

*An International Division Member Connection, June 2024*

### Fellow International Educator,

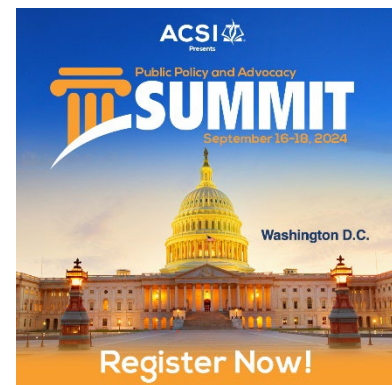
Summers at international schools comprise two distinct shoulder seasons. First is the season of goodbyes. You know what I mean, goodbyes to the graduating seniors, goodbyes to non-returning students, and, of course, goodbyes to dear staff and friends. Following the season of goodbyes, hopefully there is time for some rest and a bit of preparation for the coming year. But then comes the final season of summer, the season of hellos. That season, when new staff start to show up, followed closely by new students and their families. Talk about highs and lows, hills and valleys!

Those shoulder seasons of summer require some emotional know-how, some sensitivity to the grieving process (the goodbyes), and a dose of confident comfort in welcoming new friends (the hellos), all in the span of a few weeks.

Thankfully, our friend [MaDonna Mauer](#) has provided us with some wise counsel to navigate these seasons in three accessible articles targeting various types of people in our international communities. The first one addresses the needs of leavers with [Building a RAF\(G\)T](#). Her second article addresses the needs of the stayers in [Building a Dock: A Resource for the Stayer](#). And finally, MaDonna addresses the newcomers in [LAND, A Resource for Newcomers](#).

I've experienced all three of these realities: RAFT, DOCK, and LAND, and it reminds me of the encouraging words of Psalm 121:7-8: The Lord will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

How are you caring for your leavers, stayers, and newcomers?



Blessings upon you wherever you are,  
Tim for the [international school team](#).

[Tim Shuman, Senior Director, International Division](#)  
[Chealsea Allen, International Schools Activity & Events Coordinator](#)  
[Michael McNabb, Director of Accreditation, International Division](#)  
[Kimberly Park, Accreditation Specialist, International Division](#)  
[Caitlin Taylor, Administrative Assistant, International Division](#)

## Membership Renewal

Membership Renewal is just around the corner! Be on the lookout for a renewal email coming your way this month. To prepare for renewal season, ensure that your account is accurate. Take a moment now to update your enrollment numbers and key school contacts. View the [User Guide](#) for assistance and [contact us](#) if you have any additional questions!

## The Ideal Portrait of a Graduate

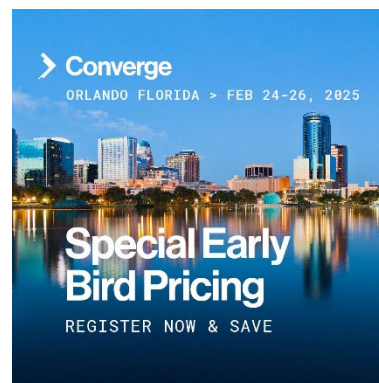
By Dr. Larry Taylor, ACSI President & CEO

It's that time of year once again. As the sun sets on the familiar halls that echo with laughter and locker doors clanging shut, a mix of emotions hangs in the air. High school graduation, a milestone marking the transition from adolescence to adulthood, is an event brimming with nostalgia, anticipation, and the promise of new beginnings.

The significance of this moment in time is undeniable, as it involves looking back over a lifetime so far and anticipating the future. As diplomas are granted, graduates stand on the threshold of a world filled with endless possibilities. The future beckons with unseen adventures, promising new friendships to be forged, new challenges to be overcome, and new dreams to be pursued.

Graduation ceremonies are a testament to the dedication and hard work put forth by each graduate. Christian schools have embraced this opportunity to nurture and guide the students God has entrusted to their care. The hope and goal are that regardless of the length of time—one year or twelve—they have been laying a strong foundation by helping them grow in knowledge of academics and the Bible and mature in their faith and relationship with Jesus Christ.

