



Head of School Survey - Executive Summary

In the spring of 2009, *Independent Thinking* asked incoming heads (starting July 2009) and first year heads (started July 2008) to send a copy of his/her resume. This was sent to all in either category – whether it was their first headship or not.

Just the Facts.....

- 81% of incoming heads (43 of 53) and 62% of first year heads (60 of 97) responded to our request.
- The male/female breakdown was 79%/21% for incoming heads and 82%/18% for first year heads.
- Year of Undergraduate College Graduation:

1965-69	6
1970-74	10
1975-79	18
1980-84	19
1985-89	24
1990-94	21
1995-00	2
Not Listed	3
- Graduate Degrees: All respondents (except for one in each group) had at least one advanced degree. While most degrees were MA, MS, or MEd, there were also a number of JD (6), MDiv (4), MBA (3), and EdD/PhD (18).
- Experience *Immediately* Preceding Appointment as Head of School

Head of School	25
Interim Head of School	3
Assoc/Asst Head	27
Division Director	28
Director of Admission	4
Director of Development	2
Dean of Faculty	2
Academic Dean	1
Dean of Students	1
Director of College Counseling	1
Other	9*

* College President, Superintendent of Schools, Association Executive Director, Public School Principal, Business Manager, Counselor, Consultant, Summer Programs Director
- Other Administrative Experience

Head of School	14
Interim Head of School	3
Assoc/Asst Head	16
Division Director	39

Dir of Admission/Adm Officer	29
Dir of Development/Dev Officer	12
Dean of Students	25
Director of College Counseling	10
CFO/Business Manager	3
Department Chair	20
Athletic Director	3
Dean of Faculty	5
Academic Dean	6
Director of Diversity	1
Other	21*

* Attorney, Consultant, Business, Banking & Finance, College President, Chaplain, Summer Program Director, Association Executive Director

Thoughts and Comments:

- Being a head of school is still clearly a male-dominated position.
- The most common immediate prior experience is as Head of School, Assistant Head of School or Division Head. In many cases, these current heads have been in these prior roles at more than one school.
- Relative few heads have previous direct external relations (admissions or development experience).
- Virtually all of the heads have significant teaching experience. Of the heads surveyed, 11 of 103 had no prior teaching experience while 57 had more than ten years experience.
- While there has been much conversation about grooming internal candidates and hiring from within the school, only 15 (14%) of the candidates have a prior professional relationship with the school where they are currently the head.

Open-ended Questions:

Additionally heads who started in 2008 were asked to respond to three questions:

- *What best prepared you to be a head of school?*
- *What do you wish you knew more about when you started?*
- *What surprised you most about being a head of school?*

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