



Dear ACIS Group Leader,

Welcome to ACIS! Now that you have decided to travel, the next step is to present this fantastic opportunity to your likely participants, their parents and your local school board and administrators. As you may be aware, educational travel for students is widely accepted as a unique learning experience that broadens horizons far beyond the reaches of the classroom. However, your school board may need to be convinced that educational travel is right for your school district. The more proof you have that educational travel is safe and effective, the more success you will have in gaining approval. ACIS has therefore compiled the information we feel is most useful in proposing your trip with confidence.

Every school board and district operates in a slightly different way and has differing guidelines concerning educational travel. You will need to tailor the information contained within this packet to suit your particular situation. Keep in mind that a great tool for convincing your school board of the appropriateness of travel is gaining the support of potential passengers and their parents ahead of time. The suggestions below will help you do so.

Please contact your ACIS International Program Consultant if you have any questions or require additional copies of the documents in this packet.

### **Generate Participant Excitement**

- Know the itinerary you have chosen! Your knowledge is critical to generate student enthusiasm.
  Research the places you will be visiting, if necessary, and review the itinerary day-by-day with your
  ACIS International Program Consultant. Having a clear picture of how much time will be spent
  sightseeing, driving, traveling by train or as free time will be helpful at your first organizational
  meeting.
- Use ACIS' online My Account to promote your trip and email your group. Remind interested students about your upcoming meeting(s) and send them a web link to your customized TripSite. You could also create a Facebook page or group to generate excitement and encourage students to use social media to inspire their friends to join the tour.
- Select one or more enthusiastic, outgoing students who are committed to traveling and ask them to help you promote the trip and encourage their peers to register (even better if their parents can help get other parents on board, too).
- Invite students who have traveled with you or with other teachers in the past to come speak at your meetings. Their first-hand experience will be invaluable in raising interest for your trip.
- Refer to the Planning and Recruiting Resources page within your online account's Group Leader
  Academy for additional organizing ideas and sample materials. Our website, www.acis.com, is an everevolving and valuable resource for information on your upcoming trip for you, the parents and the
  students.

### **Get the Parents on Board**

- Present concrete facts to parents, including the details of ACIS' protection plans, payment deadlines, student behavior expectations and the ACIS Terms and Conditions.
- Invite interested parents who want to support the trip to your meeting with the school board.
- Encourage parents to travel along!



# **Approach the School Board**

- Present the school board with copies of the enclosed informational packet, which specifically
  addresses the concerns they may have about financial security and organizational integrity. It contains
  information on the manner in which participant payments are protected, liability insurance, peace of
  mind benefits and ACIS' professional affiliations. You will also find information on ACIS' worldwide
  network.
- For proof of ACIS' commitment to both educational development and safety, refer them to the details of your itinerary including Cultural Connections and other educational inclusions, "A World of Possibilities" ebook, full-time ACIS Tour Manager, Safety & Security Handbook, 24-hour Duty Officer system, global network and industry-leading protection plans.
- Call your ACIS International Program Consultant if any questions arise that are not answered in the enclosed information.

### **Additional Useful Tips**

- Start planning early and always have relevant materials and information at your fingertips.
- Know your itinerary and be confident in the quality, value and security that ACIS provides as the leading company in educational travel.
- Gather support from students, parents and members of the school administration.
- Identify the most senior person within the administration who is enthusiastic about travel. They could be your best advocate with the school board!
- Put together a mission statement that describes the aims and objectives of the trip.
- Directly involve the current year's curriculum, showing how it is complemented by your trip.
- Refer to successful previous trips and make use of written references when possible.
- Provide the school business manager with copies of the relevant documents enclosed.
- Encourage a member of the school board to travel as well.

We hope this information provides a solid foundation on which to present your trip to the school board and attain the necessary approval. In distributing the enclosed documents to the right people, you may answer many questions before they arise.

Sincerely,

Peter Jones President

# Sample School Committee Member Letter

# **Pleasantville High School**

**History Department** 

Dear School Committee Members,

During spring break of 2026, I am bringing a group of students and faculty from Pleasantville High School on a trip to Greece and Italy with ACIS (American Council for International Studies).

After doing research, I found that ACIS is the country's leading sponsor of educational trips. Its programs are fully insured, and its nationwide reputation is based on over 40 years of experience with more than half a million student and adult travelers. They have a 24-hour, 365-day support network staffed by ACIS employees, both in the U.S. and overseas. They use only three- and four-star hotels in popular and safe areas and the best sources of local transportation.