[Continue reading here.](#)



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## Help Christian Schools in Brazil

**STRONGER TOGETHER**

The state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil was devastated by one of the largest floods in the country's history. Will you help us raise essential funds to support the ACSI schools directly impacted by the disaster? You can make a difference by donating to the [ACSI Crisis Response Fund](#) today.

[2024-25 Events](#)

**Upcoming International Events**

- Register now for the [2024 Job Fair Tour](#) and our [Virtual Job Fair Day](#).
- New price promo is happening now for PFO2Go. Register your incoming hires to [PreField Orientation 2 Go](#) now. [Check out our course FAQs](#).
  - A recent PFO2Go learner wrote, "I would recommend this course to anyone going to an overseas school assignment because it touches on many important issues that affect everyone moving overseas, culture, transition, culture shock, and how to handle the stress that will arise and how to care for yourself."
- **Leaders mark your calendars for the International School Leaders Conference (ISLC) Europe, coming up on 27-30 April 2025.** We are still working on finalizing our location and keynote lineup.
- **Leaders in Latin America** look for an exciting new conference just for you coming up 02-05 April 2025. We will be sending out information soon.
- **ICEC Asia 2025** is coming 26-29 November 2025 – to be held in Malaysia! Details will be forthcoming.
- Check out the ACSI Europe [Student Leadership Conference 2024](#) in Budapest. All are welcome.

## News, Articles, & Other Ideas

- ACSI's most recent posts and resources:
  - [Explicit Phonics in Early Education: Where do I begin?](#) with Suzanne Anderson.
  - [Teacher Well-Being: Not Just an Afterthought](#) with Ginger Hill
  - [Essential Components of Research-based Reading Practices](#) with Dr. June Hetzel
  - In this episode of [Sharpening Kingdom Leaders](#) Dr. Taylor interviews our own Julie Heinsmann, Superintendent at Morrison Academy, Taiwan. (Video)
- Michael and Kim Essenburg care for international Christian schools and love to give you tips, ideas, and things to think about.
  - [When stress actually is a spiritual problem!](#)
  - [What steps have you taken in the past 12 months that actually helped you and your international Christian school colleagues do school improvement better?](#)
  - [Leader, what happens when your workspace is welcoming? What happens when it isn't?](#)
  - [How you can use the working genius model to enhance school improvement](#)
- The analysis in this article about birth rates is something we should all be looking at for the future. [Schools Are in the Baby Business: Maybe No Longer a Growth Industry](#).
- And then there is this study from the US about the students we have enrolled right now: [Students Are Missing School Because They're Too Anxious to Show Up](#). And this from an international school in Switzerland on how to assist senior students during college application time: [How to support anxious students – tips from a former therapist](#).
- When you get a chance to talk about how your international school is different than schools "back home" this article is a good start, plus it has some relevant points for us to discuss. [Five Reasons Instructional Coaching in International Schools Is So Complex](#). For positive take on instructional coaching visit: [To what extent is your international Christian school using full-orbed instructional coaching to help teachers flourish?](#)
- I'm sure that one or two of you need the encouragement found in this article. The distance involved in parenting adult children makes this issue even more critical: [God Understands and Is Compassionate Toward Parents of Prodigal Children](#).
- Are you looking for a large-scale art project for your art students? Maybe [this one](#) is a bit too ambitious, but wow, it's amazing.
- Did you know that France just released [a scratch and sniff postage stamp](#) to celebrate the French baguette? Will someone please send me a postcard from France using this stamp?

