

Compromising the Educational Program: The Cost of Leadership Turnover

Top Challenges Identified by Heads of School:

Finding and retaining qualified staff:	Responding to conflict in and about independent schools:	Caring for students and staff through stressful times:	Ensuring the school's sustainability:	Balancing the demand for more programs with the available resources and existing initiatives:
100%	97%	96%	91%	83%









The Hard Data: Why It Matters:

Head of School Turnover

11.5% turnover in the 2021-2022 school year. ¹

> 20% of new heads leave within three years. ¹

Administrative Turnover

Nearly one-third of schools had three or more heads in the past decade. ²

Misaligned expectations betweens heads and boards. ³

Faculty Turnover

26% of teachers are unsure about renewing their contracts. ⁴

Factors include burnout, low salaries, and lack of support. ⁴

Interim Leadership

One in five heads followed a leader who served three years or fewer. ³

Reliance on interim heads affects longterm planning.

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Strategic Solutions for Stability:

- Offer competitive salaries and benefits.
- Provide continuous training opportunities.
- Implement flexible work policies.
- Improve board governance with training.
- Engage in strategic long-term planning.
- Conduct thorough leadership searches.
- Utilize consulting for leadership development.
- Provide coaching for school leaders.





Resources

- ¹ https://www.nais.org/articles/pages/books/trendbook-excerpt-head-turnover-rose-just-a-bit-last-year-after-dipping-early-in-thepandemic
- ² https://www.nais.org/articles/pages/research/nais-research-head-turnover-at-independent-schools-sustaining-school-leadership
- ³ https://www.nais.org/learn/independent-ideas/march-2021/nais-research-insights-into-head-of-school-turnover
- ⁴ https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/spring-2024/the-big-picture-hiring-retention-in-independent-schools