

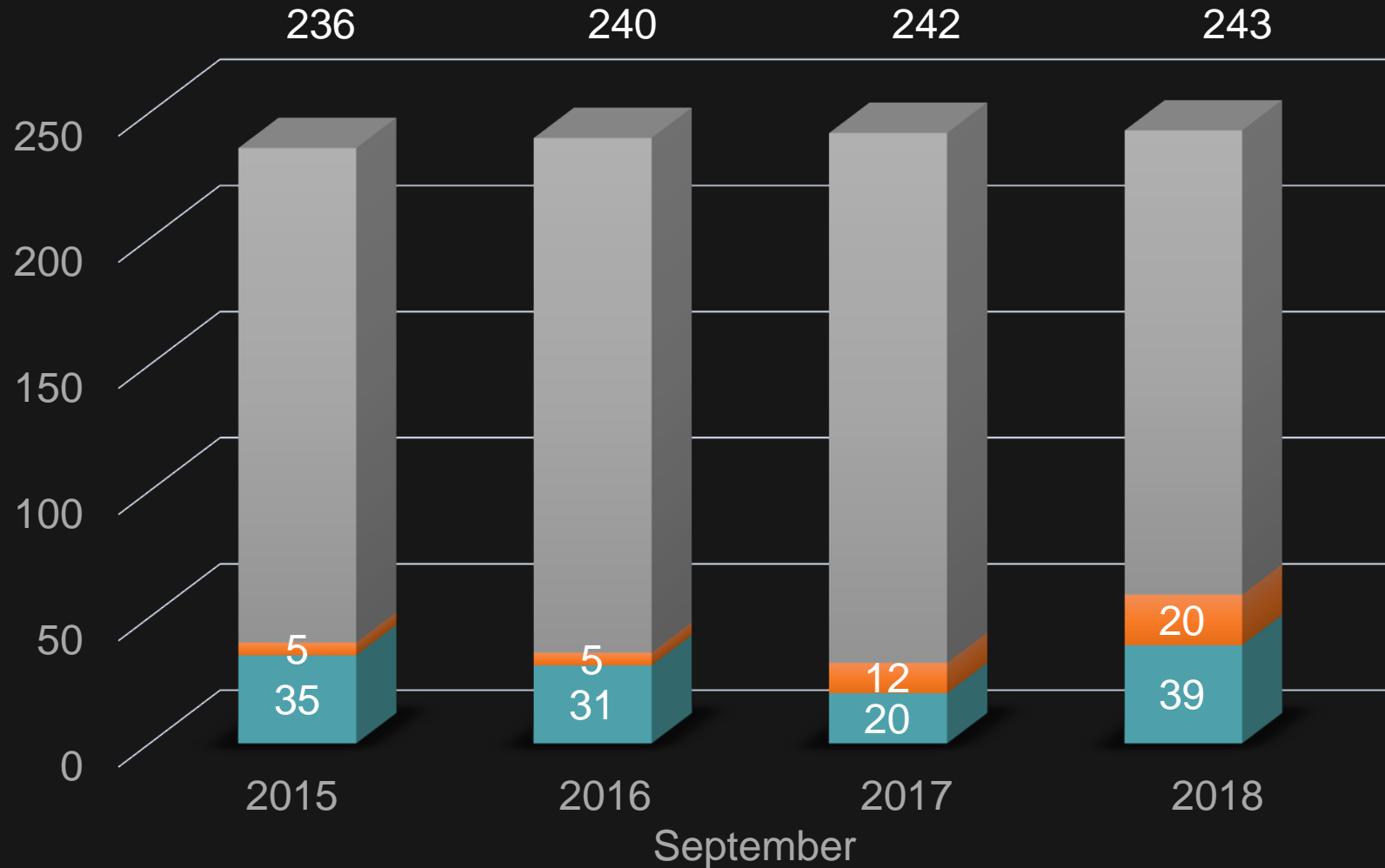
Out the Door: What We Can Learn from Abrupt Departures from Headship



Claudia M. Daggett
Executive Director, Independent Schools Association of the Central States
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Data

ISACS Headship Departures Typical Timetable & Abrupt



Impact

“ Any circumstance that significantly interrupts the head’s ability to lead has the potential to disrupt normal school operations, unsettle faculty and staff, distance parents, and fracture boards....

...The reality for almost all school heads and their boards is that the *urgent* always overwhelms the *important*.”

-- Siri Akal Khalsa, Executive Director, Northwest Association of Independent Schools

“The rash decision to fire the head halts institutional momentum and generates constituent anxiety that weakens the school....

Discarding a head of school, instead of engaging constituents in a carefully managed transition process, can tear the fabric of relational trust that holds the community together.”

-- Lee Quinby, Executive Director, Colorado Association of Independent Schools

Theories

labile landscape

unrealistic expectations

enrollment management & financial sustainability stressors

generational shift

the Yelp effect

failure to fully embrace
a partnership model

Remedies

Recommendations

1. Avoid creating an emergency.
2. Develop board-head agreements on meaningful goals and metrics to assess progress.
3. Cultivate empathy and trust.
4. Establish a regular practice of board education and shared self reflection.
5. Grow leaders better able to thrive.
6. Improve head search and entry processes.

Resources

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Contact

Claudia Daggett
Executive Director
Independent Schools Association of the Central States
www.isacs.org
claudia@isacs.org
(312)750-1190



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