kind of moral support and confidence in me that she has shown, as well as a deep understanding of the challenges I face, have gone a long way to helping me to remain in the position. If I didn't have that, I doubt I would be able to stay in the position much longer." [Interview 12]

7.3 Healthy, positive, and supportive relationship with chair (3)

"I feel very well supported and respected. I know that I can be candid and open with my board chair. In some ways, my board chair feels he is more a guide than a boss. He is very intentionally "not pushy". In areas where he is less schooled and cannot serve as thought partner, he will defer to me and support me; for example, with our work around DEI. He will "check me" and will always publicly support my work and my pace or rate of change." [Interview 3]

"More than anything, what heads need from their chair is validation, support, a listening ear, transparent communication both ways, appreciation, and respect." [Interview 5]

"One thing my second board chair (who remains a very close friend) taught me was how to successfully manage board chair. Thanks to him, I know believe that it is important as head to build a personal relationship with board chair (I often vacation with my current and past board chairs). I seek advice in order to build trust. And I always have open discussions about operations and all things school related." [Interview 7]

7.4 Clear goals and common pace of change (2)

"Each summer priorities are built between me the board chair according to which I am then evaluated." [Interview 6]

"Also, any board chair who is unaware of the unique culture of our school can force changes that are dangerous. Finally, it is critical for the success of all that the board chair and head agree on finish line and the pace of progress. More than anything, agrees on the pace is so important." [Interview 9]

7.5 Board chair as my champion (1)

"I do feel that what makes the partnership successful is that I have always felt that my chair was an early champion of me getting the job; he wants to see me succeed, and understands that he as a partner will play a significant role in my ongoing success." [Interview 3]

7.6 Heads experience greater board pressure at "elite" schools (1)

"The more I hear about the nightmares some of our colleagues experience with their boards and chairs, the more I appreciate what I have at my school. In fact, while my network is quite small, I've seen a lot more instances with head/trustee friction at "elite" schools (as was my first

headship) than at the "less distinguished" schools like the one where I now serve. I can't say the stakes are lower at my school, since we struggle with enrollment and our big dreams like rebuilding our old campus, but I do feel like a capable leader might have a better shot at being appreciated in a less prominent school. And, I might just be full of crap too." [Interview 1]

7.7 Job of being a head is getting harder and harder (1)

"I will say that this is my 17th year as a head and it feels as though the job has gotten harder and harder, especially as it pertains to creating a strong sense of community that supports one another. It feels as though it is harder to build consensus and that communities are more fractured, and this often lands on the head of school to try to resolve. It just seems harder and harder to find a way to identify as one school, and instead we spend the majority of our time trying to meet the needs of individual students and identities. There is so much calling out of needs not being met. And the realities of social media, calling out, and the anonymity of social commentary make it almost impossible." [Interview 8]

7.8 Micro-management will drive heads out (1)

"What they don't need is micro-management; rather lots of autonomy. And I would likely not go to a school where board meets more than five times a year; too much time spinning wheels and prepping for board and committee meetings rather than focusing on the important work of moving the school forward." [Interview 5]

7.9 Successful heads are servant leaders first (1)

"When I think about our responsibility as heads, I realize that we really have to have faith in all people (parents, students, faculty, trustees). Our job is like a ministry in a way. We are serving other people. And we have to be humble. It is way too easy to get off center. We definitely can't be jerks. We have to give people benefit of doubt and see goodness in all. Just the other day I had a faculty member in my office and he read me the riot act, and all I could think about was what else was going on in his life to cause such anger and how can I help him." [Interview 6]

7.10 Would not say if I did not get along with Board Chair (1)

"I don't know if I'd stay if I thought I could not work with the board chair." [Interview 13]

8) Relationship With Board Chair

8.1 Excellent/Outstanding (8)

"Outstanding. He is supportive, patient, respectful of boundaries, and willing to take on challenges as needed." [Interview 1]

"Excellent." [Interviews 2]

"Excellent." [Interview 3]

"Outstanding." [Interview 7]

"Excellent." [Interviews 9]

"Excellent." [Interview 11]

"Excellent." [Interview 12]

"Excellent." [Interview 15]

8.2 Very good/Very Strong (3)

"Very good." [Interview 5]

"Very strong." [Interviews 8]

"Very strong." [Interview 14]

8.3 Supportive (2)

"Collaborative and supportive." [Interview 13]

 "Great. I could not do my job with her support and advice" [Interview 6]

8.4 As good as it gets (1)

"Currently, it is about as good as it gets. We have good governance hygiene, and a respectful relationship that positions either of us to call out the other on anything without it becoming unprofessional or ad hominem." [Interview 10]

8.5 Strained (1)

"It is somewhat strained right now because of the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice. It certainly is my role to partner effectively with the Board while also supporting my team, and while I think I have done a good job of supporting my team through all of this, the Board has been frustrated that I haven't been tougher on the team and more aligned with them. In turn, I've been disappointed that they have not been supportive of me during some very difficult situations, and I have been especially disappointed that my chair has refused to speak to trustees whose behavior has been inappropriate towards my colleagues. I think we are turning a good corner, but we haven't completed the turn just yet." [Interview 4]

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Key Study Contacts

				Contact	
Member	Robert Donmoyer	**Role**	Primary Contact	donmoyer@SanDiego.edu	
Member	Kevin Yaley	**Role**	Principal Investigator	**Contact** kyaley@sandiego.edu	