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**LITTLEFORD & ASSOCIATES**  
— GLOBAL ISSUES | LOCAL SOLUTIONS —

Board Governance | Head Compensation | Mentoring Heads | Faculty Compensation & Evaluation | Fundraising | Leadership Transitions  
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## PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF

*Posted on August 1, 2015*

Great heads are characterized by persistent focused leadership. They do not flit from one initiative to the next leaving earlier ones unfinished or in limbo. When such "slippage" is related to faculty compensation and evaluation changes, it often feeds faculty cynicism.

Yet that is not the case with many client schools. Last week one school Head provided this feedback from a teacher on the progress of the School's faculty compensation system and evaluation process:

"The recent faculty evaluation that I went through here was the most rigorous I've encountered in 21 years of teaching. It's appropriate for us to be held to high standards as educators and I welcomed the classroom observations and reports the evaluation required. After years of receiving empty "step raises" at other schools just for showing up, regardless of how diligently I performed, it's a great feeling, professionally, to navigate such a demanding evaluation. The recognition the school gave me as a result—naming me as one of the first "Senior Teachers"—made me especially proud to be an educator. When the financial reward was added, I felt for the first time in my career that my efforts in and out of the classroom were being acknowledged in a special way."

This is a tribute to the process that the Head began four years ago by working with Littleford & Associates. The School adopted a career ladder salary model combined with a substantive faculty evaluation process.

What is most interesting about this teacher's experience is that the current Head's predecessor hired him at a higher than average salary for his experience. Thus, the Head felt that he needed to "red-line" this teacher's salary (among others) at a flat 3% increase for a few years to bring him back into range.

The teacher accepted this, however, without resentment because he anticipated moving to a higher rung on the School's career ladder once everyone was brought onto the new scale. The rationality and fairness of the new salary system appealed to him and has proven to be a great morale booster for the faculty overall.

Furthermore, according to this Head, "Faculty love the transparency of the process and the



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opportunity it gives them to see into the future of their compensation arrangements. An unexpected bonus for the Board Finance Committee is the ability to plan the future cost of faculty salaries with greater precision along with public benchmarks to assess progress. This is a big improvement over 'percent, percent, percent' annual fixed percentage raises."

This Head of School is a firm yet compassionate leader. His experience demonstrates the rewards of consistency of leadership over time on this most important yet volatile subject of evaluation, compensation and workload. We are proud to call him and his School a client. The School is the Bullis School in Potomac, MD, and the Head is Tom Farquhar.

John Littleford  
Senior Partner