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An International Division Member Connection, August 2025

Fellow International Educator,

Some years ago, around this time of year, during one of our division prayer meetings, my former teammate, Tim Thompson, prayed, “Lord, please meet the need of the hundreds, if not thousands, of teacher slots to be filled in our international Christian schools for the coming year.” That phrase, “hundreds, if not thousands,” stuck in my mind, and after our prayer time, I returned to my office wondering, “Is Tim right? Could it be that many?”

We know from first-hand experience that one of the most significant needs our international schools have is for teacher recruitment. Recognizing that this is an ongoing necessity year after year, we have assembled a few resources: eight free job posts annually on the [ACSI career center](#) job board, our annual [job fair tour](#), our [virtual job fair](#), and a collection of [fresh ideas for recruiters](#). Expat teacher turnover is a reality in international schools worldwide. Depending on the size, some schools will recruit up to thirty staff members for the new school year, while others will recruit fewer, but every school has a need.

When Tim prayed, there were 180 international schools in our membership; based on my understanding of the need, I estimated that, on average, each school would recruit five new teachers. That totals 900 teachers needed! Tim was very close to accurate in his prayer. Today, due to some school consolidations, closures, and transfers, we count 163



member schools. Using the same per-school average, that's 815 teachers—still hard for my human understanding to fathom. Thankfully, we have a big God.

There is a passage in the book of Matthew that I've called "The Recruiter's Prayer." It's found in chapter 9, verses 35 to 38. In it, Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." We are praying with you and for your staffing needs. We believe in what you are doing, and we believe that God will help fill the need.

Speaking of staffing, after prayer and a thorough search, we are pleased to announce that [Dr. Angela Patterson](#) joins our team this week as the **Incoming Senior Director for the International School Division**. Dr. Patterson comes to us with a wealth of international schooling experience, and we are looking forward to her contribution and leadership. The directorship will officially pass to Angela at a ceremony during [ICEC Asia](#) on the campus of Dalat International School, Penang, Malaysia. Please join us if you are able.

Blessings to you wherever you are in the world,

Tim, for the [international school team](#)

[Tim Shuman, Senior Director, International School Division](#)

[Angela Patterson, Incoming Senior Director, International School Division](#)

[Chealsea Allen, International Schools Activity & Events Coordinator](#)

[Michael McNabb, Director of Accreditation, International School Division](#)

[Kimberly Park, Accreditation Specialist, International School Division](#)

[Caitlin Taylor, Administrative Assistant, International School Division](#)



Quarter 3, 2025



Watch the video above to see an update from ACSI President & CEO, Dr. Larry Taylor. Hear exciting updates on new professional development opportunities and strategic alliances. We are excited for all God is doing in and through the ACSI community!

Upcoming International Events ➤

- [PFO2Go](#) is in full swing, with new staff at international schools signing up before the school year starts. Sign up your incoming staff now to ensure a smooth start. Read some of our course [reviews](#).
- The 2025 [Job Fair Tour](#) registration is open. Join our teacher recruitment fair at Liberty University, Dallas Baptist University, and Grand Canyon University from 28 October to 4 November.
- The [2025 Virtual Job Fair registration](#) is open for recruiters. Join us on 9 December 2025.
- Teachers and Leaders in Latin America, take a look at the exciting plans for the [ABI Conference](#) coming up on 12-15 November in the Dominican Republic. You do not want to miss this first-of-its-kind gathering. [Dr. Jon Eckert](#), of Baylor University, is our featured speaker. Be sure to check out the list of other presenters. Come and meet Dr. Angela Patterson.
- Approximately 150 delegates have already registered for [ICEC Asia 2025](#). Join us from 26 to 29 November, on the seaside campus of Dalat International School. We've secured special conference rates at [Flamingo By the Beach Hotel](#), a short walk from Dalat's front gates. We are delighted to announce [Dr. David I. Smith](#) from Calvin University as our featured keynote speaker. Our pre-conference courses will also enhance your experience. We are also accepting your workshop submissions [here](#). Come and meet Dr. Angela Patterson.
- [The International School Leaders Conference \(ISLC\)](#) is on the horizon, just nine months away. We are returning to beautiful Dubrovnik, Croatia. Dates are 26-28

April 2026. Registration is not open just yet, but you can visit the event webpage to learn more. [Dr. Paul Matthews](#), from myteacheraide.com is joining us.

