

Pathways Benchmarking Survey Results

2018-19

Webinar
April 23, 2019

AISAP

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ASSOCIATION OF
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL ADMISSION
PROFESSIONALS



AISAP's Pathways Research



Salary & Compensation



Staffing & Office Design



Perceptions & Priorities

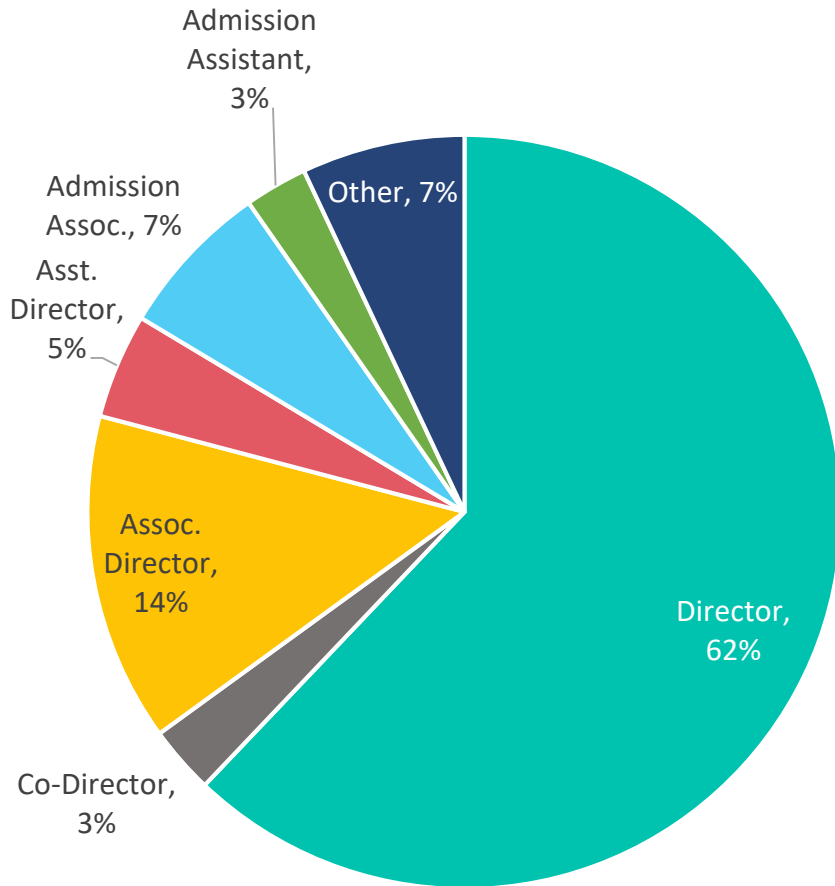


Financial Aid & Marketing



- AISAP's Pathways research initiative is the largest collector and distributor of admission professional information in the industry
- This year's survey carries over last year's redesign and focuses on the professional's experience
 - Peer comparisons including salary, job roles, and office environment broken out by school type and job title
 - *What are your concerns for the industry?*
 - *Where is your career taking you?*
 - *How can AISAP support you?*

Demographics of Survey Respondents



- 554 total respondents
 - Invited via AISAP newsletter
- School demographics:
 - 84% Co-ed schools
 - 75% Day schools
 - 23% Day + Boarding
 - 43% PK/K-12 schools
 - 20% PK/K-8 schools, 19% HS
 - 92% US-based schools



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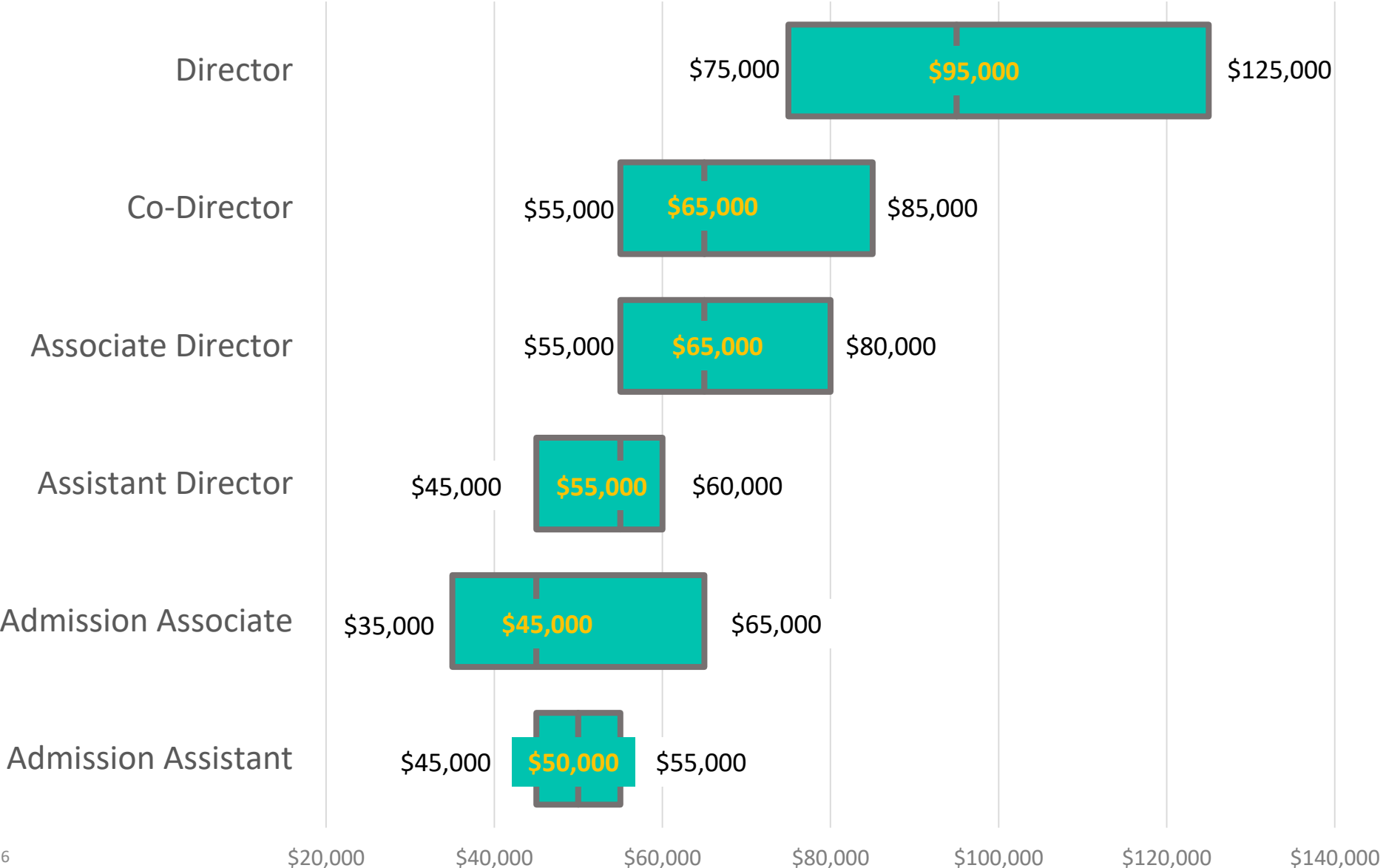
Perceptions & Priorities



