Senior School Leaders Business Strategy Cohort: Four Working Sessions to Strengthen the School Model

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Cohort Overview

This four-part cohort deepens senior leaders' business fluency and introduces new approaches to strategy development and execution. Through a sequence of practical, applied sessions, participants will strengthen their understanding of how financial, enrollment, advancement, and operational levers interact to shape a sustainable school model.

Each 60-minute session, facilitated by Peter Baron of MoonshotOS and featuring guest experts, blends practical insight, hands-on tools, and peer dialogue to help leaders build business acumen, test ideas, and apply proven frameworks in their schools.

Session Topics & Guest Experts

What 200 Heads of School Reveal About the Independent School Business Model
Peter Baron, Founder, MoonshotOS
peter@moonshotos.com

Date: **January 19th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

Brief session description:
After more than 200 conversations with heads of school about the independent school business model, the results are in.

This session uncovers the critical challenges facing today's independent schools and how schools are effectively redefining the model. The focus turns to revenue drivers and structural opportunities that strengthen the business model, with case studies of schools that have made those moves, the paths they took, and what came of them.

Essential for heads of school, this workshop critically examines current hurdles, identifies opportunities to reimagine the business model, and offers a hopeful outlook for the future of independent schools.

What participants will walk away with

- **Where the pressures are coming from.** The forces reshaping the model and why they are hitting harder now.
- **Revenue moves that worked.** Examples of schools creatively growing revenue to support programs and mission.

Title: Beyond the Bell: Innovative Programming That Expands Mission, Market & Revenue

Guest: Karen McClelland, Executive Director of Auxiliary Programs, Sidwell Friends; Senior Advisor, SPARC
karen@sparcnational.com

Date: **March 11th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**
Brief session description:
Explore how schools can use innovative auxiliary programming to extend their educational mission while creating new opportunities for growth. We'll examine programs that strengthen the school brand, introduce new families to the community, give faculty space to share passions and expertise, and generate meaningful non-tuition revenue.

Title: AI for Admission: Prompts That Actually Work

Brendan Schneider, CEO, SchneiderB Media (Enrollment/Marketing Strategist).
brendan@schneiderb.com

Date: **March 17th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**
Brief session description:
Everyone is talking about AI. Few are using it well. This hands-on workshop cuts through the hype and gives admission and marketing professionals copy-paste prompts purpose-built for their daily work.

Attendees will learn the CRIT framework, a simple four-part structure that transforms vague AI requests into consistently useful outputs. We will apply the framework live to real school marketing tasks: drafting parent follow-up emails, generating blog post outlines, summarizing tour feedback, and writing human-sounding social media captions.

No prior AI experience required. Participants will leave with a printed prompt cheat sheet containing 20 ready-to-use prompts they can deploy the Monday after the conference.

Whether you are AI-curious or already experimenting, this session will sharpen your skills and save you hours every week.

Title: The Financially Literate Board: What Trustees Need to Know and What They Should Be Asking

David Hanson, Managing Partner, Winthrop & Associates
david@winthropassociates.com

Date: **April 14th, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

Brief session description:

Strong governance requires more than approving a budget. It requires trustees to understand the financial drivers, risks, and tradeoffs that shape a school's long-term sustainability. This session will equip board members with the essential financial knowledge they need to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities with confidence, including how to read key financial statements, assess operating performance, understand reserves and endowments, evaluate debt and capital decisions, and recognize warning signs before they become crises. Just as important, participants will learn the critical questions trustees should be asking management about enrollment, tuition dependence, compensation, liquidity, financial aid, philanthropy, scenario planning, and long-term sustainability. The goal is not to turn trustees into CFOs, but to help them become more informed, disciplined, and effective stewards of the institution.