Tuesday, June 16, 2020

10:00 am – 12:00 pm  What is the Culture State of Your School?  Getting a Temperature Reading

*Developing a partnership with the outgoing head and business office*

- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School
- Leonard Kupersmith, Head of School, Christ Church Episcopal School
- Nishant Mehta, Head of School, The Children’s School
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School
- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

Particularly in light of the current challenging circumstances, what are the key challenges your school is facing? Where do you start your journey once you are fully in the leadership seat? How do you build background knowledge about the school while getting to know the community, the board, and the faculty, all while making decisions that are fundamental to the school’s operations for this year? Do you have existing relationships that may need to adjust? What kind of shoes are you trying to fill?

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  Where Do You Go From Here? Working With the Board

- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School
- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

So much of what you inherit as a leader is going to be built from the working relationship of your predecessor as well as the personalities on the board. How have these relationships been working? What does your board expect of you at this time? What are your expectations/assumptions of the board? How can you build a relationship with the board, including the unique relationship between the head and the board chair when times are this challenging? How do boards operate in a crisis such as this one? This session will discuss best practices, transitions, differing board models, and successful board relationships.

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

10:00 am – 12:00 pm  Legal Matters and Crisis Planning Now

- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School
- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

COVID-19 presents challenges like we have never seen before, and it requires a different mindset, particularly around legal challenges and potential concerns on the horizon. We will discuss some of these obstacles and develop ways to think through challenging issues and policies as they arise.
Guardrails and Guidelines: Advice From Experienced Heads and Time for Q&A

- Chris Angel, Head of School, Hammond School
- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School
- Brett Jacobsen, Head of School, The Mount Vernon School
- Doreen Kelly, Head of School, Ravenscroft School
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School
- Jackie Westerfield, Head of School, Grandview Preparatory School
- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

What does a “normal” year in the life of a head look like and how is it different now? What will help you be the most successful at this particular time? What did you do right or wrong in your first years and what do you think are the biggest challenges for new or transitioning heads right now? If you could go back, what would you change?

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Money Matters - Finance and Fundraising

- Palmer Ball, Executive Director, PAIS
- DuBose Egleston, Head of School, Porter-Gaud School

Financial planning for schools right now is an ambiguous exercise, with many schools not knowing their enrollment for fall with any true certainty. Where is your school on the financial spectrum? How do you know? What planning steps can you take now to keep it on even footing in this uncertain economy?

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Trends and Headwinds on the Educational Landscape

- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

If everything is uncertain, what should you be tracking as a school leader? We will discuss the historic trends facing independent schools as COVID-19 approached and discuss the potential long-term ramifications of the changes schools and their families have experienced.

Thursday, July 16, 2020

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Building Bridges and Maintaining Balance

- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School

Developing relationships and communicating with the faculty, staff, and families as you and your school make foundational decisions about the year ahead. Learning how to set boundaries and take care of yourself.

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Q&A / What to Expect Going Forward

- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School
- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

Ongoing – June and July

Developing Goals for This Year

Starting from the school’s current plan for the summer and fall and the school’s mission, develop a plan for your first 90 days on the job. Working with an experienced head of school, create a calendar, outline board meetings, and make a plan to guide your first months of the school year.
Skill-Building Sessions – 4 PM Eastern

**September 15**  
**Community**  
- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School  
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School

**November 17**  
**Building a Budget**

**January 12**  
**Employment / Enrollment / Renewals**

**March 16**  
**Goals, Evaluation, and Governance**  
- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

**May 11**  
**Wrapping Up the Year**  
- Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School  
- Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School  
- Debra Wilson, President, SAIS

*Schedule is subject to change. All times listed are Eastern.

**Faculty**

**Chris Angel,** Head of School, Hammond School  
Chris Angel currently serves as head of school at Hammond School. He has served as head since 2009 and previously held the position of head of upper school from 2002-2009. During his tenure, the school saw unprecedented growth through the expansion of unique academic offerings, experiential education opportunities, national recognition among secondary schools, and an expanded footprint to include state-of-the-art facilities and co-curricular programs. Under his leadership, the athletic department was named a three-time winner of South Carolina’s most prestigious athletic award, the arts developed an international repertoire, and community service offerings were expanded school-wide.

**Palmer Ball,** Executive Director, PAIS  
Palmer Ball is the executive director of PAIS. She formed Palmer Ball Consulting, LLC, in 2016, specializing in project work for independent school financial operations. In addition to her consulting work, she was an adjunct faculty member of the independent school finance graduate class at the Klingenstein Institute. Before consulting, Ball served as business manager at Spartanburg Day School for 21 years and was vice president for business and finance at Converse College for four years, following three years in the development office.

