

Lessons Learned in Headship

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Introductions:

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I. Mission



I. Mission:

- A. It must always be about mission. If your mission consistently does not “fit” the directional decisions you must make - - revisit the mission. Are you out of synch? Maybe it’s time for a rewrite. Know what makes you and your school unique.
- B. At the same time, don’t be too quick to assume mission is issue - - maybe you had “strayed”.
- C. Understand your core values and lead by them.
- D. If you get stuck, return to mission.
- E. If you are grappling with a challenging situation, look at it through the lens of mission. Encourage your leadership team to help you do this.
- F. Always be “mission consistent.”



II. Board Chair



II. Board Chair:

The critical importance of the Board Chair – Head relationship

- A. “Call Your Board Chair - - First and Often!” - “No surprises” rule will steer the course. Regular meeting - - face-to-face as often as possible.
- B. Head’s lifeline - - easier today - - 24 / 7 - - text, email, phone - - but try for regular face-to-face.
- C. Board Chair needs to make head access a priority or don’t accept the role.
- D. Head is the Board’s only employee. Chair needs to remind Board of this.
- E. For long-term headships, continuity is key - - Board Chair to Board Chair.
- F. Consider role of “Immediate Past Board Chair”



III. Admin Team

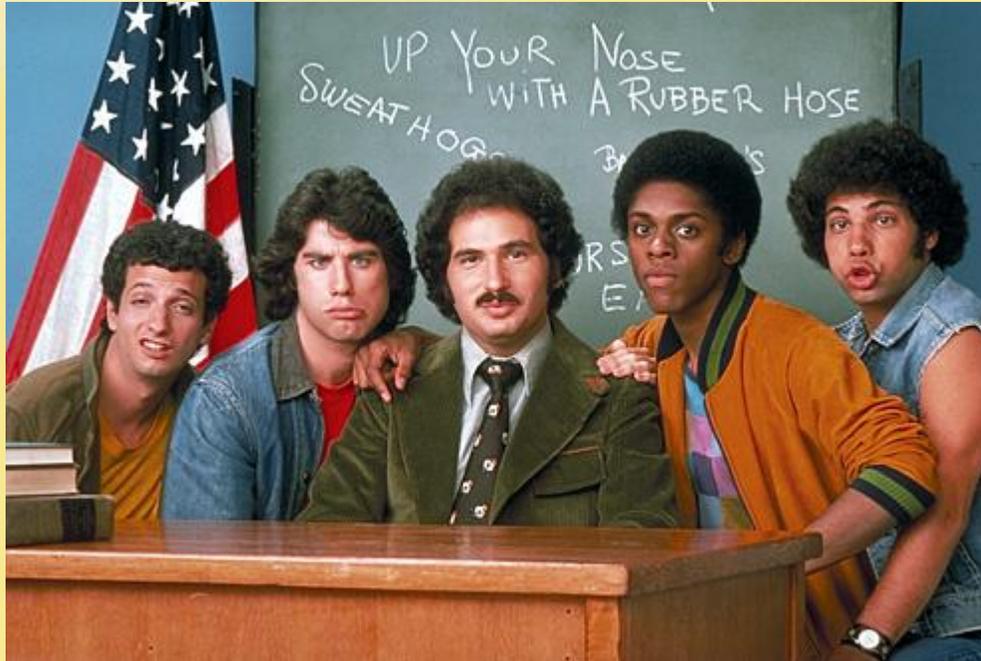


III. Admin Team: Assemble the carefully and strategically. Chemistry/Balance.

- A. Regular meetings.
- B. Email group list. (Head's Assistant?) Text group.
Communication is critical
- C. Have fun together: Retreats, dinners, outings.
- D. Use collective skills to make each other stronger.