Financial Aid & Marketing

Salary by Position Title

25th percentile, median, and 75th percentile (n=335)



Salary by Position Title, by School Type

Median Salary

<i>Position</i>	Elementary School	Middle-High School	High School	PK/K – 8/9	PK/K - 12
Director	\$81,500	\$114,250	\$96,500	\$91,000	\$99,250
Co-Director	-	-	\$65,000^	-	\$73,750
Associate Director	\$55,000^	\$62,500	\$63,000	\$78,250	\$71,000
Assistant Director	\$65,000^	-	\$42,000	-	\$52,750
Admission Associate	-	\$48,250^	\$65,000^	\$45,000^	\$47,500
Admission Assistant	-	\$45,000^	\$55,000^	-	\$50,000

-None available; ^Not significant: less than 3 responses

Director Salary, by School Type

Median Salary

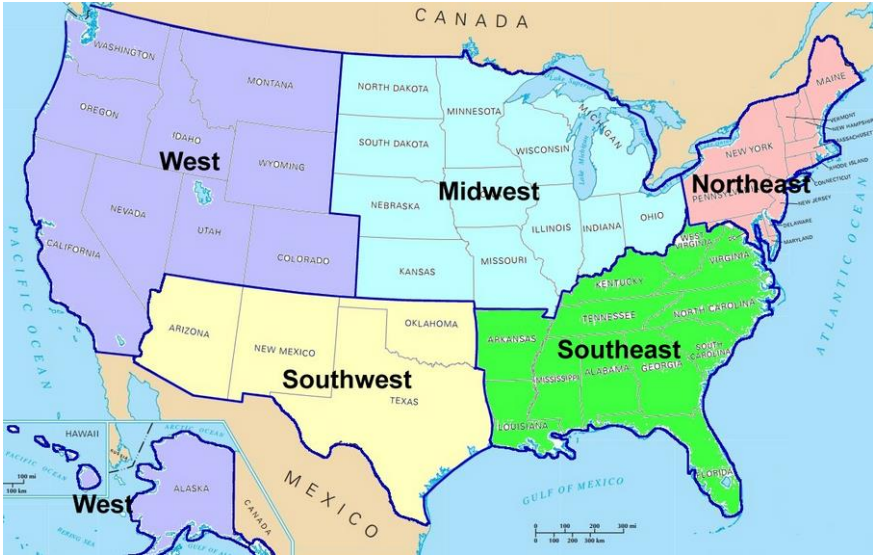
<i>Director Only</i>	Elementary School	Middle-High School	High School	PK/K – 8/9	PK/K - 12
Day School (n=175)	\$81,500	\$113,500	\$94,500	\$91,000	\$95,000
Boarding School (n=7)	-	-	\$110,000	-	-
Day + Boarding School (n=44)	-	\$115,000	\$93,500	-	\$117,000
Girls Only (n=21)	-	\$112,000	\$92,000	\$115,000 [^]	\$113,000
Boys Only (n=14)	\$85,000 [^]	\$155,000 [^]	\$95,000	\$117,500	\$135,000 [^]
Co-ed (n=191)	\$81,000	\$113,000	\$98,000	\$88,000	\$98,250

-None available; [^]Not significant: less than 3 responses

Director Salary by School Type, by Region

Median Salary

<i>Director Only</i>	Elementary School	Middle-High School	High School	PK/K – 8/9	PK/K - 12
Northeast (n=63)	-	\$111,750	\$94,000	\$90,500	\$106,750
Midwest (n=15)	\$65,000^	\$95,000^	\$60,000^	\$60,000	\$106,500
Southeast (n=52)	\$76,750	\$88,000	\$100,000	\$80,500	\$93,250
Southwest (n=11)	-	-	\$65,000^	\$105,000	\$89,250
West (n=50)	\$90,000	\$155,000	\$109,500	\$105,000	\$92,000