## Headship Openings Only

- Cairo Covenant School (starting June 2025), Egypt. [Learn more here.](#)
- Christian Academy of Guatemala. [Learn more here.](#)
- Christian English School, Italy. [Learn more here.](#)
- Christian International School in Hong Kong. [Learn more here.](#)
- Doulos Discovery School, Dominican Republic. [Learn more here.](#)
- Faith International Academy, Philippines. [Learn more here.](#)
- Hillcrest School, Nigeria. [Learn more here.](#)
- Mountainview Christian School, Indonesia. [Learn more here.](#)
- Rain Forest International School, Cameroon. [Learn more here.](#)
- Sahel Academy, Niger. [Learn more here.](#)
- Due to the unusual need we are also listing this non-headship opportunity at Dakar Academy, Senegal. [Experienced Boarding Administrator](#) needed.

If you have a head of school opening coming up, please let me know. Be sure to check our [member school vacancy page](#) as well as the [ACSI Job Board](#). If you are interested in a position at an international school, check out the latest non-USA opportunities [here](#). Check out the latest ACSI [Job Flash](#) that goes out to thousands. Learn how you can get your needs included in the job flash [here](#), scroll down for Job Flash.

## AI in Christian Schools: ACSI, Cardus Survey Unveils Insights into Adoption and Perceptions

By David Harding

AI has been a subject of fascination for many years, but its potential uses have gained considerable attention since the introduction of ChatGPT in November 2022. This significant milestone has shed light on the innovative possibilities of AI, especially in the K–12 education field. To better comprehend this shift, the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Cardus conducted a survey in the fall of 2023 to evaluate the utilization and perspectives of AI among its member schools. The results of this survey were jointly published in a [report](#) by ACSI and Cardus (Swaner and Djita 2024).

The survey had a clear objective of understanding the AI policies and instructional methods employed in Christian schools. It delved into the ways educators incorporate AI in their teaching and learning processes, while also

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## Maximize Your Membership



Watch this month's [Maximize Your Membership](#) and join

## Sevenstar's Flexibility Allows Families and Students to Thrive in New Ways

By Josh Worden

*Some of the names in this article have been changed at the request of the individuals referenced*

Call it a coincidence, or maybe it was much more. Robbie and Linsey Fuller moved from Oregon to China in 2016 for a new job, unrelated to how they had put their son Max in Chinese preschool the previous three years.

“The nearby Chinese preschool was the same price as daycare and he might as well learn Chinese,” Linsey said. “We had no plans at that point to move to China. By the time we arrived, Max spoke conversational Chinese and was our little translator.”

That wasn't the only godsend. After trying multiple school options in China, the Fullers began using Sevenstar Academy, giving their two children, Max (now in eighth grade) and Maddie (fifth grade), an online, Christ-centered education



exploring their thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of AI. Notable discoveries from the survey encompassed:

#### **AI Utilization in Education**

Approximately one-third of Christian school educators—both leaders and teachers—reported that their schools employed AI in educational settings.

ACSI's Public Policy and Legal Affairs team as they go over important information that is going on at the state level and in Washington, D.C. They also give information on LDRP and the upcoming PPLA Summit. Previously recorded **Maximize Your Membership** webinars are available at our [website](#).

at an affordable price.

“When I started them on ACSI’s Sevenstar curriculum, it was for sure higher level than the international school here, which is very expensive,” Linsey said. “My favorite part is the independence it instills in the kids. They need to make their own schedule and use their time wisely.”

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## **The Ideal Portrait of a Graduate Continued**

An individual's character, work ethic, and academic abilities are not fully developed at the age of 18, and maturity is a lifelong process. However, there are fundamental training strategies that can enhance the likelihood of a child adopting a desired belief system, cultivating effective learning habits, and embodying Christ-like character traits. While parents are the primary influencers in shaping these qualities, schools also play a significant role in their development.

Every graduating senior is a unique creation in the image of God, yet schools aim to instill certain desired outcomes in all of them. During my time as head of school at Prestonwood Christian Academy in Texas, we prayerfully aspired for our graduating seniors to demonstrate the foundational desired outcomes listed below:

1. Reverence for God is the beginning point of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). Without reverence and recognition of God, then education is essentially secular. Learning to think and discern (Hebrews 5:14) as a mature believer in Christ is undergirded by authentic respect and love for our Lord.