IV. Students

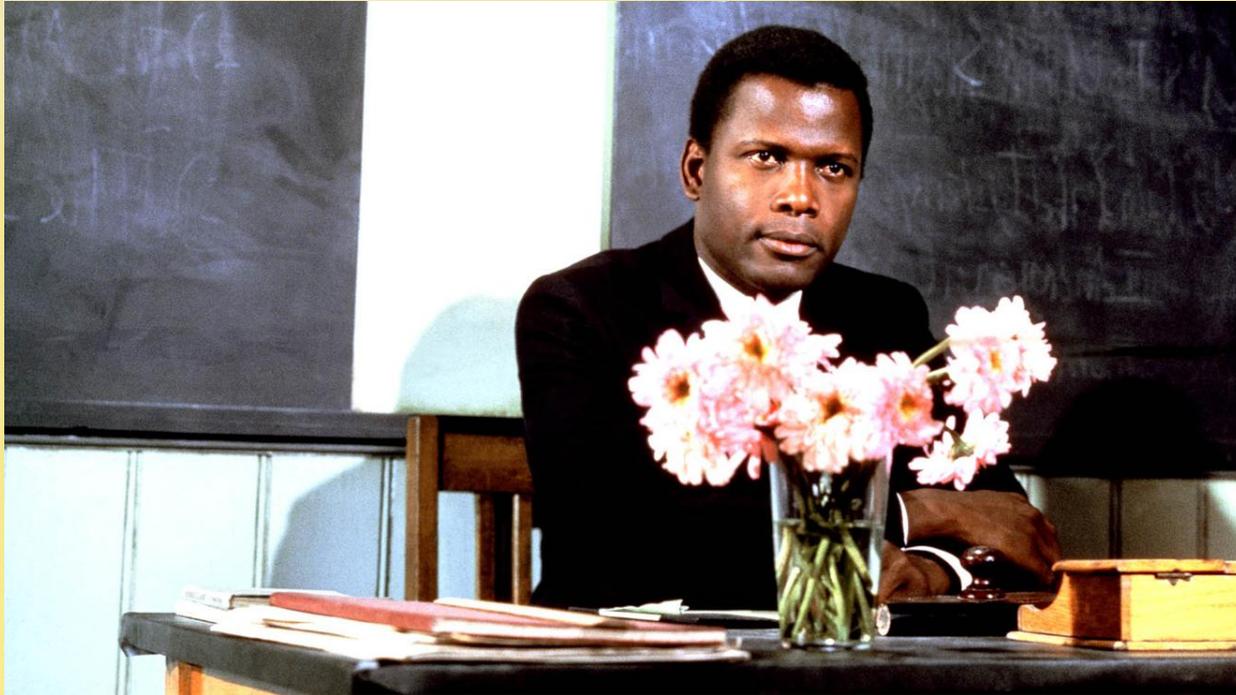


III. Students: Keep it child focused.

- A. It's all about the students. Always should be. Never forget it.
- B. Have fun. Take a walk - - often.
- C. Get out of your office and be with students.
- D. Know them: know their names, their families, their pets, etc.



V. Teachers



V. Teachers:

- A. Quote former Head of Berkeley Prep. Hire good teachers and you will avoid 90% of potential problems.
- B. Build relationships with your teachers.
- C. Convince them with words and actions that you support them.
- D. Nourish and grow your teachers. Set high expectations.
- E. Professional Development. “Growth Mindset” – Carol Dweck.