-None available; ^Not significant: less than 3 responses

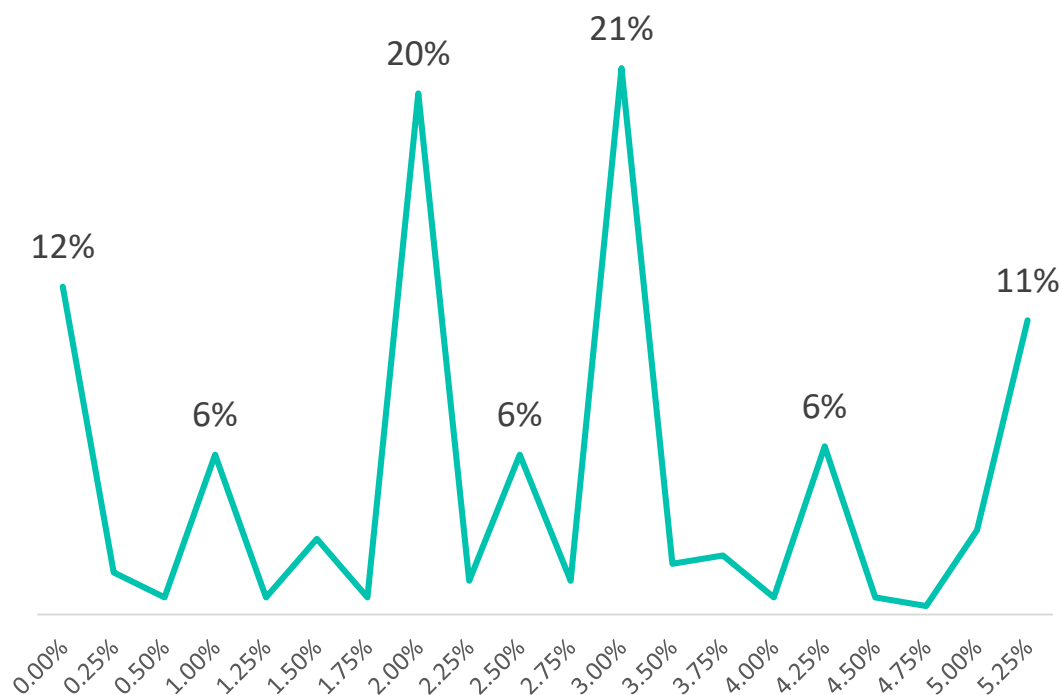
Salary by School Type, by Region

Median Salary, Other Notable Groupings

<i>Region & Position</i>	Elementary School	Middle-High School	High School	PK/K – 8/9	PK/K - 12
Northeast					
Assoc. Dir.	-	-	\$65,000	-	\$81,500
Asst. Dir.	-	-	\$41,500	-	-
Midwest					
Assoc. Dir.	-	-	-	-	\$71,000
Southeast					
Assoc. Dir.	-	-	-	-	\$65,000
Asst. Dir.	-	-	-	-	\$52,500
Admis. Assoc.	-	-	-	-	\$47,500
West					
Assoc. Dir.	-	-	-	-	\$83,250
Admis. Asst.	-	-	-	-	\$51,500

*Southwest's salary sample is too small to populate
-Not available nor significant*

Annual Salary Increase



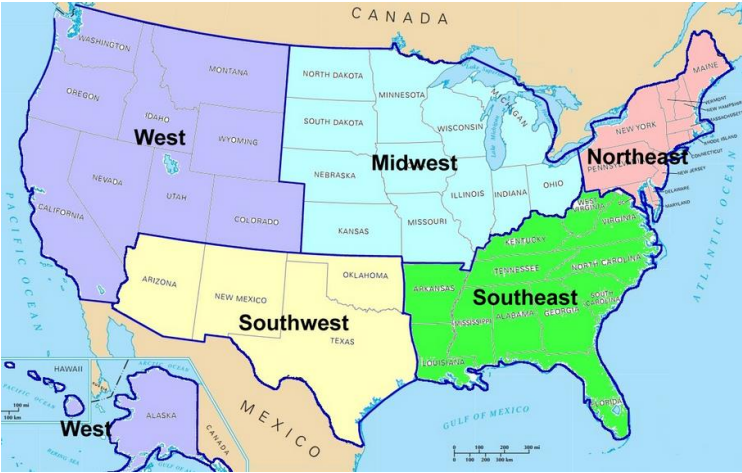
<i>Position</i>	Mean Increase
Director	2.58%
Co-Director	2.42%
Associate Director	2.47%
Assistant Director	2.75%
Admission Associate	1.80%
Admission Assistant	2.56%
Other	2.58%
Average	2.52%

- 49% received a salary increase between 2.0% and 3.0%
 - However, 12% did not receive an increase
- Interestingly, 14% of Directors received no raise this year while 17% received 5.0% or more
- On average, wages increased 2.52% overall this year, compared to 2.28% in 2017-18

Director Annual Salary Increase by School Type, by Region

Median Salary

<i>Director Only</i>	Elementary School	Middle-High School	High School	PK/K – 8/9	PK/K - 12
Northeast (n=60)	-	2.30%	2.64%	2.10%	2.72%
Midwest (n=13)	3.00%^	0.25%^	2.50%^	2.67%	2.15%
Southeast (n=50)	3.42%	2.50%	3.31%	2.08%	1.80%
Southwest (n=11)	-	-	0.00%^	1.58%	1.71%
West (n=49)	3.63%	3.63%	3.89%	3.47%	3.14%



