



Results - AAIE Leadership Challenge Survey: May 2018

Survey Treatment and Key Findings: There were 123 AAIE member survey participants. Responses for the statement, “Describe your top-three leadership challenges” were diverse in content but quite consistent in announcing dominant themes. The open-ended responses were counted and cataloged and then summarized. The ranking of themes is based on the physical count of how many times the challenge/issue was mentioned. The *MIE Member Commentary* section provides further description of the leadership theme - using actual AAIE member written responses.

More than any other issue, it is the **board and head of school relationship** that occupies greatest concern and challenge. The imperative of **creating both future-ready and inclusive schools** through change leadership strategies and needed professional development to ensure high quality also took center stage. As market competition increases for talented teachers, many comments focused on **recruitment, professional development and retention** of the best and brightest. Mentioned often was the tension between ensuring our international schools remain relevant and **responsive to innovation** while needing to balance conservative or traditional perspectives within the community. And finally, many comments focused on advancing the school through effective marketing, communication and fundraising practices.

RANKING

01

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: Board Governance and Board/Head of School Relationship

- Needed dispositions and skill sets for head of school to “lead-up”, creating a generative board in a climate of collaboration. What are the head of school leadership skills that build support within a non-profit board? There is an place for courageous leadership.
- Creating a sustainable board culture where vision, role clarity and governing through policy allows everyone to fly at the proper attitude between school oversight and day-to-day operations.
- Creating a board (often elected at large) focused on long-term welfare of the school rather than personal, short term or perception-based agendas.
- High board turn-over, board training and ensuring consistency and continuity.

RANKING

02

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: Teacher Impact on Student Learning

- Recruitment and retaining highest quality teachers and leaders.
- Innovative approaches to identifying and recruiting teacher and leadership talent.
- Energizing and developing mature “calcified” teachers– successful practices for coaching up, down and sideways. Recruiting a culturally diverse faculty and leadership team.
- Professional development models and practices that are proving effective, valuable and sustainable for teacher growth and development.
- Best practices for richly relevant professional learning for faculty and staff to ensure digital/information age teaching and learning practices.
- Building capacity across the teacher corps for inclusive teaching and learning practices.
- Teacher feedback and performance assessment that is aligned to school mission that impacts classroom practices and student learning. Change leadership to gain faculty support for the actions of continuous improvement.
- The art and practice of the difficult, “hard” teacher and /or leadership performance discussions.



RANKING

03

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: Strategic Planning and the Future of Teaching, Learning and Inclusion

- Setting a strategic blueprint for ensuring future-ready students and advancing a school change agenda focused on personalized learning, using technology to amplify learning and promoting student agency. (Making the case across the community for “student inquiry vs. worksheets.”).
- Engaging in a community-based approach to establish a future-ready vision, school design and strategic thinking that aligns all within the school with understanding and common purpose.
- Developing the educational program, preparing the community, providing professional development and transitioning school culture to become an authentically inclusive school.
- Developing leadership skills to unify a diverse group of stakeholders to shape all the future-ready educational component parts that inform day-to-day classroom practices to prepare highly adaptable youth.

RANKING

04

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: Teacher Impact on Student Learning

- Creating a partnership between teacher and student to ensure a balance between knowledge and skill development and student agency of control, autonomy and power over his/her own learning.
- Developing a school culture of learners who have “the power to act”, have a voice in the school and where learning involves the activity and the initiative of the student to chose a portion of his/her own curriculum.
- Capturing, processing and communicating student learning data toward development of a school quality dashboard that has both community-wide meaning and utility.
- The social and emotional well-being of adolescents– the temptation and risk-taking behaviors characteristics of expatriate youth. Supporting adolescents with dignity, high expectations and compassion.
- Social media issues and challenges for international school youth.
- Building school traditions and community within a highly transient student population.

RANKING

05

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: Change Leadership and Educational Innovation

- Change leadership skills for ensuring that international schools remain ahead of the curve for student learning while balancing a conservative community.
- How is technology for learning best brought into the life of the classroom- the development of sustainable teaching practices with the use of technology resources?
- Change leadership practices for developing a community-wide consensus and aligning all stakeholders toward implementing teaching and learning practices that promote student adaptability skills of critical thinking, key literacies, international mindedness, and integrated STEAM learning.



RANKING

06

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: School Advancement– Marketing, Communication, Fundraising and Facilities

- Leading the strategic (in essence, seeing around the corner) intersection between instructional needs for the future and facility development.
- Master planning, development of facility build criteria that leverages design, flexible use of space, how instruction must inform construction and building for adapting to future needs.
- Schools are no longer storefronts. Need for focused marketing in a climate of increased competition, including for-profit schools– requiring defining a strong school identity, value proposition and targeted communication messaging.
- The advent of both annual giving and capital campaigns and the creation of a school culture of giving and philanthropic support.

RANKING

07

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: Host Country and School Community Relationship

- Changing demographics of expatriate population (enrollment fluctuations), localized corporate salary and benefit packages and increase in self-payers.
- Parent involvement, school volunteerism impacted by highly transient expatriate population.
- Ever-changing and more militant central government rules and regulations governing foreign schools.

RANKING

08

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: School Finance Resources

- Leading a community through enrollment downsizing while educational program quality, ongoing innovation excellence in teaching and learning remain the community mindset and perspective.
- The high expectations of a community for ongoing school improvement at a time of flat enrollment growth and cost reductions.
- Managing tuition increases, developing new revenue streams, promoting philanthropic support to remain competitive across local and international comparisons.
- The connection between enrollment management and marketing the school. Finding the message and the means for communicating what the school’s educational brand means for the student and his/her family.
- Ensuring sustainable green practices across the school where every student witnesses strategic planning and implementing for environmental stewardship.

RANKING

09

AAIE Member
Commentary

Theme: The Head of School’s Dilemmas

- A highly competitive job and recruiting market vs. a moral imperative to ensure cultural diversity and gender equity across the teaching and leadership functions of the school.
- Increasing demands for day-to-day school leadership by the head of school vs. strategic direction for the school, ensuring leadership development of the administrative team and at the same time ensuring the head remains current with research and practice. “It’s all about enough hours in the day.”
- Focusing on ensuring high expectations and quality of educational program and teaching/leadership performance while taking the tough personnel decisions and at the same time expected to maintain high morale, positive school climate and board support when the heat is on.