

Notes on Evaluating the Head of School

- taken from a presentation by Ruth Greenberger at the Friends Council on Education conference for Trustees and Heads, Pendle Hill, November 2002. (Ruthpg44@gmail.com)

"It's not just your heart and soul you put out there, but all your internal organs." – a Friends school head

"How do I ever find out what the heck she does all day?" – a board clerk

Best case scenarios:

- How the board evaluation and head evaluation are done sets up a dynamic of mutual trust, proactive communication, mutual goalsetting and integrity that then permeates the entire system.
- The head works with the personnel committee or executive committee to design the process.
- The process is revised and varied annually.

Why evaluate the head?

- The board has the right to expect competence and a responsibility to affirm it.
- Giving feedback on strengths and skills reinforces good work.
- Schools are places where people are expected to learn and grow, including the head; evaluation is a learning experience.
- The board needs to be aware of the head's job, priorities, tasks, and vision.
- The board needs to know if the head can handle the volume and complexity of the work.
- The board needs to know how various constituencies perceive the head.
- The board is legally responsible for the school.

Who should evaluate the head?

- The board is responsible for evaluating the head.

What processes and structures can be used for the head's evaluation?

- Gather input from many perspectives (e.g. 360 degree review)
- Use a goal-setting format
- Questionnaires and "how I see it" surveys
- Portfolio evaluation
- Self-evaluation

What happens to the results?

- A small committee (including board clerk) summarizes and organizes the results (to avoid damage from "fringe" remarks).
- Summary is presented to the head FIRST. Presentation may be used as a goal setting conversation.
- Board clerk reports a summary to full board.
- Board clerk might share summary with faculty and staff in joint presentation with head where head asks for faculty support on growing edges.
- Important to keep a written record on file.