-None available; ^Not significant: less than 3 responses

Additional Compensation

<i>Compensation</i>	Mean Among Those Receiving Benefit	No Benefit Received
Overtime	\$960	96%
Bonus	\$3,050	83%
Additional Duties	\$4,940	84%

- A great majority of admission professionals do not get additional compensation beyond their salaries
 - All totals of “no benefit received” are within 2 percentage points of last year’s results
- Of those receiving compensation through “additional duties,” less than 30% considered themselves faculty members



AISAP's Pathways Research



Salary & Compensation



Staffing & Office Design

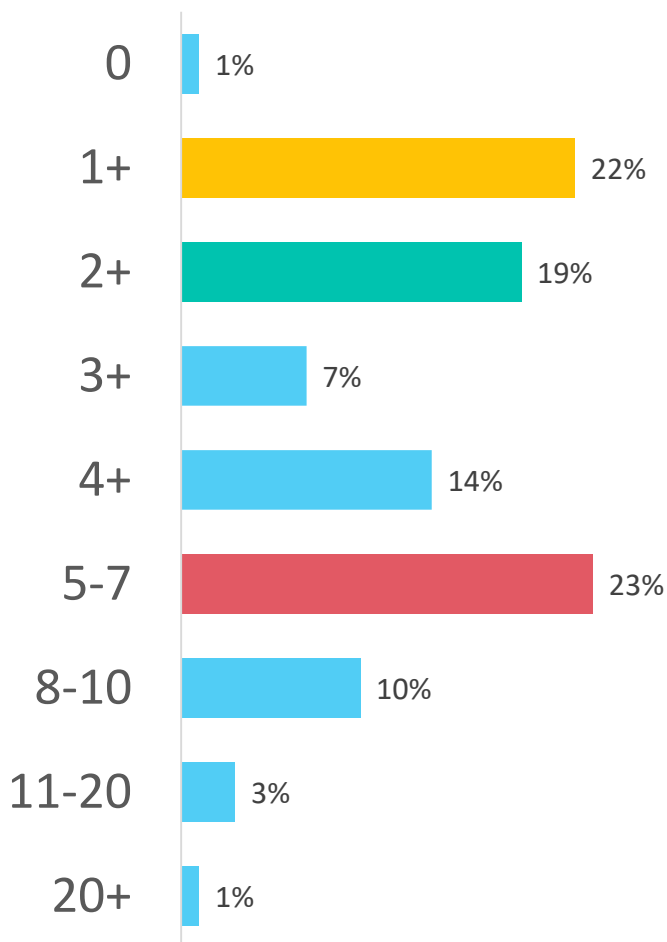


Perceptions & Priorities



Financial Aid & Marketing

Admission Office Size and Makeup



- The most common makeup of offices with 1+ is a Director and a part-time Associate or “Admission Officer”
 - Additionally, these size offices are most common in Elementary and PK/K-8/9 schools
- Offices made up of 2+ employees most often have a Director and full-time Admission Assistant or Associate
 - There is also a model of one full-time employee and multiple part-timers
 - This is the most common size office in PK/K-12 schools
- Office with 5-7 employees typically have a Director, 1-2 Assistant Directors, and multiple Admission Associates and Assistants
 - Boarding schools, especially, have offices at this size, or bigger (70% have at least 5 employees)

Involvement in Different Aspects of Admission Process

Task	Involved, Work Alone	Involved, Collaborate	Not Involved
Analyzing/organizing application data	34%	60%	6%
Working with feeder school representatives	27%	64%	9%
Entering application data	22%	47%	31%
Working with placement consultants	22%	57%	21%
Recruiting visits (including fairs)	20%	76%	4%
Planning strategically in terms of recruitment visits and class make-up	14%	77%	9%
Onboarding new families	10%	86%	5%
Awarding financial aid	8%	69%	23%
Developing admission marketing materials/language	7%	86%	7%
Re-recruitment and re-enrollment (retention efforts)	6%	83%	10%
Making admission decisions	5%	90%	6%
Setting tuition	1%	39%	60%

Directors, are the only admission professionals involved in setting tuition, with 51% of them *collaborating with others*

When awarding financial aid, 41% of Associate Directors And 60% of Assistant Directors at *not involved*

Directors, Associate Directors, and Assistant Directors all are equally involved in *planning strategically*

Only 7% of Directors work alone when making admission decisions

Desired Involvement in Different Aspects of Admission Process

Task	More Involved	No Change	Less Involved
Setting tuition	43%	55%	2%
Re-recruitment and re-enrollment (retention efforts)	26%	69%	5%
Developing admission marketing materials/language	19%	76%	5%
Planning strategically in terms of recruitment visits and class make-up	19%	80%	1%
Awarding financial aid	18%	78%	5%
Working with feeder school representatives	17%	80%	3%
Onboarding new families	13%	76%	12%
Analyzing/organizing application data	12%	80%	8%
Working with placement consultants	10%	85%	5%
Recruiting visits (including fairs)	9%	83%	9%
Making admission decisions	7%	93%	0%
Entering application data	2%	71%	26%

Setting tuition is the task that professionals want to be most involved in, and also the one which the least are involved

Although involvement in *retention efforts* is the second-highest ranking task that professionals want to be involved in, 60% or more of all roles in the office say they want *no change*

On average, 33% of Admission Associates and Assistants want to be more involved in *developing marketing materials* and *onboarding*

Successful Aspects of Admission Office Functions

Processes working very well/well

- Application decision-making process
- Application instrument
- Collaboration with other necessary offices on campus

Processes that can use improvement

- Oversight and implementation of retention efforts
- Recruitment of diverse students (ethnic, socio-economic, etc.)
- Recruitment travel frequency/planning/variety

The two items that Admission professionals identified as “aspirational” tasks are also process that can use improvement: involvement in the retention effort and planning recruitment strategically

Word Association with Admission Work

What terms best describe your feelings of the work your office does?