- SAVE THE DATES:
 - 17-20 March 2027. International Christian Educator Conference Europe. Prague, CZ
 - 17-20 November 2027. International Christian Educator Conference Asia. Tentative: Chiang Mai, Thailand

News, Articles, & Other Ideas ➤

- ACSI's most recent posts and resources:
 - It's your turn! ACSI is always on the lookout for inspirational stories about Christian schools around the world. Each school has a story to tell... and we want to share yours on our platforms. Please share any encouraging ways God is impacting your school community. This could include student leadership opportunities, outreach events, specialized programs, fundraisers, prayer walks... the options are endless. [Tell us about your school!](#) Check out recent school stories [here](#).
 - [Becoming a Truth-Seeker: Reimagining AI through the Big Story of Scripture](#) with Dr. Dave Mulder.
 - [A Christian Imagination for AI: Scripture, Screens, and the Shape of Our Souls](#) with Dr. Dave Mulder.
 - [Teaching Christianly: Exploring Christian School Teachers' Insights](#) with Francis Ben and Rian R. Djita.
 - [Creating a Total Rewards Philosophy](#) with Chris Loncar
 - Check out ACSI's [Student Leadership and Learning](#) events that your international school students can participate in virtually. [See those events here](#).
- [Michael and Kim Essenburg](#) care for international Christian schools and love to share flourishing tips and ideas with you.
 - [Leaders, how can you get the feedback you need to continue growing? \(Hint: Use AI!\)](#)
 - [How can key deliverables help you know what "done" looks like for your school improvement goal?](#)

- [How can you help your colleagues seek to holistically flourish in Jesus?](#)
- [Harold Klassen](#), TeachBeyond, has written a helpful book entitled [The Visual Valet](#), a kind of visual organizer, to help Christian teachers wisely apply biblical integration in the classroom.
- [Global Student Solutions](#) supports international schools with cybersecurity, technology strategy, and college and career guidance. Their recently published International School Cybersecurity Threat Analysis is available now. [Learn more about GSS here.](#)
- Are you thinking about starting a journal? This article has some fresh ideas: [Three Helpful Instructions on Keeping a Journal.](#)
- Have you seen the free Biblical Worldview and Integration courses that Grand Canyon University offers? [Wow, check it out.](#)
- How [food self-sufficient](#) is your current country of residence? My passport country doesn't make the list of the top 50 most food self-sufficient.
- Are you hearing the English word "Y'all" in your international community? According to the article, [Y'all, we need to talk about 'y'all'](#), its usage is on the rise. I'm not sure this is a good idea, y'all.

Head of School Openings Only ➤

- Bingham Academy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. [Learn more here.](#)
- Christian English School of Torino, Italy. [Learn more here.](#)
- First Baptist Christian School, Cayman Islands. [Learn more here.](#)
- Grace International School, Bangladesh. [Learn more here.](#)
- Hillcrest International School, Indonesia. [Learn more here.](#)
- Hope Academy, Central Asia. [Learn more here.](#)
- International Academy of St. Petersburg, Russia. [Learn more here.](#)
- Lighthouse Primary and Secondary School, Mauritius. [Learn more here.](#)
- Mountainview Christian School, Indonesia. [Learn more here.](#)
- Oaxaca Christian School, Mexico. [Learn more here.](#)

If you have an opening for a head of school position, please let me know. Check our [member school vacancy page](#) and the [ACSI Career Center](#). If you are interested in a position at an international school, check out the latest non-USA opportunities [here](#). If you

need help and ideas for how to use your Career Center benefit, check out our [ACSI Career Center Employer Manual](#).

Dr. Angela Patterson: Coming Full Circle with ACSI

By Josh Worden

ACSI popped up on Dr. Angela Patterson's radar several times before she was hired as ACSI's Incoming Senior Director for International Schools; she'll begin that position in August. Patterson will overlap in her new role from August through December with current Senior Director Tim Shuman, who is retiring after 15 years of service with ACSI.

Patterson's history with ACSI dates to 2002, when she participated in the Third Culture Kid Pre-Field Orientation, now known as [PFO2Go](#). That orientation helped her transition to her new role as a fourth-grade teacher at an international school in China. She eventually spent 21 years in China in various teaching and leadership roles.

"I hadn't really been aware of Christian education until I prepared to move abroad," she said. "I think the pre-field orientation is one of the

Gut-Wrenching and Glorious: The Hard Work of the High Calling for Christian Educators

By Dr. Chris Hobbs, Head of
School at Indian Rocks
Christian School

George Bernard Shaw, the sharp and provocative playwright of the 19th and 20th centuries, once wrote:

"This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

That's a provocative statement. But at its core there is a truth worth considering: there's joy in being used for a great purpose.

