



Mike Mersky's *Leading Ideas* on

More Characteristics that make National Independent Schools

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"All independent schools, no matter how grounded in tradition, are works in progress."

"The board . . . should . . . use its collective wisdom to focus on strategic planning, broad policy issues, and fiduciary responsibilities."

"Top-notch administrators have a way of bringing out the best in those around them."

"Essentially, it is the teacher . . . who must facilitate the engagement of the student with the subject material. Goal setting, yearly evaluations, curriculum review with colleagues, and access to professional development are essential elements for a vibrant faculty culture."

"Students may learn more from their parents than any other group. The parents and teachers should be perceived as a team . . . to divide and conquer is not an option."

"Firm and kind are my watchwords."

A national independent school:

- believes in the "education of the heart" as one of its primary goals;
- possesses a rigorous academic program;
- maintains high standards and expectations for all students and professionals;
- believes in a competitive admissions process;
- has an organized business approach which is illustrated by balanced budgets and positive audits;
- establishes clear and attainable goals for its development program which advances the School based upon significant support from its constituencies;
- has a Board of Trustees that supports the Head and the School's philosophy, knows its role as a non-profit board, responds to what is financially in the School's best interest, and assures the long-term legacy of the institution;
- recruits teachers and administrators using both local and national searches;
- believes in professional development for all personnel at the School;
- encourages professional attendance at local and national conferences;
- supports teachers and administrators in outside, educational leadership opportunities;
- believes that students learn both inside and outside the confines of the School;
- celebrates and enhances the continued growth of diversity within the school community because it knows the importance of teaching kids about the future that truly exists;
- bases all of its decisions for the School in terms of what is best for the kids who attend.

MJM 1/3/00

Quotations from Greg O'Melia, Head, Buckley School, NYC, and a founding member of The Education Group's Leadership Taskforce.