



The Emotionally Intelligent Head of School

Mike Murphy, Partner, Jacksonville, FL

There is strong agreement that Heads of Independent Schools and other leaders are facing more pressure than ever to navigate complex environments, partner with employees and clients who are increasingly transactional, manage diverse teams, and achieve results while balancing their own well-being with the well-being of their school communities. Emotional intelligence has become a vital trait for effective leadership.

The emotionally intelligent leader exhibits and develops behaviors that:

- Foster self-knowledge
- Encourage expression
- Strengthen individual and team relationships
- Heighten concern and awareness of others
- Build conflict-resolution and problem-solving skills
- Enhance resilience
- Expand an optimistic outlook

Research using the EQ-i 2.0 model reveals that four key emotional behaviors can predict a leader's level of well-being or happiness. EQ-i 2.0 coaches understand that emotional intelligence can be enhanced when individuals work to balance behaviors where they are strong with those that are less developed or weaker. By doing so, a person can improve their well-being while also becoming a better leader.

The four emotional intelligence behaviors that contribute most to the well-being scale are self-regard, self-actualization, interpersonal relationships, and optimism.

- Self-regard involves having respect and confidence in oneself, including an awareness of both strengths and weaknesses.
- Self-actualization is a commitment to achieving one's full potential and striving for continuous self-improvement.
- Interpersonal relationships are healthy when there is mutual satisfaction and respect in partnerships.
- Optimism is the ability to maintain a positive outlook, even in challenging situations.

Strengthening and balancing these four behaviors often requires a leader to understand how assertiveness and independence are expressed when working with others. Additionally, controlling impulses and learning how to evaluate the environment and emotions of those around us are vital skills. Equally important is the ability to communicate one's feelings clearly and not assume that others can read your thoughts.

If this concept interests you, you may want to consider working with an EQ-i 2.0 coach. A coach can help you set goals that focus on balancing different behaviors, ultimately enhancing your emotional intelligence at work, at home, and in your community.

Schools seeking a new head of school may consider having finalist candidates complete an EQ-i 2.0 assessment or another tool like the Hartman Survey to better understand the qualities that will influence the leader's behavior and potential areas for growth.

Mike's 44-year career in independent schools included 8 years as Headmaster at Pace Academy (GA), and 15 years as Head of School at Shorecrest Preparatory School (FL). He has worked with schools in California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New York, and Texas. Mike is an active volunteer with the Severn Leadership Group (SLG) which is headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland. During his four years with SLG, he has become a mentor, Program Manager and EQi-2.0 coach