As Christian educators, we are part of something mighty. Yet, in today's world, we often hear more about balance, boundaries, and avoiding burnout. These are important conversations, but they must not eclipse a foundational truth: God

GRAACE Leadership Summit Unites Christian School Leaders to Renew Vision and Build Thriving, Mission-Aligned Communities

Christian school leaders from across the country gathered in Beaufort, South Carolina, on June 22–24 for the GRAACE Leadership Summit—an event designed to refresh, refocus, and reimagine leadership in service to students from GRAACE (God-honoring, Responsive, Accessible, Affordable, Culturally-engaged, Excellent) populations.

The summit offered professional development and provided a solemn space for reflection and strategic collaboration, anchored in the rich spiritual and historical legacy of the Lowcountry. From Harriet Tubman's courageous efforts during the Port Royal Experiment to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership at nearby Penn Center, the setting underscored the summit's deeper mission: connecting the work of Christian

greatest things ACSI does to prepare monocultural individuals to go abroad.”

The orientation wasn’t her only touch point with ACSI. Later in 2002, she attended her first [International Christian Educators Conference](#) in Penang, Malaysia.

The next year, she became the Accreditation Coordinator at her school. Because her school was in China, they were unable to have ACSI accreditation, but that didn’t stop Patterson from getting help from ACSI.

[Continue reading here.](#)

designed us for meaningful, even demanding, work.

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”
– Genesis 2:15

Before the fall, work was part of God’s perfect creation. The Hebrew word for “work” (abad) means to serve and cultivate. The word for “keep” (shamar) speaks to guarding and stewarding.

[Continue reading here.](#)

education to the enduring call of justice and kingdom service.

Day One: Inspiration and Reflection

The summit opened with a focus on personal and spiritual renewal. Attendees explored Beaufort’s historical landscape and participated in guided conversations that linked past movements of justice to their current work. Time was set aside for reflection and mission alignment, as leaders considered how they might follow in the footsteps of transformative figures like Tubman and King in their own school communities.

[Continue reading here.](#)



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Dr. Angela Patteson: Coming Full Circle with ACSI Continued

“I downloaded all the ACSI documents to make sure we were meeting those standards for biblical worldview,” she said. “Even though we were going through an external accreditation process, I wanted to hit those marks internally.”

Patterson used ACSI resources as she developed her school’s curriculum, helped teachers gain ACSI teacher certification if they didn’t have an education degree, and pulled from [ACSI’s research efforts](#) as she completed her master’s and doctoral work.

Now, Patterson will serve in international education in a different format, having returned to the United States in 2023 to be closer to family.

“I didn’t know if the chapter of my international school career was closed, but I waited on God’s timing, and by waiting, this position became available,” Patterson said. “I’m incredibly excited.”

ACSI’s International School Division comprises approximately 170 international Christian schools that serve 47,000 students across 70 countries worldwide. International schools typically offer a Western-style education in the English language, resulting in a high school diploma that is recognized and accepted at universities and colleges worldwide.

In her role leading the International School Division, Patterson intends to knit different schools and educators together in the movement of global Christian education.

“I am naturally a connector of people and content,” she said. “When I have a conversation with a head of school, I try to connect them with someone else doing something similar.”

Patterson also wants to not only help international schools better achieve their mission but also expand their impact beyond their own walls.

“I want to help international schools have a vision for national Christian education where they live,” Patterson said. “If they have teachers on their campus who are nationals and believers, and who have a heart for their own country, how do we help them learn, grow, and multiply?”

“I’m excited that Dr. Patterson is joining ACSI Global to be the next Senior Director of the International School Division,” Shuman said. “Her two decades of experience in key leadership positions in a large international school system will be an incredible asset to the division in the years ahead.”

The formal transfer of the Senior Director title, role, and responsibilities will take place in November 2025 during a special ceremony at the International Christian Educator Conference (ICEC Asia) in Penang, Malaysia, held on the campus of Dalat International School.

Gut-Wrenching and Glorious Continued

From the beginning, humankind was created to nurture and advance God’s creation to its fullest potential. Tim Keller wrote:

“Whenever we bring order out of chaos, draw out creative potential, and elaborate and unfold creation beyond where it was when we found it, we are following God’s pattern of creative cultural development.”