Highest frequency of terms associated with Admission work

2017-18

1. Welcoming
2. Important
3. Essential
4. Challenging
5. Rewarding

2018-19

1. Welcoming
2. Essential
3. Important
4. Challenging
5. Rewarding

- “I love that Admissions includes the entire community and our work allow us to be creative and innovative.”
- “Our mission is to be the "first face" of the school and convey the warmth, spirit, and culture of the school and adequately prepare families for what life is like at our school and support them through the application and onboarding processes.”
- “Exhausting, but rewarding. No day is ever the same! I get to work with amazing families all the time.”
- “The work we do in our admission office is the foundation for the sustainability of our school.”

Admission Work Frustrations

Admission offices are also struggling with internal roadblocks

- Need more support
 - “[Our office] knows we can be more innovative and strategic - we just need the support to do it.”
 - “We work under a microscope and are frequently micro-managed by leadership. Their requests are often unrealistic (inadequate timing) or inconsistent with industry best practices.”
- Reputation internally is hurting
 - “I believe we do excellent work which is best understood and appreciated by the members of the senior team and less well-grasped by the overall school community.”
 - “As the department responsible for 90% of annual revenue, we are not always recognized as the experts that we truly are.”
 - “I feel that my work is important, but continues to be overshadowed by the CFO and the Advancement office. It seems as though I am mostly viewed as a necessary cog in the wheel.”
- Office is not evolving or innovating
 - “Not everyone in the office is strategic or willing to try new things.”
 - “I love my job! However it is frustrating at times because I can see how it could be so much better, but we are sort of stuck in how things have always been.”



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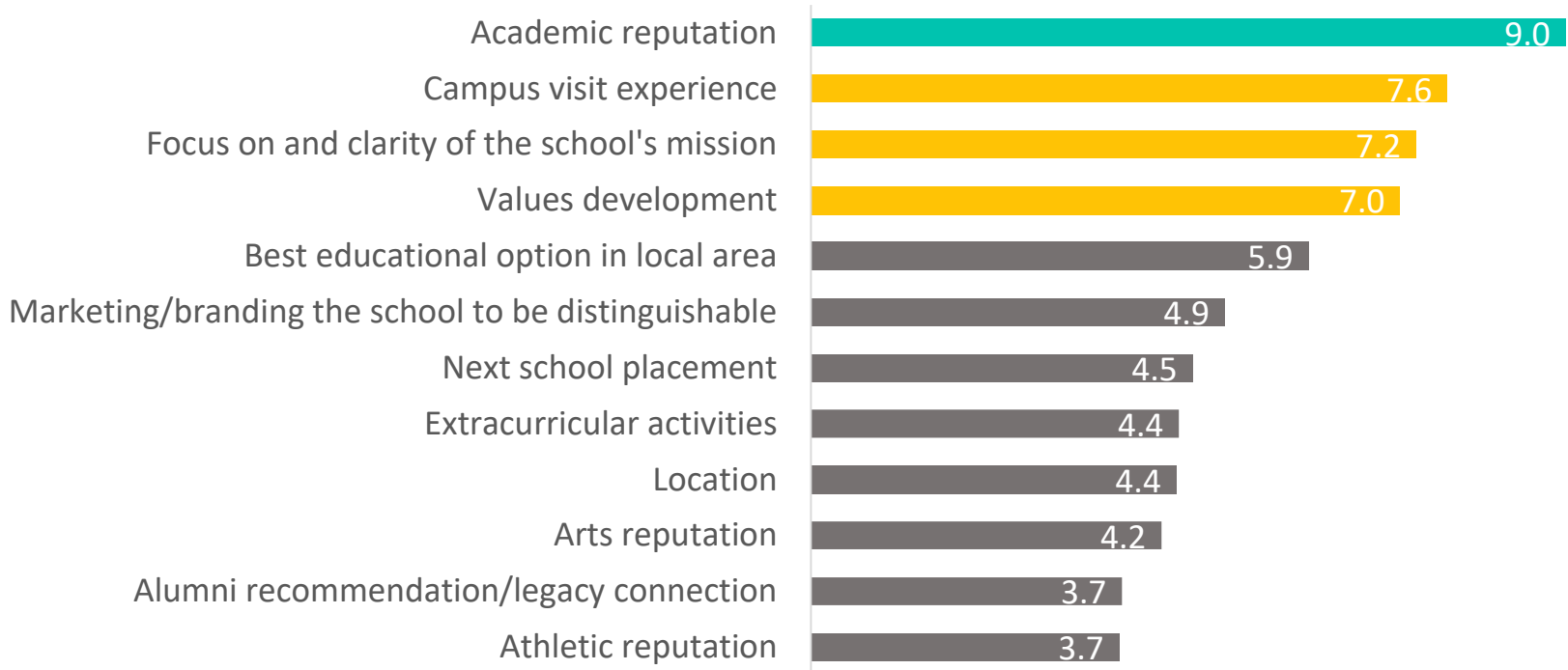
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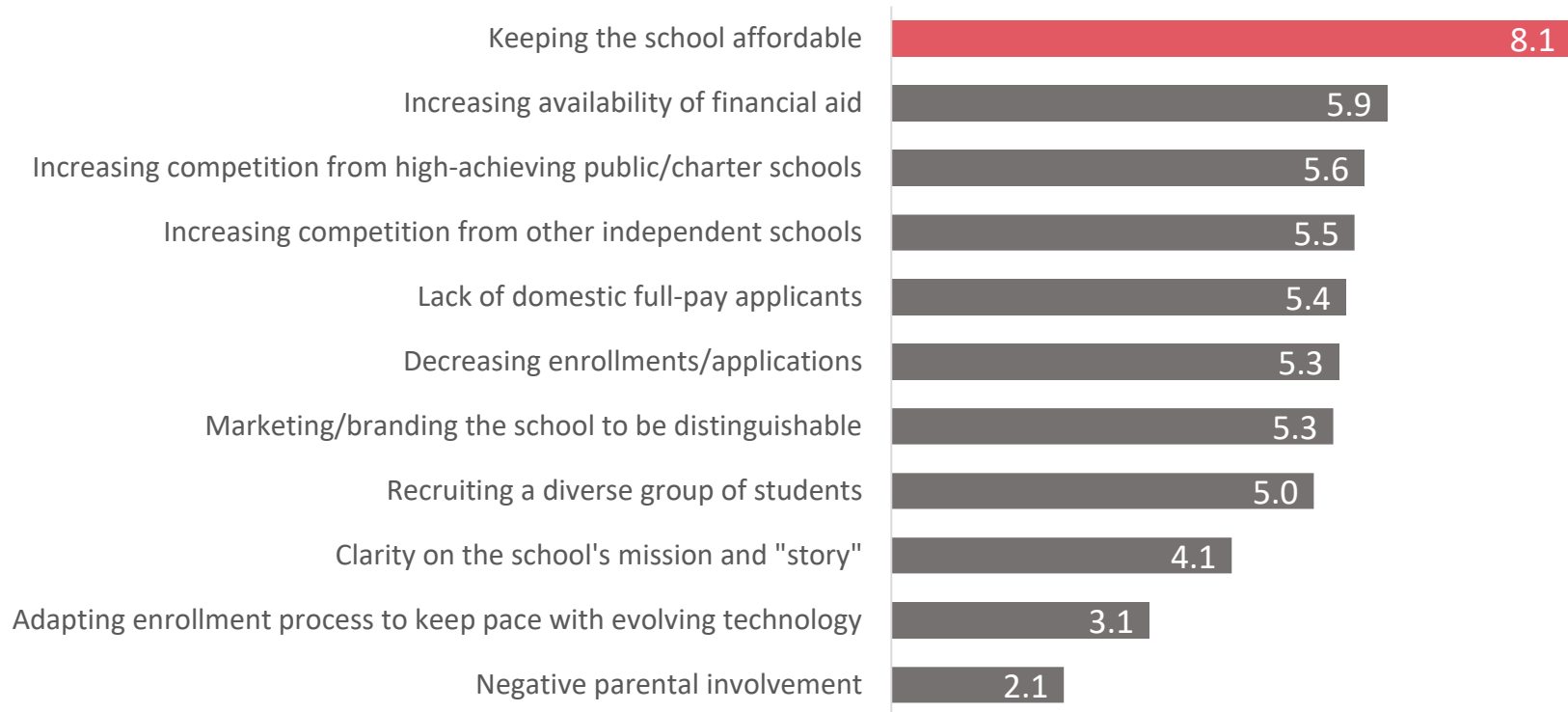
School's Reputation and Perception