**DuBose Egleston,** Head of School, Porter-Gaud School  
DuBose Egleston has been at Porter-Gaud for 19 years and just completed his 10th year as the head of school. He attended O’Quinn and then Porter-Gaud for 12 years, graduating in 1993. DuBose enjoys working around young people and watching them grow up in the years they are at PG. He is proud of PG’s excellent faculty and staff and enjoys being a part of a school family that sees so much hope and promise in the next generation.
**Jack Hall, Head of School, The Walker School**  
Jack Hall began serving as Walker’s head of school in June 2011. Since taking the helm, he has led the school through a dual long-range planning and SACS re-accreditation process, overseen the largest land acquisition in the school’s 58 year history, and grown Walker’s annual fund to record levels in both revenue and parent participation. Over his educational career, he has served as director of admission & financial aid, middle and upper school head, and grade chair. He has worked in a variety of independent schools including The Westminster Schools, The Lovett School and Mary Institute, and St. Louis Country Day School. In addition, Hall has served as both vice president and president of GISA.

**Brett Jacobsen, Head of School, The Mount Vernon School**  
Brett Jacobsen is completing his eleventh year at The Mount Vernon School (PS-12). Leading Mount Vernon through a transformational decade of innovation and impact, the School has grown by 45%, exceeding 1,000 students for the 2020-2021 school year. Brett shares his story of innovation through presenting nationally, hosting a leadership podcast, Counter Service, and leading Mount Vernon’s consulting agency, MV Ventures.

**Doreen Kelly, Head of School, Ravenscroft School**  
Doreen Kelly has been head of Ravenscroft School since July 2003. She joined the Ravenscroft faculty in July 1999 as the director of the lower school. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a bachelor’s degree in English and a master’s degree in education. She also studied for two years at Villanova University. Prior to joining Ravenscroft, she served as upper school director of studies, head of middle school, English teacher, and volleyball coach over a 10-year career at Trinity-Pawling School, an all-boys boarding/day school in Pawling, New York. Prior to her responsibilities at Trinity-Pawling School, she taught English as a second language for two years at D’Education Populaire, France.

**Leonard Kupersmith, Head of School, Christ Church Episcopal School**  
Leonard Kupersmith is the head of school of Christ Church Episcopal School. He has a B.A. in English from Brooklyn College, a doctorate in English from Kansas State University, and over 46 years of experience in the field of education as a teacher and an administrator. He has served independent schools since 1974. Prior to joining CCES in 2006 as associate head of school, Kupersmith served as headmaster of Wichita Collegiate School from 1986-1991 and founding headmaster of Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School, where he served for 13 years.

**Nishant Mehta, Head of School, The Children’s School**  
Nishant Mehta has been the head of school of The Children’s School since May 2013. He is nationally recognized for his vision of improving school access and breaking down silos. He contributes to the discourse on leadership, equity, and justice and sits on the boards of the NAIS, NBOA, ESHA, and the Asheville School.

**Kavita Vasil, Head of School, Highlands School**  
Kavita Vasil joined Highlands School as head of school in July 2014. Prior to Highlands, she served as school director for Temple Beth Sholom Schools in Sarasota, Florida since 1994. She holds an undergraduate degree in developmental psychology from the University of Florida and a graduate degree in child development/education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In addition, she served as an assistant professor of education at the University of Maine where she focused on early and elementary education.
**Jackie Westerfield, Head of School, Grandview Preparatory School**
Jackie Westerfield is the head of school at Grandview Preparatory School in Boca Raton, Florida. She is a graduate of Loyola University School of Law in Chicago, Illinois and received her bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Iowa. Westerfield practiced law and taught college courses in Iowa and Illinois before moving to Florida to work with Grandview Preparatory School. She completed the Klingenstein Head of School Program at Columbia University Teachers College in 2017. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Southern Association of Independent Schools, having also served on the boards of the Florida Council of Independent Schools and the Florida Kindergarten Council.

**Debra Wilson, President, SAIS**
Debra Wilson joined the SAIS staff in July 2019. Debra received her B.A. in English from Sewanee, The University of the South, and her J.D. from the University of South Carolina at Columbia. She previously served as general counsel for NAIS for 19 years. In addition to her role as chief legal officer, she has presented to school leaders around the country and abroad, including at many SAIS events. SAIS school leaders may also know her from phone calls and emails she’s fielded from member schools facing particular legal or governance issues. Before joining the NAIS staff, Debra was a tax litigator at the Department of Justice. She is an avid reader, photographer, and cook, and loves to be outdoors in the low country of South Carolina.