

**The Pleasures and Perils of Headship:
A Series of Conversations for the Women Heads of ISAS**

Join retired Head of School, Ann V. Klotz, for three Zoom conversations about the particular challenges women heads navigate.

Sessions will occur on January 27, February 19, April 1 at 4:00 pm Central Time.

Sessions will be recorded and the recordings will be shared with all registered participants through May 30, 2026.

**Session 1: January 27
Witch or Mom: Boss Women's Dilemmas**

Gender stereotypes persist in the way women are perceived in headship. The data confirms that while 80% of school leaders are female, the number of women who head schools has hovered under 40% for decades...especially for women who lead co-ed K-12 schools, and the number of female heads of color continues to lag behind white women heads. From our demeanor to our clothes to our family structures, constituents scrutinize women's leadership differently than they consider male leaders. How does gender impact our work? When we layer in geography, what other nuances do we need to consider? What's hard? What's great? In this interactive session, we'll share strategies, vent and offer support to one another. How can we be boss-women without being labeled as bossy or b****y? What strategies might we share? How can we help one another? How do we negotiate the public and private faces of headship? We will be sure to save some time to talk about the particular challenges women heads face caring for their children (in our schools or NOT in our schools) or older parents and our partners—if we have them—and how it may feel if we are flying solo as heads. Feel free to send Ann any questions or topics you hope we'll address ahead of time:

avk@annvklotz.com

Session 2: February 19**Mentorship: Building our Team and Loving Our People—Even When They Leave Us**

Mentoring the next generation of school leaders is one of the privileges and responsibilities of headship. It can be lonely to lead a team and challenging to meet each individual's needs. In this session, we will talk about the head's role in building and nurturing her team—or inheriting a team that is not her own—and how to mentor those who aspire to greater leadership roles. Some of the questions we may discuss include:

- How do you cultivate a strong leadership team?
 - What tips and tricks do you have for integrating new members of the team?
 - What was the best leadership retreat you ever led or the best team-building activity you ever participated in?
- What opportunities do aspiring leaders need?
- What training do we need to offer our internal folks who move into management (department chair, division director, etc.) but do not have a lot of experience in supervising their colleagues?
- How do we help aspiring leaders balance their ambition with the work we need them to do?
- How can we encourage leaders to document tricky situations and to hold those they supervise accountable?
- How do we reassure our communities when our 'stars' go on to greatness beyond our walls?

The fact is, the better the people, the more likely it is that they will leave us. Join us for a lively conversation about what it means to mentor and lead. Leave the session with a few mantras around mentorship. Feel free to send Ann any questions or topics you hope we'll address: avk@annvklotz.com

Session 3: April 1**Why We Stay: What Keeps Us in our Roles as Heads?**

In this session, we will swap stories and laugh a bit at the “You can’t make this stuff up” parts of our job! Long ago, I stopped using the word balance, preferring “the struggle to juggle” in describing my life as a head. What are your best juggling strategies? Heads are asked to keep a lot of plates spinning in the air, and sometimes, a plate shatters. I prefer sequence over balance any day because balance implies the idea that if we could just get everything perfectly aligned, no plate will not fall. Sequence means we focus on what’s on fire and then, once that particular situation is calm we return to the whole. How do we “get back in the game” when we feel downhearted or when the board’s expectations are unrealistic?

What keeps you coming back to your job—besides the pay check? As a Head, you are the Chief Inspiration Officer. Where do you find inspiration? How do you refuel? All Heads talk about the importance of cultivating resilience in children, parents and faculty, but how do we practice what we preach in our own lives? Who has time for self-care? How do you handle the mountain of email? The endless meetings? The cranky parents? The unhappy teacher? The naughty child? The demanding family members in your own family? In this hour, take some time to celebrate your successes and share with your colleagues the ways in which you both manage the day-to day-work and also restore yourself. Feel free to send Ann any questions or topics you hope we’ll address: avk@annvklotz.com