2. An Eternal Perspective is interdependent with reverence. This type of perspective gives us purpose in our work, and it develops a strong work ethic because we know and understand that we are working to please and honor God (Colossians 3:23). The Latin phrase on our school crest, *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (for God's greater glory), frames our motives.

3. Humility is then cultivated when one recognizes that our lives are about Him; we are a 'serving-as-His' leader. Recognizing that God has bestowed intellect, talents, and gifts upon us takes the focus off us and rightfully places it on our Lord. This compels us to demonstrate the love and attitude of Jesus Christ to all people, characterized by selflessness, servanthood (Philippians 2:2–11), and a lifestyle of obedience to seeking first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

4. The process of learning, or scholarship, is conditioned by reverence, eternal perspective, and humility. The Christian liberal arts environment nurtures the mind to become eager to learn, think, and analyze. All knowledge and every academic discipline are appreciated, and not for a 'grade' per se, but because of the very process of learning—scholastic excellence becomes a commitment to discipline the mind. Using our mind to not only magnify God but to serve as His ambassador in areas of law, business, medicine, engineering, education, ministry, and any assignment God calls us to, is an act of obedience and reverence. The development of a biblical worldview is the fruit of this process.

5. Rigor, high expectations, and accountability complement the entire learning environment as students grow accustomed to striving for excellence. Problem-solving, thinking, critical analysis, and synthesis strengthen the mind and become natural thought processes. The apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthians to strengthen their minds (2 Corinthians 10:5), including all systems of philosophy, opinions, and powers of reason being subject to the Word of God. A culture of rigor serves as a catalyst to pursue excellence in every area of one's life.

Schools, savor every moment of this celebration as we witness God's reflection in the eyes of each graduating senior. The memories of high school will forever hold a special place in their hearts. To the graduates: may your futures be as bright as your spirits, and may you always seek to glorify your Heavenly Father on whatever path He leads you!

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## AI in Christian Schools Continued

This usage was most prevalent in high school grades. However, a majority of educators expressed low levels of familiarity, usage, and confidence in AI technology.

### Primary AI Applications

Among the schools incorporating AI, the top four applications were:

1. Automated Tasks: AI was used to generate essay prompts, lesson plan ideas, and other automated tasks to streamline administrative processes.
2. New Learning Tools: AI-powered educational games and interactive tools were integrated to enhance student engagement and learning experiences.
3. Adaptive Learning: AI systems provided students with customized learning materials, adjusting the difficulty based on individual performance.
4. Individualized Learning: AI-powered tutoring programs offered personalized instruction tailored to each student's needs.

### Perceived Benefits and Concerns

Many educators believed that AI could save time and effort, potentially leading to more effective curriculum development and lesson planning. However, they also voiced significant concerns:

1. Integrity: The potential for AI to facilitate cheating among students.
2. Learning Impact: Fears that reliance on AI might hinder the development of creative and critical thinking skills.
3. Safety: Worries about the risks of hacking and inappropriate monitoring.

4. Faith Development: Concerns about the impact of AI on students' spiritual growth and adherence to Christian values.

### **Demographics of Early AI Adopters**

The survey revealed that early adopters of AI in Christian schools were typically located in urban areas and were schools with missional admissions policies. In contrast to covenantal schools, these schools do not require parents to attend church or sign a statement of faith. Additionally, school leaders generally exhibited a more favorable attitude towards AI compared to teachers.

### **Theological and Educational Considerations**

Christian schools possess distinct missions that are rooted in their theological beliefs and educational principles. These factors influence their decision-making process when it comes to embracing AI technologies. The report emphasizes the significance of fostering open and collaborative conversations within the school community to thoroughly examine the potential benefits and obstacles of AI. By engaging in such discussions, Christian schools can guarantee that the integration of AI aligns harmoniously with their core missions and values.

