**Notes from ACIS June Heads meeting small group discussions #1, 6.11.21**

**Continued/New ACIS Collaboration Opportunities/Strategies Post-Pandemic (Facilitator= Mark Twarogowski)**

1. Keep weekly ACIS heads zoom meeting- alternate support and professional development
   1. Schedule less frequently- once a month
   2. Timing tbd (in school hours vs out of school hours):
      1. alternate operational/structured professional development with out of school hours for less structured/more social sessions
2. Keep zoom format for committee meetings
3. Connect with former school heads
4. Encourage people to resume visits to other schools- both structured and unstructured
5. Continue with inviting other schools to virtual presentations at individual schools

**Restoring/Rebuilding Positive Faculty/Community Culture Post-Pandemic (Facilitator= Samantha Coyne Donnell)**

1. Authors/Research to recommend
   1. Heidi Hayes Jacobs- restoring faculty culture at schools (suggested by Will Webb)
      1. Post Pandemic Planning (watch on Youtube)
   2. Peter Block- community and stewardship (suggested by Tim Breen)
   3. Martin Seligman on Human Flourishing (suggested by Tim Breen)
   4. Samantha Coyne-Donnel’s syllabus on Pursuit of Happiness
   5. Priya Parker- The Art of Gathering (suggested by Sumant)
2. Keep it simple- don’t try to return to “normal” too fast
3. Focus on gratitude and appreciation
   1. Brainstorm 2-3 qualities you admire in all members of admin team and share out
   2. Fac/staff bios
   3. Take all fac/staff on outdoor ed
4. Address internal narratives
   1. Loss of ground up voice during high stakes
5. Refocus on students
6. Play together- have fun, learn from each other
7. Start off in opening faculty meetings with “Why I Teach” presentations
8. Ex: NOLS- highest staff ratings, lowest pay- why? How do they establish culture?
9. Consider carefully how you invite families back in your school
10. Try to do some of this work with your board as well

**Balancing/Advancing DEIJ efforts in Conjunction with Other Needs/Strategic Priorities (Facilitator= Sumant Bhat)**

Opening question: Who are you as a school, who are you as a leader, and how does that reflect on your DEI work? How does diversity work relate to your purpose as a school?

* Valuing the individual in independent schools becomes a valuing of diversity
  + Diversity is a value-add to your school community- all should feel a sense of belonging
  + Make it about kids rather than a political agenda
* Are independent schools engines of inequity? Are there larger institutional/systemic things interfering with your DEI work?
  + What if independent school were anchor institutions in the community- being great neighbors- purchasing, curriculum, etc.

**Things to consider:**

* Understand who are you as a leader and your lens- be as curious as possible
  + Hold up the mirror and think about who you are and what you are modeling for your staff/faculty- not trying to solve but starting with reflection
  + consider history of your institution as well
* Language matters- justice has become a charged word- lean into it or avoid it?
* Trauma triangle- perpetrator, savior, or victim? There is a tendency to fall into absolutes and label yourself as only one of these things (ex: teacher as white savior)
* Privilege vs merit
* Make it an act of scholarship- unpack evidence to reach conclusions vs politics where you have a conclusion and look for evidence to support it
* Think about how to take the emotions out of it but also be respectful of emotions that inevitably come up
* Find a balance between Texas textbook version of American history and critical race theory
  + Both margins are going to attack anyway- look for the balance to be able to speak to both sides

**Resources/Research suggested:**

* SEL vs DEI- look at Mark Brackett work on SEL (suggested by Rand H.)
* Educate yourself on Critical Race Theory- how it fits in multi-cultural education- all over the news- be ready to have this conversation with parents/teachers
* 1619 project
* The Anchor Schools Project- new (Tim Breen)
* Howard Zinn/American History (suggested by Mike Imperi)
* *Gustavo Carrera* article on independent schools- are we really just here to give a leg up to people that already have a leg up?