Our group will be in the good hands of an ACIS Tour Manager, a highly-trained, multi-lingual guide and educator. Our tour manager will not only explain what we are seeing, but how it came to be and why it matters. ACIS Tour Managers are renowned for bringing a unique perspective to their tours, combined with a love of teaching and an irresistible enthusiasm for the regions they describe. Our tour manager will serve as an accessible, authoritative source of information, helping students form a basis for exploration, discovery and personal growth. His or her expertise will certainly enhance all that my colleagues and I have taught our students at home.

The eight-day trip will include tours of the two countries by foot, boat and bus. This will be an opportunity for our students to study cultures they may have never experienced before and learn of Europe's ancient history. We will also see many historic architectural masterpieces and works of art throughout Athens, Delphi, Pompeii, Sorrento and Rome. Our students will set eyes on the Acropolis and Parthenon, dive into Greek culture with a dance lesson, travel back in time at Pompeii, and explore the ancient city of Rome through the Colosseum and the Vatican—just to name a few of the educational highlights. They will engage in immersive activities to connect them with the cultures they are visiting and will be able to tie what they are experiencing overseas to their lessons at home.

I am eager to share more details of this trip with you at the next School Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2026. While the actual contract is between individuals and ACIS, I would appreciate the support of the school committee. I am certain that after hearing about ACIS' organizational integrity and financial security, you will feel confident about the decision to travel with ACIS. A few parents, students and another teacher who have all traveled with ACIS will be joining us to answer your questions. If you have any questions or concerns before then, please feel free to contact me by phone at (555) 555-5555 or by e-mail at firstlastname@sampleschool.edu.

With regards,

Signature

First Name Last Name History Department Pleasantville High School





# **ACIS REPORT CARD**

**98**% of ACIS Group Leaders rate their overall satisfaction good to excellent

**99**% of ACIS Group Leaders rate our educational content good to excellent

**95**% of ACIS Group Leaders would recommend us to a colleague

**97**% of ACIS Group Leaders *rate our tour managers good to excellent* 

To school district officials, board members, administrators and educators,

We're excited that your school is considering offering an educational travel program that will promote global citizenship and cultural competence to your students. ACIS tours are built on a passionate belief that **travel changes lives** and, like you, our goal is to facilitate transformative educational experiences.

We respect and appreciate the concerns school administrations face regarding allowing students to participate on an educational trip abroad. Since our **founding in 1978**, we have recognized that an integral part of our responsibility is to provide school districts, administrators, school board members, teachers and parents with proof of the **value**, **quality**, **financial security and overall integrity** of our organization as well as address your safety and liability concerns.

# Within, please find information related to:

- Financial Security and General Liability
- Professional Affiliations and References
- ACIS' Worldwide Network
- Risk Management and Emergency Protocol
- 24-Hour Global Safety Coverage
- ACIS' Industry-Leading Protection Plans
- Experiential Learning and Curriculum Support
- Support and Services for Teachers
- Support and Services for Students and Families

It's your responsibility to make smart and careful decisions for your community, and our responsibility to ensure you have the information you need to feel confident that educational travel with ACIS is an important vehicle for the individual growth of your students. The decision to allow educational travel opportunities can very much depend on the process used for selecting a reputable company. The professional integrity, accountability and ethical practices of ACIS are all a matter of record, supportable by documentation.

We welcome any additional questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Peter Jones President









# **Financial Security and General Liability**

# **Indemnity Bond**

Participants' payments are protected by ACIS. ACIS, as an Active member of the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA), is required to post \$1 Million with USTOA to be used to reimburse, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the USTOA Travelers Assistance Program, the advance payments of ACIS customers in the unlikely event of ACIS bankruptcy, insolvency or cessation of business.

# **General Liability Insurance**

We hold a \$51 million general liability insurance policy with Lexington Insurance Company covering school districts and teachers (both group leaders and chaperones). We are happy to provide you with a Certificate of Liability upon request.

A group leader may still travel with ACIS without obtaining school board approval. As per our Terms and Conditions, the school, school board, school administration, school officials, municipality, and municipal officials are not liable in any way for the travelers on an ACIS program, regardless of school approval.

