ISAS

Independent Schools Association of the Southwest

2026 November Heads Meeting

November 8-10
The Lively on Oak, Oklahoma City, OK

Sunday, November 8

November 8 | 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Ballroom — ISAS Standards Committee Meeting (lunch is provided)

November 8 | 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Ballroom — ISAS Board Meeting

November 8 | 4:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Ballroom Foyer — Gathering for New Heads of ISAS Schools

A time for new ISAS Heads to network with each other and ask questions of ISAS Staff

November 8 | 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Ballroom Foyer — Opening Reception for all Heads of School graciously sponsored by DovetailED

November 8 | 6:00 p.m.

Dinner and evening on your own

Several restaurants are on the same property as the hotel: Capital Grille, Mesero, Shake Shack, Tommy Bahama Marlin Bar. Oklahoma City has lots of other restaurants to choose from nearby as well. Click here for lots of options!

Monday, November 9

November 9 | 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	
Ballroom	Breakfast Buffet

November 9 | 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.	
Navigating the Space in Between: Leading with Intention Amid Competing Demands and Constituents	
Ballroom	Heads of School are at the center of a complex web of relationships. They are at the top of the organizational chart, but can easily feel like they're at the bottom, subject to the varied desires of the board. Just as often, heads end up feeling stuck in the middle – between parents and faculty, between the board and leadership, just to name a few. None of these constituencies are a monolith, and all of them need care. Heads need and deserve a model to help them navigate this complex landscape. Barry Oshry's organizational model of tops, middles, and frontline offers a helpful mental model for understanding these dynamics – and the possible paths forward. At the core of the framework is a focus on responsibility – focusing on the decisions that are under your control, and helping others see the choices they have to be part of the solution. By using this lens, Heads can get even better at navigating the internal challenge of leadership, as well as external relationships. They can act more intentionally in their interactions with other people, less frustrated with the realities that are out of their control, and more helpful in encouraging others to take responsibility for their situations. This lens doesn't remove all of the challenges associated with headship, nor does it remove conflict. Instead, it offers a path to what some thinkers call conscious leadership, a way of managing these competing demands with more curiosity, more agency, more learning, and less drama. Recognizing that immense expertise is dispersed throughout the room, this session will be a mix of speaker-presented frameworks, individual reflections, and opportunities to share experiences and lessons learned among the Heads in attendance. *Greg Bamford, Co-Founder and Partner, L+D*

November 9 | 10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	
	Break

November 9 | 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	
Headship: A Discussion of the Summer Edition of NAIS Magazine	
Ballroom	Heads of School are asked to read the Summer Edition of NAIS Magazine prior to arrival. The group will be divided into three groups for the purposes of discussion: 0-5 Years of Headship: facilitated by Scott Griggs 5-10 Years of Headship: facilitated by Meshea Matthews 10+ Years of Headship: facilitated by Dale Smith

November 9 | 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	
Ballroom	Lunch graciously hosted by GFFdesign

November 9 | 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	
Unconference	
Ballroom	As a group, we will brainstorm topics for discussion. Each topic will be assigned to a table, and Heads may choose to participate in one or more conversations during the session.

November 9 | 2:00 – 2:15 p.m.	
	Break

November 9 | 2:15 – 3:30 p.m.	
Wisdom Road: Searching America for Civility, Shared Values, and Common Ground	
Ballroom	Author-educator Grant Lichtman spent more than 30 weeks, slowly traveling 20,000 miles around America in a small RV, listening to strangers from the often-overlooked parts of our country recall the wisdom and important values that guide their lives. His new book, Wisdom Road, (which all attendees will receive), shares the voices and places he found, providing hope that in this time of increased division, and even anger in our country, what we share is vastly more powerful than that which sometimes seems to tear us apart. Grant will summarize key highlights and themes of his extraordinary journey, and then share concrete ideas and resources for how school leaders can help students learn to find and interact with people who have different life experiences or worldviews from themselves. He will share ways that schools can reimagine the idea of civics education,

reaching out and engaging in civil discourse with others, a critical step in healing some of our deep national divides.