### **Conclusion and Future Directions**

The ACSI report concludes with suggested discussion prompts to facilitate conversations among educators, administrators, and stakeholders. These prompts aim to address the complex interplay between AI technology and the distinctive educational and theological goals of Christian schools. As AI continues to evolve, ongoing reflection and dialogue will be essential in navigating its integration into the educational landscape, ensuring it serves to enhance, rather than compromise, the mission of Christian education.

### **Reference**

Swaner, Lynn E., and Rian Djita. "Navigating AI in Christian Schools." Cardus, 2024.  
<https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/navigating-ai-in-christian-schools/>.

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## **Sevenstar's Flexibility Allows Families and Students to Thrive in New Ways Continued**

Students like Max can take classes ahead of schedule if they're able, such as his high-school-level Chinese class. Plus, he can eventually earn a U.S. high school diploma even while in China. "If they decide to go to college, they will be very prepared," Linsey said.

Since Robbie gets Chinese holidays off from work while the kids get American holidays off, they travel often. Sevenstar allows them to start and stop school when they need to.

"It doesn't have to happen on a western timeline or Chinese timeline, which is very helpful for us," Linsey said. "We're like weird unicorns that don't fit in either system."

Sevenstar isn't just for families living overseas. As a high school sophomore in Texas, Jack Lewis trains rigorously in the hopes of becoming a Division-I collegiate hockey player and one day making the National Hockey League. He typically trains four hours per day, six days a week, with competitions on the road on weekends.

Balancing school and hockey was difficult, so Jack started using Sevenstar in August of 2023.

"It's a lot more flexible than normal school," Jack said. "Before, I'd be booked from 8 a.m. to 2:30. Now, I can get on the ice at 12 if I wanted to."

"A huge advantage of Sevenstar is to ensure his schedule is designed to get enough sleep," his mom, Lisa, added. "Rinks are spread out, plus we travel out of state, so often we are home late at night. Jack counts eight to nine hours and sets his alarm. In bed at midnight? He'll likely set the alarm for 9 a.m. and get his school day started."

Sevenstar has an AP and Dual Credit program, which Jack intends to use to get college credit while in high school.

"We are grateful for a God-focused curriculum," Lisa said. "I did not grow up in a home where we attended church, so I am particularly interested in following along with his apologetics course."

The same was true for Austin Green, another high schooler using Sevenstar who has also taken an apologetics class.

"He's brought things up with us that he wouldn't have if he was going to public school," his mother, Jan, said.

Austin moved with his family 13 years ago onto a military base in Japan due to his father's job and initially attended a public school on the base. He took one Sevenstar class in seventh grade and eventually decided to go full-time.

"The public school is not very high-level, and it was going to affect my college," Austin said. "Sevenstar had higher courses that I needed to take in order to be ready for college."

Austin plans on attending college in America next year. He has visited five universities with the hopes of studying to become an athletic trainer.

"The private school options were financially way out of reach," Jan said. "Sevenstar met our need financially, academically, and had flexibility for a sport team."

Austin was able to participate on a soccer team while taking classes through Sevenstar. Sometimes, he wouldn't return home until late or spend an entire weekend at a tournament and would need flexibility to do his coursework. Sevenstar allows a 14-day window to complete assignments after the due date, so Austin could focus on doing his homework at a reasonable pace.

"Sevenstar and the 14-day grace period allowed him to play the sport and get enough sleep without having to worry about getting schoolwork done," Jan said.

"The grace period really helped me when I've been sick or not understanding my classes," Austin added.

Even though Sevenstar is online, the Green family has gotten the responsiveness they've needed. "Sevenstar is really helpful when you have questions," Jan said. "You can get ahold of people, and they offer suggestions and help."

For more information about Sevenstar Academy, please visit the [website](#).