



# **Leadership Teams In Independent Schools**

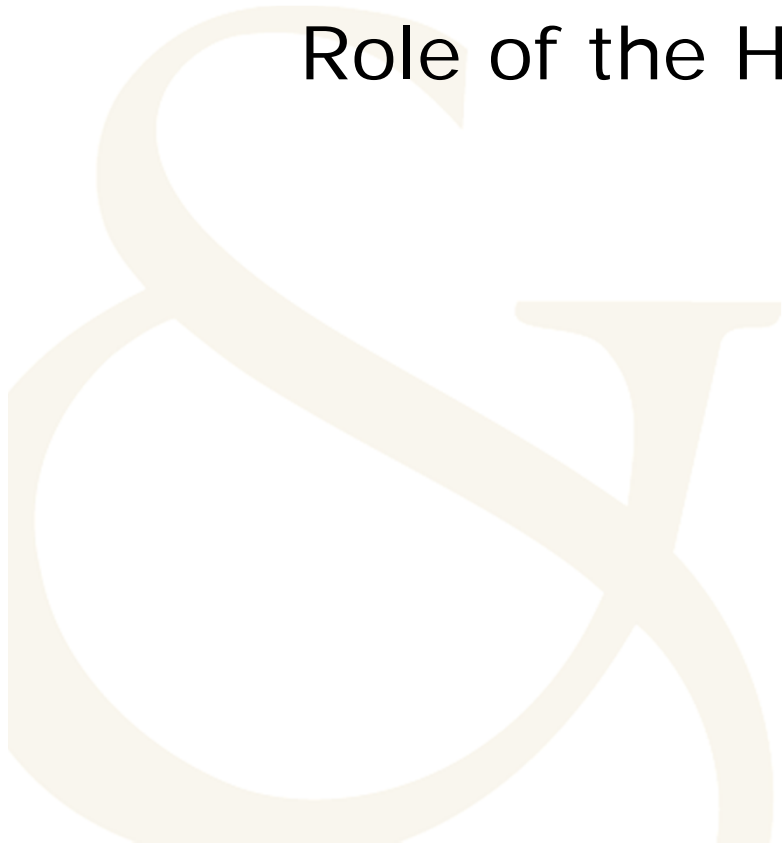
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# Why this topic?

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Why is a highly effective leadership team important to a school's success?

Role of the Head of School has changed



# Why?

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The demands on our leaders have been reshaped in the rough water of intense competition and relentless change.

# Whether large or small

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The difficulties we face are not always a function of size and scale.



# Headmaster – Head of School

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We have looked to the Head of School to lead in all areas of school life.

The expectations of the role of Head have outdistanced what can be accomplished by a single individual.

# Leadership guru Warren Bennis

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“Our mythology refuses to catch up with us. So we cling to the myth of the Lone Ranger, the romantic idea that great things are accomplished by a larger-than-life individual working alone.”

# Heroic Hero or Team

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Bennis:

“Despite evidence to the contrary including the fact that Michelangelo worked with a group of 16 to paint the Sistine Chapel, we still tend to think of achievement in terms of the Great Man or Great Woman instead of the Great Group.

# In our schools today

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- Administrative Councils
- Administrative Teams
- Executive Teams
- Curriculum Teams
- Senior Staff



## Currently....

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- These groups meet weekly, sometimes more
- These groups hold strategic sessions – once or twice a year – sometimes more
- In reality, a large part of their agenda is tactical

## Point

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Strategic issues are rarely solved with tactical measures

Yet, the strongest professionals in our school spend their time on tactics.

## Currently

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Our administrative groups are generally strong in their discipline

They are typically good managers of their area

Hold an important position within the school

## **Many are competent but not strategic**

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Daily demands on our time prevent us from longer-range thinking

No time to develop the material/data to inform the discussions

Some team members are comfortable focusing only on their department's needs

## Currently...

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In almost all schools, a group of senior leaders exists

Aren't they there to be the leadership team?

# I would venture.....

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Yes and No

Head of School wants wise counsel from the folks who have expertise in various areas.

## But.....

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Each team member has specific leadership responsibilities that keeps them working as an individual.

And probably how they are evaluated

The team needs to work for the whole school's well being.

# Silos





# Breaking down the silos

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Calls for collaboration...

Requires: Full endorsement of the Head

And, new thinking about the purpose of the senior leaders in a school as a feasible means of providing inspired leadership.

# Possibilities for more success

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- ✓ In Academics
- ✓ In Admission & Integrated Marketing
- ✓ In Development
- ✓ In Parent Satisfaction & Relationship Building
- ✓ In finance
- ✓ In Strategic Planning

# What will it take?

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There are all levels of research on effective teams – business, health care, non profits and schools

There are certain across the board characteristics of a well functioning team

# Effective Teams

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- They have a purpose
- They set priorities
- They have clear roles
- They make decisions
- Members feel appreciated
- They have effective meetings

## Many of today's teams are

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- Collaborative
- Strategic, when time permits
- Understand marketing
- Value Research
- Deeply understand all audiences

# Tomorrow's Teams....

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- Strong appreciation for trust
- Shared purpose
- Empathy
- Make time for strategic thinking
- Curiosity
- Shared decision making and shared risk

## Obstacles to getting there

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- In some cases, The Head of School *expects* that the group will become a team
- In some cases, individuals within the group won't give up control or share information
- In many cases, the group rarely thinks about their effectiveness or "what could be?"

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Likelihood of effectiveness is greatly increased when a team is a real “team” rather than simply a structure.

That takes a commitment



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The team needs a compelling direction for its work

The team needs an enabling structure

The team needs to work within a supportive organizational context

## A blueprint - perhaps

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- As a group assess your current functioning
  - With candor (that will be hard)
- Determine the direction for your work
  - Day to day or longer term?
- Each member outlines what they need from other team members

# Assess your meetings

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- What might “effective” look like?
- What might “inspired” look like?
- What will it take?
- Are all team members on board?

## Jim Collins “leaders”

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The eleven leaders in Jim Collins' “Good to Great” built enduring greatness

*“through a paradoxical blend of extreme personal humility and intense professional will.”*

# In my experience

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Great leaders in organizations have a constellation of characteristics, many covered previously, but also include:

Optimism

Enthusiasm

Energy

## In my experience

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The greatest leaders engage others with their energy and are, in turn, re-energized through the process.



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**Q & A**

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