VI. Parents

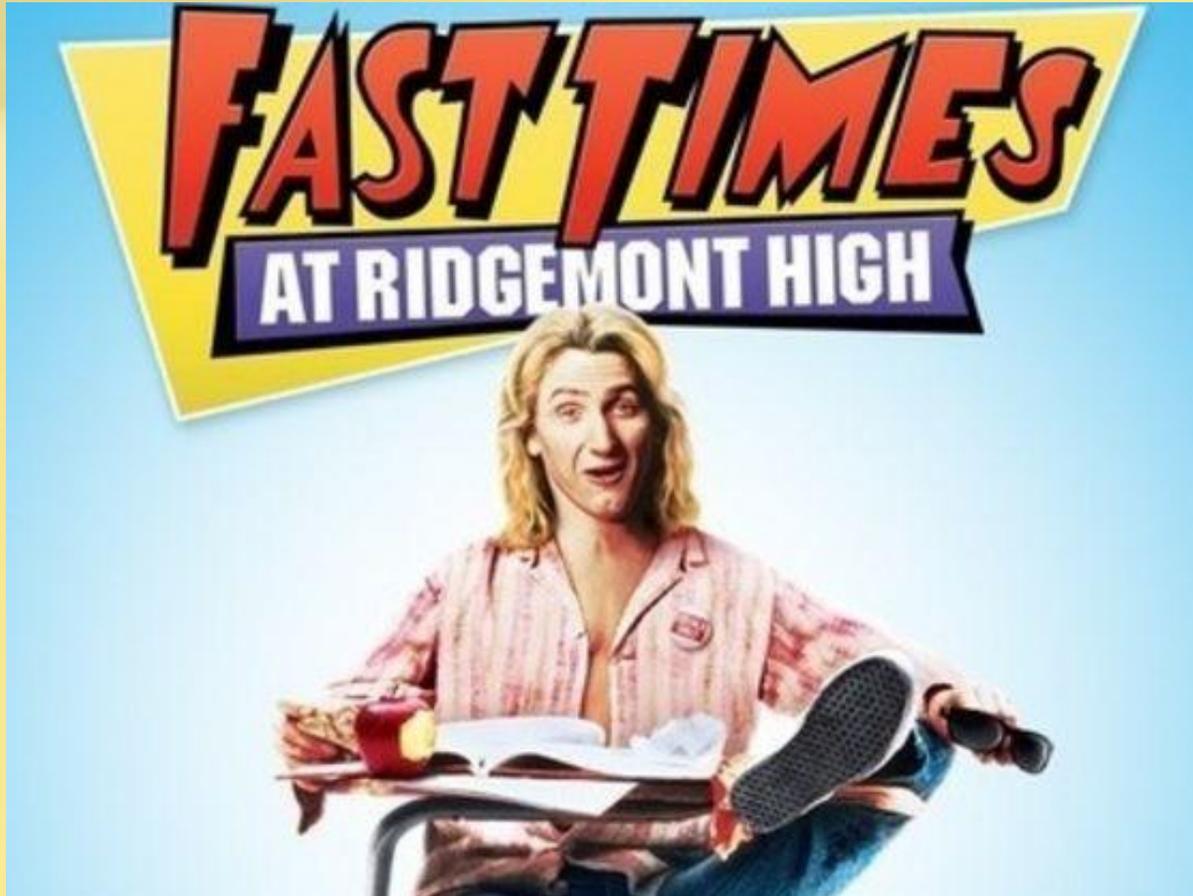


VI. Parents:
Never forget they are your “customers”.
Remind teachers and staff.

- A. Fred Factor
- B. Mix and mingle. Show no favorites.
- C. Encourage teachers to partner with parents.
- D. Boundaries: can current parents really be friends?
- E. Listen!! More than anything, they want to be heard.
- F. Find the good things to share. Encourage teachers to do the same.



VII. School



VII. School:

- A. Know who / what your school is? Know the culture of your school and the culture of your school community.
- B. Understand the history and know the founders / former leaders.
- C. Understand what can and cannot be changed. (Class size story.)
- D. Community: Building traditions. Make yourself unique.
- E. Welcoming new families. Always growing your community.



VIII. Facilities



VIII. Facilities:

- A. Evaluate strengths and shortcomings.
- B. Plant / Facilities Manager (CFO) vs. Facilities Committee of Board (both?)
- C. In small schools, the Head may be in charge of facilities -
- a lot of responsibility
- D. Long-range plan for campus and facilities. (1996 – 2017)
- E. Make facilities a source of pride for school leaders.



IX. Finance



IX. Finance:

- A. Hire a great CFO and recruit a great Treasurer - - they both need to work closely with all other committees.
- B. Grow cash reserves - - Have a “building fee” to build funded depreciation.
- C. Grow endowment for rainy day.
- D. Consider a special endowment fund for professional development for teachers. Easy money to raise. (Sigety)
- E. Successful budgeting = successful admissions.



X. Volunteers



X. Volunteers:

- A. Parent volunteers are essential to independent schools.
- B. Consider Grandparents as pool for volunteerism.
- C. Making volunteers feel appreciated. (plaques)
- D. Give them “ownership” - - But you steer.
- E. Challenge of volunteers - - more two working-parent-families.



XI. Board



XI. Board:

- A. Constantly be identifying and cultivating leaders.
- B. Recruit specifically for committee leadership - - Head must have input
- C. Look way ahead for Board Chair - - test and grow them
- D. Make meetings productive and time sensitive.
- E. Plan activities for Board outside of the Board room.
- F. Honor and credit your Board and school volunteers - - in front of entire school community (events, publications, notifications, etc. - - weeds)
- G. Building the Board is an ongoing process. Prospect – Cultivate – Recruit
- H. Celebrate success: (Annual Dinner)



XII. Marketing



XII. Marketing, Marketing, Marketing:

- A. Remind teachers, staff, parents, and grandparents that we are constantly marketing the school. (Fred Factor)
- B. A fully enrolled school is a better school for all.
- C. Emphasize power or word-of-mouth, especially for community schools.
- D. Think outside-the-box seeking marketing opportunities.



XIII. Schools in Your Area



XIII. Schools in Your Area:

- A. You gain much by building good relationships with area schools- especially your “competitors”.
- B. Local organization? Good way to create meaningful (and affordable) professional development for teachers.



XIV. Accreditation and Other Organizations



XIV. Accreditation and Other Organizations:

- A. “Street cred” with parents.
- B. Benefits for Heads: information, networking, trends, support.
- C. Different organizations for different needs.



XV. Collegial Networks



XV. Collegial Networks:

- A. School leaders you can really trust
- B. Real Communication
- C. You're lucky if you can find it. Work to create it. Nurture it.
- D. Dangers of "going it alone". Also, no fun.



XVI. You



XVI. You:

- A. If you don't make time for you and your family, no one will.
- B. You can, but shouldn't live at school.
- C. Turn it off – it can't be all school. Create distractions.
- D. Family trumps EVERYTHING!! It's hard.
- E. Taking care of you.
- F. Discuss this point with Board Chair - - create understanding of need for “down time” - - Consider a Committee to specifically care for the Head.



XVII. Summary



XVII. Summary:

- A. Listen
- B. Back to Mission
- C. Hire well and nourish
- D. Network
- E. Build and maintain strong relationship with Board Chair
- F. View parents as customers
- G. Celebrate your volunteers
- H. Market strong and creatively.
- I. Recharge: Take care of yourself and your relationship.

