



## Instructions and Policies for Using the ISCA Online Forum

*THIS DOCUMENT IS PRIMARILY FOR THE "FIRST-TIME" ONLINE FORUM USER, BUT ALL ISCA MEMBERS ARE URGED TO READ IT ONCE, BECAUSE THE ISCA ONLINE FORUM OPERATES SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY IN SEVERAL RESPECTS FROM OTHER ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUPS.*

### The Basics

**AN ONLINE FORUM** is one of the most useful and efficient tools to enable large groups of people with a common interest or members of an organization such as ISCA to efficiently, speedily, and inexpensively communicate with one another via e-mail in the manner of an open forum. ISCA's greatest asset, the collective wisdom and experience of its membership, current and former Board Chairs, can now be tapped with ease by any member with a problem or question.

While the ISCA web site ([www.ISCAchairs.org](http://www.ISCAchairs.org)) is open to the public, only current ISCA members are privy to the questions, answers, and written discussions as subscribers to the ISCA Online Forum. Where queries or responses are of so sensitive a nature that a member wishes to participate anonymously, ISCA has provided a mechanism for confidential communication (see below).

As a member of ISCA, you are subscribed automatically to the ISCA Online Forum. ISCA uses Gaggles as its hosting platform and you should have received a welcome email from Gaggles with instructions on how to create a profile and modify your user settings. Being a subscriber to the ISCA Online Forum means that when an ISCA member "posts" a question requesting assistance or advice from the ISCA membership by sending an e-mail message to the ISCA list-server ([isca@gaggles.email](mailto:isca@gaggles.email)), the list-server will automatically forward the message to every member of ISCA. Thereafter, all members will receive all e-mail comments or responses to the original query from those members choosing to respond.

**A THREAD**, in list-server parlance, consists of an original query and all responses to it. You know that an e-mail message received from the List-Server is part of a particular thread because the subject line of the e-mail will match that of the original query. For this reason, it is important that the member sending the original query choose with care the half-dozen or so words that will fit in the subject line. Those words should describe (as succinctly as possible) the subject of the query. The words in the subject line will allow a member to follow a particular thread of interest, or to ignore messages that are part of a thread that is not of interest to that member. The ISCA list server will automatically add <ISCA> to the beginning of the SUBJECT line; in that way, before opening an e-mail

message you will know if it has been sent by the ISCA Online Forum.

Individual participation in the Online Forum varies greatly, in a somewhat analogous way to a classroom, where everyone hears all the questions and all the responses, but not everyone necessarily raises a hand to participate.

The ISCA Online Forum will be of greatest value to the ISCA membership if members who have a worthy comment or answer do not hesitate to participate, and conversely, if members do not waste other members' valuable time by posting frivolous or inappropriate queries or responses.

## How to Use the ISCA Online Forum

**Posting a query to the Online Forum:** An e-mail query or question to be posted to the Online Forum should be addressed to: [isca@gaggle.email](mailto:isca@gaggle.email) The "subject" line should be as descriptive of the issue or problem as possible and not longer than a half-dozen or so words. When the message is re-sent by the list-server to all ISCA members, the subject line will be preceded by <ISCA>. In this way, it is easy for members to identify e-mail messages coming from the ISCA Online Forum. The list-server will not accept messages from other than a subscriber, and therefore you must use the e-mail account provided to ISCA with your membership application. All messages sent to the Online Forum should be text-only and without attachments of any kind.

**Responding to a message from the Online Forum:** In your email program, select the "reply" function; doing so in response to an e-mail from the Online Forum should automatically place [list@ISCAchairs.org](mailto:list@ISCAchairs.org) in the address of your e-mail response; otherwise you can do so manually. The line should have the same text as the e-mail you are responding to preceded by "Re:" (this is also handled automatically by most e-mail programs). It is not necessary to 'reply all'; all ISCA members will receive your reply post by just replying as indicated above.

**Viewing archived Online Forum Posts:** Gaggle allows registered users to view archived conversation threads from the Online Forum. ISCA Members need to create a Gaggle account in order to view those archived Online Forum discussions.

## Related Issues Concerning the ISCA Online Forum

**Problems with the Online Forum:** Though we cannot guarantee an immediate response, if you are having a problem sending messages to the Online Forum or have any questions or comments about its use, please send your correspondence to Bethany Di Napoli, Executive Director of ISCA, at [bethany@iscachairs.org](mailto:bethany@iscachairs.org). Gaggle also has a 'help' feature on the [Gaggle website](#)

### Acceptable Use, Privacy and Non-solicitation

ISCA's Online Forum is the most widely and frequently accessed of all of ISCA's product and program offerings. ISCA remains committed to allowing members the opportunity to post and respond to inquiries concerning governance-related topics important to independent schools, all in keeping with the goal of supporting ISCA's mission to empower independent Board Chairs to lead with excellence.

That said, ISCA wants to be conscious and respectful of certain privacy concerns and wants to make sure that matters posed and responded to on the Online Forum are appropriate to ISCA's mission. ISCA does not deem inquiries related to the tuition or compensation practices of a particular independent school to be appropriate subject matter. In addition, ISCA does not allow direct attacks on an individual or group, hate speech, or abusive content, including threats or slurs. It is also inappropriate to use the Online Forum for promotions, advertising or solicitations, including soliciting individuals or groups to take a specific action related to a specific cause or issue.

If you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of a proposed Online Forum posting or response,

please contact Executive Director Bethany DiNapoli at [bethany@iscachairs.org](mailto:bethany@iscachairs.org).

**Responding Directly to a Member "outside" the Online Forum** Generally, reply responses should be made to the Online Forum to be of benefit to all members interested in a particular subject. However, there are circumstances where "sidebar" e-mail conversations should continue outside the Online Forum, such as when the discussion becomes so specific, detailed or tangential to no longer be of value to the entire ISCA membership. Use the member directory to search for the member's email address if you wish to reply directly to the member who posted the query. The member's email is not automatically included in the message unless the member specifically adds it to the body of the email message.

**Making Confidential Queries/Responses** If there are circumstances of such a sensitive nature that the member sending the query wants to remain anonymous or keep the school identity confidential, please send the query directly to Bethany Di Napoli, the Executive Director of ISCA, at [Bethany@iscachairs.org](mailto:Bethany@iscachairs.org). Bethany will then re-send the contents and subject line of the e-mail message to the Online Forum and will indicate that this is being posted anonymously to protect the identity of the member or school because the content is highly sensitive.

## **Important DOs and DO NOTs**

### **DO:**

- Keep the body of your message as short and succinct as possible.
- Respond to the Online Forum if you have the answer to a query or an appropriate comment.
- Limit the use of the Online Forum to subjects appropriate to ISCA

### **DO NOT:**

- Use the Online Forum for promotions, advertising or solicitations of any kind
- Engage in discussions of tuition and compensation, since ISCA members represent competing schools.
- Identify any individuals by name or share personal information.