Why do families choose to enroll at your school?



- 69% of respondents chose “academic reputation” as a top three reason families attend their school
- Two statistically significant differences:
 - Surprisingly, *alumni recommendation/legacy connection* is more important for elementary schools (6.5) than all other school types (3.5-4.5)
 - *Values development* is also more important for PK-8/9 schools (8.3) than high schools (6.7)

Challenges Facing Admission in Independent Schools



- 72% of respondents listed “keeping the school affordable” as a top three challenge
- No statistical differences among the challenges listed above, when analyzed by school type
- *Additionally, there are no significant differences year-over-year*

How to convince families your school is the right fit?

Compiled from open responses

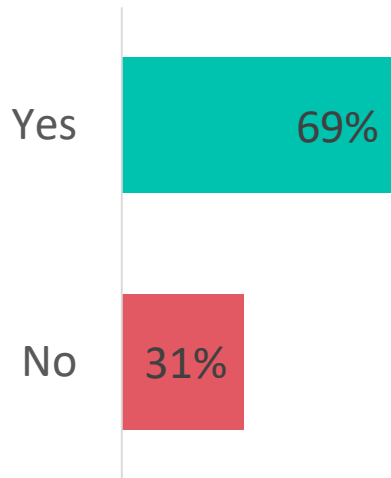
Challenges

- Value proposition
 - Unique educational models, special community, diverse student body, next school/college placement
 - “Competition at the price point, with many families choosing the *good enough*, affordable option”
- Combatting stereotypes
 - Misinformation such as “exclusivity” or boarding school as a military school
 - “We have a reputation...for being more traditional, when we are actually quite progressive”
- Challenging local markets
 - “School located in a depressed day market - young families moving out, retirees moving in - low income”
 - Lack of funds for proper marketing/storytelling or research into new areas