Request for ACIS to provide more support on DEI work- Rodney Glasgow will be at October Leadership conference; Use case studies on HoS monthly calls

**COVID Shifts/Innovations that are Here to Stay, Possibilities for What has Been Built, and Scenarios for Various Pandemic Stages in 21-22 (Facilitator= Markus Hunt)**

* Pandemic forced schools to identify core values of the institution and by division
  + Those that knew their core values did better, those that didn’t had trouble
* We are still in it- how do we get out of it or what comes next?
* Socio-emotional piece came through the most over the past year- connection was crucial
* How do we rewind habits or processes that were needed this past year but will not be helpful moving forward- need to reset (committee work, being engaged and involved in all of school life)

**Small Group Discussions #2**

**Mark Gustavson: Head of School/Admin Sustainability**

Be more intentional with your time and be unapologetic about it

Let people know in advance when you are/are not available

**Tricks/Ideas**

* Use Calendly app to schedule- be intentional about when people can meet in relation to HoS schedule
* Schedule in preparation for meetings
* Shift agenda items to pose as a question that you want answered (ex: playground behavior)
* Minimize the # of people that directly report to the HoS to be intentional about those people
* Have one day a week where only the HoS can schedule themselves (not the EA)

**Jeff Leahy: Risk Assessment**

* Protocol still unknown- schools waiting for guidance from the CDC
* Different counties have different expectations/standards
* Majority of schools strongly recommending vaccines for employees
  + Schools can require vaccination as a condition for employment
* Unvaccinated will have to stick with quarantines; prior covid protocol
  + Some schools not allowing paid days off for unvaccinated that will need to quarantine
* What to do when people get sick (not covid)
  + Consider how to keep masking as a normal part of moving forward without feeding into stigma of unvaccinated
* Communication strategy around all of this
  + Desire to start sending out positive messages about upcoming trends but have to wait for CDC guidance
  + Parents are waiting to hear from schools as to what they will be requiring
  + Build excitement about path forward
  + Messaging needs to be clear about return to policies for parents/employees
* Travel
  + Longer trips getting pushed to spring but shorter trips on schedule for the fall
* How do schools track who is vaccinated and who is not- who collects this information, who holds it, etc.

**Lisa Stroll- Faculty Recruitment/Retention**

* Free job posting on Linkedin
* Can schools collaborate on hiring needs- share candidates that were not hired with other ACIS schools?
  + Encourage applicants that schools don’t hire to look at ACIS job board
* Keep up with what is going on in public schools- be aware of public school salary ranges and find a way to be competitive
* What are benefits that can sweeten the deal?
  + Moving expenses
  + Signing bonuses
    - Can be a way of protecting the salary bands but still sweeten the deal for people to accept
    - Have to have some transparency around this process to protect the school
  + Pay off college debt? Are schools allowed to do this anymore?
  + Need to be careful of equity in benefit allocation
  + Also consider moving to a more flexible salary band system so don’t have to deal with signing bonuses, extra benefits, etc.
* The Teachers Council (suggested by Kelly Church)
  + Work with international applicants that want to work in US
  + Can come teach for 3 years if your institution has a MOU with an international institution
  + Teachers Council helps with VISA process
* Positive messaging about benefits of working in independent schools

**JJ Morrow- Things to keep from COVID**

* Never waste a crisis
* Can’t go back to normal- desire to go back to something better
* Affirm where you are heading as a school and why
* Consider that structure might be needed/wanted from faculty- so much flexibility over the past year, see a desire for more structure
* Schedule opportunities for down time and space
* Organize curriculum/lessons around global events
* Carry forward resiliency kids/staff learned this year
* Don’t lose momentum of tackling hard things
* Remind people what we are/are not in control of and how to handle not being in control
* How to carry forward the importance of grace in community

Book recommendations (Tim Breen)

* Upswing (Robert Putman)
* Difference Making at the Heart of Learning (Tom)