Leaning Into The Calling

“Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might.” – Ecclesiastes 9:10

The word “might” implies strength, resolve, and wholehearted effort. As we enter a new school year, let’s not shrink back from the hard work ahead, but embrace it as part of God’s calling. The demands of Christian education are real, but they’re also rich with purpose. Hard work, the kind that stretches and exhausts us, is part of God’s will for our lives.

The Testimony of Our Work

The founder of the school I lead, Dr. Max Gessner, would often say: “Holy shoddy is still shoddy.” As a teen starting my first job at Burger King, my father told me my work ethic would be my most important testimony. Our students, our peers, and our families are watching. They are shaped by the quality, energy, and joy we bring to our work. Our commitment to excellence reflects our belief that we are made in God’s image. That truth still echoes today. Dorothy Sayers wrote:

“No crooked table legs or ill-fitting drawers ever, I dare swear, came out of the carpenter’s shop at Nazareth. Nor, if they did, could anyone believe they were made by the same hand that made heaven and earth.”

The Testing of Our Work

In What’s Best Next, Matt Perman reminds us:

“Christians are to do work that will truly benefit people. Excellence in our work is a form of generosity and love, and poor quality is a form of stinginess and selfishness.”

Too often, we champion being Christ-centered in our work as if our excellence is in a different category. This is not an either/or relationship, it is a both/and. Christ-honoring work demands that it be of a quality that glorifies Him. At our school, we’ve named “best-effort excellence” a core value. Our work will be tested by students, parents, boards, and, most importantly, by God. It will pass the test because of the unusual effort and energy we put into it.

The Time For Our Work

A mentor once advised me, “Never calculate your hourly rate. It’ll only distract you from the real value of what you do.” Consider that God, in His omnipotence, took six full days to create the universe. There is no indication that He controlled His hours or clocked out at a specific time. The Creator of the universe went all in for six intense days, not because He had to, but to model meaningful, sustained work.

In *Full Time*, David Bahnsen writes:

“Parenting is full of unknowns. Marriage is as well. Oh, and so is your job. Placing artificial constraints on one of these variable aspects of our life because of a demand for ‘balance’ is impractical, immature, entitled, and futile.”

That may feel jarring, but it challenges us to rethink the myth of work-life balance. Our work is not measured in hours, but in the eternal impact it can have. If the job is God-sized and the quality is to reflect His excellence, it will require a lot of time, dare I say, more than your standard 40-hour work week. But that doesn’t mean there is something wrong, or that it’s not worth it. And it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t rest, either.

The Truth of Our Work

In *Always Becoming, Never Arriving*, Dr. David Mulder writes:

“Teaching is hard work, but it’s good work.”

It’s true. Our work is gut-wrenching, but it’s also glorious. I’m reminded of a moment as a 17-year-old Christian school student, standing with my basketball team in the locker room before bursting into a packed gym for warmups. For the next two hours, we gave everything: our strength, focus, and passion. It was gut-wrenching, but it was also glorious.

And so is Christian education.

So, fellow educators, it’s game time. LET’S GO!

We occasionally have one of our very own outstanding ACSI school leaders write the lead article for the Insider. This month, Dr. Chris Hobbs kindly wrote an article for us.

Dr. Chris Hobbs is the Head of School at Indian Rocks Christian School in Largo, Florida. He is the son of David Hobbs, who recently retired after 48 years leading Christian schools. Chris and his wife, Jen, have been in Christian education for more than 40 years together, and all three of their children are Christian school alumni. You can connect with him on X and LinkedIn and subscribe to his Learning and Leading Substack.

GRAACE Leadership Summit Continued

Day Two: Strategy and Collaboration

Shifting from reflection to action, the second day featured workshops and sessions addressing the most pressing challenges faced by GRAACE schools. Topics included navigating Title funding and state school choice programs, building sustainable development teams, and fostering strong, mission-driven school cultures. Leaders also shared strategies for training and equipping teachers to effectively disciple and educate students from underserved backgrounds.

Day Three: Building the GRAACE School Playbook

The final day culminated in the development of a collaborative resource: the GRAACE School Playbook. This evolving checklist compiles the insights, strategies, and best practices shared throughout the summit. Designed to guide current and future school leaders, the playbook reflects the collective wisdom and lived experience of those committed to building schools that are both excellent and accessible.

Throughout the summit, participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to gather in a setting that nurtured both rest and resolve. The time away from daily demands offered space to reconnect with purpose, build new relationships, and return to their schools with renewed clarity and conviction.