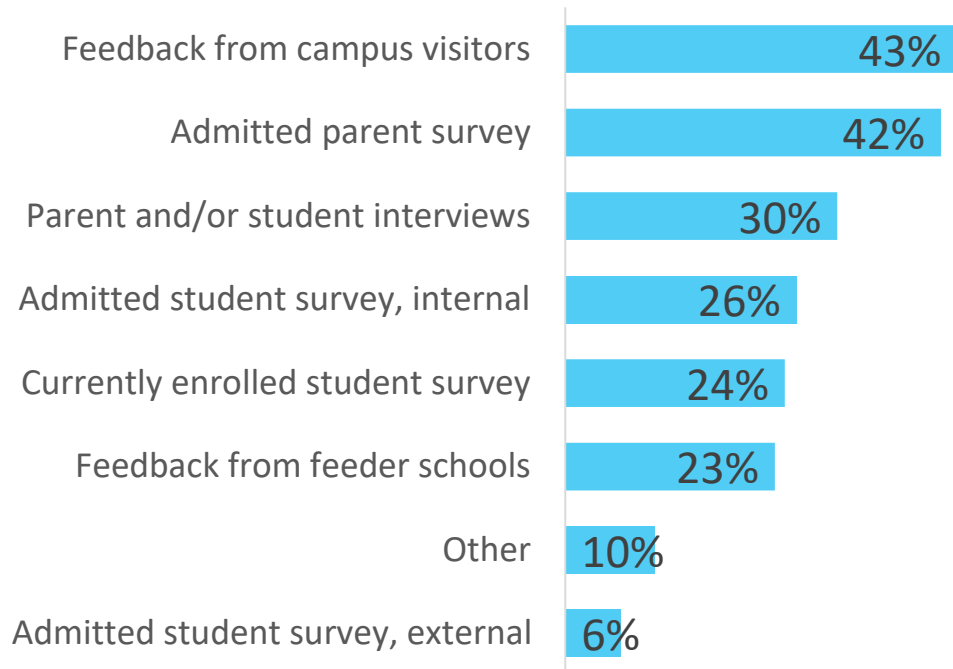
“It seems like families are not willing to make the sacrifices necessary to pay for independent school anymore in [suburban, affluent] communities and/or do not value what independent schools offer.”

How well do you understand your audience?

Do you analyze your admission data and results?



How do you analyze your data in order to determine why students are attracted to your school?



- 45% of elementary schools “have started analyzing data, but have questions in need of answering”
- On the other hand, 23% of high schools state their “analysis is an important and successful part of our process”



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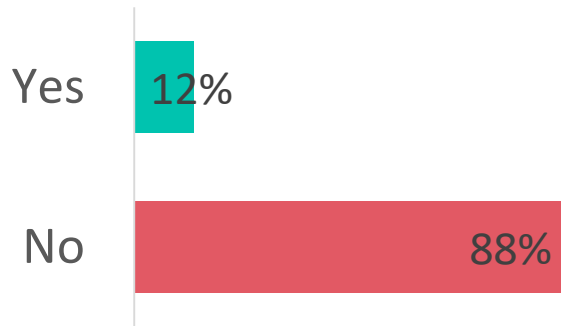
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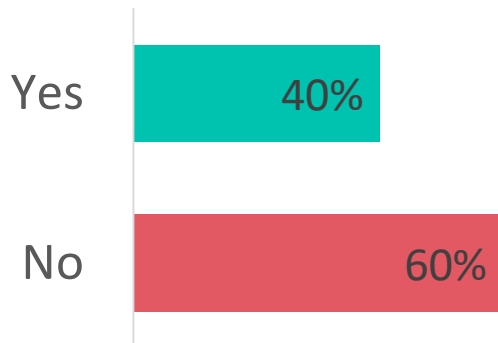
Financial Aid & Marketing

Financial Aid Support

Do you have a dedicated FA office?



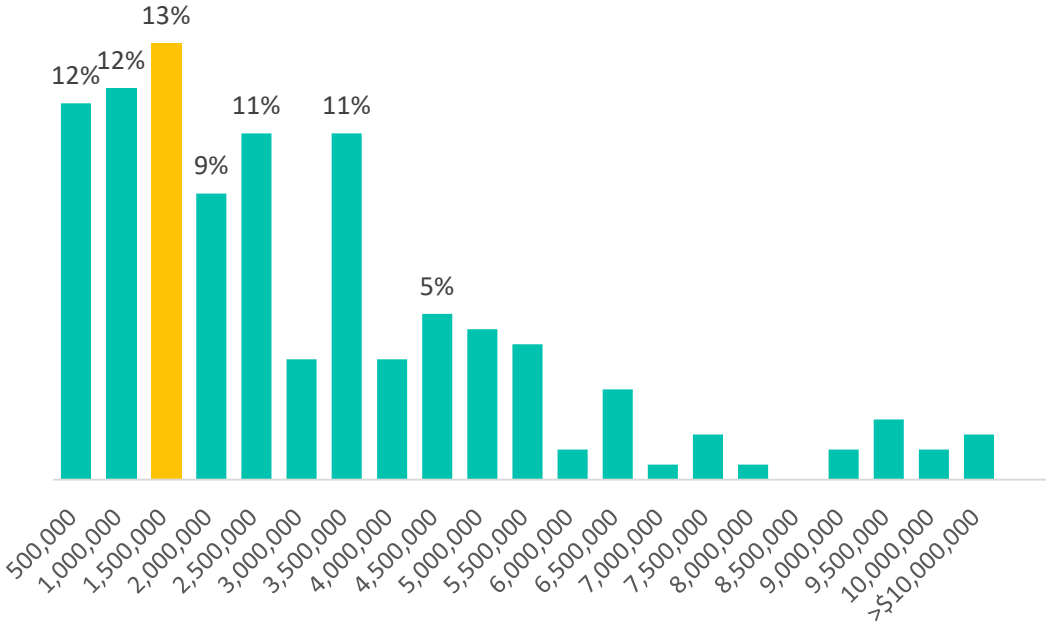
Do you have a dedicated FA Director?