Grant Lichtman, Author, Speaker, and Thought Leader on Civic Engagement

November 9 | 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.		
Hot Topics		
Ballroom	SGO/EFTC Department of Treasury IRS proposed ruling	School vouchers . . . and more!

Led by Scott Griggs

November 9 | 4:30 p.m.
Afternoon and evening on your own

Tuesday, November 10

November 10 | 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	
Ballroom	Breakfast Buffet

November 10 | 8:30 – 9:45 a.m.	
What If We Are Asking the Wrong Questions About Department Chairs?	
Ballroom	Department chairs occupy a uniquely valuable position in schools: close enough to teaching and learning to understand the daily realities of practice, while positioned to help advance broader institutional priorities. Yet many schools have inherited department chair structures designed for a different kind of work, even as expectations for these leaders have continued to grow. Drawing on the Association for Academic Leaders' new research report, *Designing the Middle: Department Chairs and the Future of Academic Leadership*, this session will explore what becomes possible when schools stop asking what department chairs *should* do and instead consider what leadership work their schools most need done. Together, we'll examine how thoughtfully designed middle leadership structures can create capacity, strengthen the connection between institutional priorities and classroom practice, and help Heads build the academic leadership their schools need for what comes next. *Erin Rehel, Chief Operating Officer, One Schoolhouse*

November 10 | 9:45 – 10:00 a.m.	
	Break

November 10 | 10:00 – 11:15 a.m.	
Heads Membership Meeting	
Ballroom	Attendance is required.

November 10 | 11:15 a.m.	
	Adjournment

ISAS thanks our additional corporate sponsors for their support of this conference.

Clarity

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ISAS

Independent Schools Association of the Southwest

ISAS Speakers

Greg Bamford

Greg Bamford (he/him) is a Co-Founder and Partner at L+D. Prior to this, Greg was Associate Head of School for Strategy and Innovation at Charles Wright Academy in Tacoma, Washington, and Head of School at the innovative Watershed School in Boulder, Colorado. During his time at Watershed, the young school grew to full enrollment and achieved ACIS accreditation for the first time. He is currently on the Board of Trustees for his alma mater, The Overlake School in Redmond, Washington, and the Advisory Board for The Hatch School, a new, independent girls' high school that opened in Seattle, Washington in 2022.

With his experience in school leadership, Greg brings a strategic lens to leadership development, innovation, and change management for Leadership+Design clients. He is particularly passionate about building leadership capacity and the cultural muscle to enact needed change. Greg has been a featured speaker at education conferences nationally and his writing has appeared in publications like Independent School, Net Assets, and The Yield. Greg lives in Tacoma, Washington with his wife and two children.

Grant Lichtman

Grant Lichtman is an internationally recognized thought leader in the drive to transform K-12 education. For fifteen years Grant was a senior administrator at one of the largest and oldest K-12 independent schools in California. Since 2012, he has worked with more than 250 private and public schools in the United States, Canada, and around the world. He speaks, writes, and works with school and community teams to build capacity and comfort with innovation in response to a rapidly changing world. Grant is the author of four books on the future of K-12, including *#EdJourney,* and *Thrive*. His new book, *Wisdom Road*, chronicles his unique and powerful 20,000 mile journey on the backroads of America in search of values, wisdom, ideas, and shared humanity that we are at risk of losing and that can reforge hope in our collective future.

Erin Rehel

Erin Rehel is Chief Operating Officer at One Schoolhouse, where her work spans the organization's Academic Program and the Association for Academic Leaders. Through the Association, she works with academic leaders across the country to strengthen their leadership practice, navigate complex organizational challenges, and more effectively lead the academic work of their schools.

Prior to joining One Schoolhouse, Erin served as Director of Strategy and Institutional Research at Episcopal Academy, a PreK–12 coed day school in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. She began her work with independent schools at the Advisory Board Company/EAB, where she served as Practice Manager for the Independent School Executive Forum. In that role, she led research and worked with heads and other senior school leaders to develop data-informed strategies addressing a wide range of institutional priorities.