- Those schools that have a dedicated FA office have, on average, an Admission office of 6 FTE
 - Financial Aid offices are most commonly found in PK/K-12 schools and MS+HS
 - FA offices are found equally among day and boarding schools
- Those schools that have a dedicated FA Director have, on average, an Admission office size of over 4 FTE
 - Half of MS+HS and P/K-12 schools have a dedicated FA Director
 - Among PK/K-8/9 schools, only 25% have a FA Director
 - 12% of day schools have a FA Director

Financial Aid Budget

What was your estimated total financial aid budget for the most recent admission cycle?

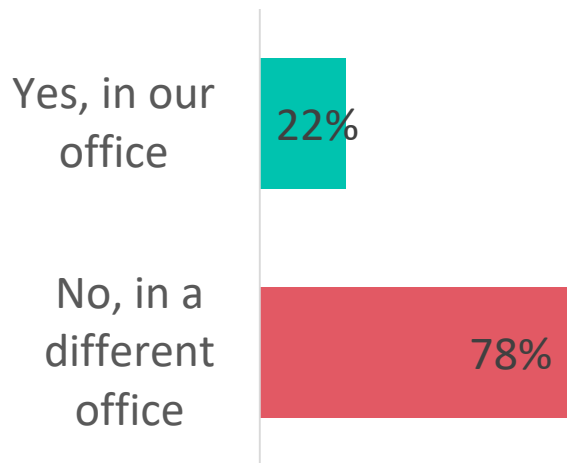


School Type	Mean Financial Aid Budget
High School	\$4,124,975
PK/K – 12	\$3,251,575
Middle-High School	\$2,887,295
Elementary School	\$1,473,970
PK/K – 8/9	\$1,163,655
Average	\$2,807,000

- 45% of schools have an annual financial aid budget between \$500,000 and \$2,500,000
- Schools with a dedicated budget director have an average budget of \$3.8 million
- The average FA budget is up 11% from last year

Admission Marketing Support

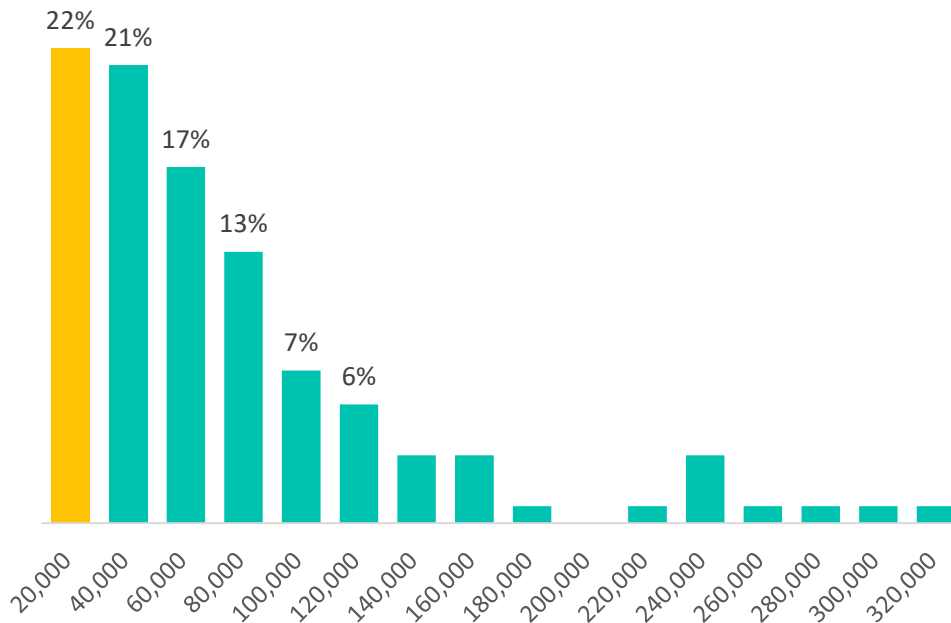
Do you have a dedicated admission marketing and communication person, or is that role under the school's marketing office?



- PK/K-8/9 and PK/K-12 schools have the highest percentages of marketing professionals working in the admission office
- Boarding/day schools are more likely than day schools to have a marketing person in the admission office
- The average admission office size is not a factor in a school having a marketing professional in the admission office

Admission Marketing Budget Process

What was your estimated total admission marketing and communication budget for the most recent admission cycle?



<i>School Type</i>	Mean Admission Marketing Budget
Middle-High School	\$94,175
PK/K – 12	\$73,870
High School	\$60,300
PK/K – 8/9	\$43,750
Elementary School	\$28,100
Average	\$63,600

- 60% of schools have a marketing budget for Admission under \$60,000
- 26% of the budgets are decided by Finance/CFO while the Admission Director is involved in 20% of the time

Takeaways

What have we learned?

- Salaries and benefits
- Work functions and desired change to work functions
 - More involvement in *setting tuition* and *retention*
- Costs rising and competition becoming fierce
 - Concerns about *keeping school affordable*
 - *Competing with public/charter schools*

ALSAP can provide you with the necessary professional development

- How to negotiate your salary
- How to identify and focus on your school's distinctiveness
- How to advocate for additional marketing funds – and what to do with the funds

Pathways research will continue to evolve

- What else are you interested in? Please let us know how to improve this instrument!

For more information about this research and how you can supplement this analysis based on your school's specific interests and traits, please contact:

research@aisap.org



Time for Questions and Answers