# **Corporate Affiliation**

ACIS is the educational travel division of AIFS, Inc. the American Institute For Foreign Study. Founded in 1964, AIFS is the leading worldwide sponsor of educational programs and one of the most financially secure companies in educational travel.

### **Overseas Providers**

All travel service providers used on ACIS programs have been carefully vetted by us and have their own insurance coverage. ACIS participants are therefore covered by both the service providers' insurance and ACIS' general liability coverage. Providers are regularly evaluated by ACIS to make certain excellence is maintained.

# **Professional Affiliations and References**

### **D&B Credit Reports**

Reports on ACIS and AIFS are available by contacting D&B directly at (888) 347-0475.

# **United States Tour Operators' Association (USTOA)**

To be admitted as an active member of USTOA, ACIS was required to post a \$1 million Consumer Protection Plan and demonstrate ethical and financial responsibility. For further information contact USTOA, 345 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1801, New York, NY 10001 or call them at (212) 599-6599.

### **American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA)**

To remain an active member of ASTA, ACIS commits to upholding its principles of professional and ethical conduct.

# **International Association of Travel Agents Network (IATAN)**

To remain in good standing with IATAN, ACIS must be an authorized ticketing agent as regulated by the Airline Reporting Corporation (ARC). ACIS maintains solid relationships with over 20 major airlines, both domestic and international carriers.

### **Administrative References**

We have compiled a list of administrators in education who have volunteered to be contacted with any questions you may have concerning educational travel abroad. Please feel free to reach out to them at your convenience and mention that ACIS gave you their contact information from our school board reference list.

# Lesley Schooler Dean of Faculty Carondelet High School 1133 Winton Drive Concord, CA 94518 (925) 686-5353

# Christopher C. Layson IB Diploma Programme Coordinator Utica Academy for International Studies 37400 Dodge Park Road Sterling Heights, MI 48312 586-797-3250

# Rebecca Westgate Director of Global Programs St. Vincent's Academy 207 E Liberty Street Savannah, GA 03140 921-226-1899 rebecca.westgate@svaga.net

# Mr. Michael Rogosich Assistant Principal Cardinal Gibbons High School 1401 Edwards Mill Rd. Raleigh, NC 27607 (919) 834-1625 ext. 236

# Dr. Guillermina Jauregui Principal Chester W. Nimitz Middle School 6021 Carmelita Avenue Huntington Park, CA 90255 (323) 887-5400

# **ACIS Teacher References**

We would be happy to connect you with experienced group leaders who can provide honest feedback about their ACIS tour experience and discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

Additionally, you can find independent, uncensored reviews from validated ACIS customers on TrustPilot: www.trustpilot.com/review/acis.com.

# **ACIS' Worldwide Network**

United States Headquarters
American Council for International Studie
330 Congress Street, Suite 5
Boston, MA 02210
800 888 ACIS toll free
617 236 2051 local
617 450 5601 fax
617 450 5678 24-hr emergency
info@acis.com

# **ACIS Midwest** 800 888 2247 toll free 312 205 4760 local info@acis.com

# ACIS West Coast 800 888 2247 toll free 916 448 7496 local info@acis.com

# ACIS London 37 Queen's Gate London SW7 5HR F

ACIS Paris
19 Rue de Babylone
F-75007 Paris

ACIS also maintains offices in Rome and Madrid, as well as affiliate partner offices in other major European, Latin American and Asian cities.

Closer to home, ACIS has a network of local representatives across the United States. These veteran educators are able to offer local, in-person support to teachers throughout the educational travel planning process and beyond.

# **Risk Management and Emergency Protocol**

In our 40+ years of operating educational travel programs around the world, we've had to navigate a variety of safety concerns. We take every precaution to ensure that our groups are safe and secure while traveling with us, constantly monitoring the global situation and ensuring policies are in place to deal with any unforeseen issue that might arise. Please refer to the ACIS Safety & Security Handbook for complete information.

# Risk Assessment Partnership with CISI

ACIS partners with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI), a sister division of AIFS, and a world class provider of the most comprehensive student travel insurance available. Since 1991, CISI has insured over 1 million international students and cultural exchange participants worldwide. CISI's services provide toll-free, worldwide access to benefits, care providers and emergency assistance.

ACIS and CISI vigilantly survey the global landscape on an ongoing basis to evaluate risk and remain at peak preparedness. To do this, CISI utilizes iJET and their Worldcue database to review and assess any potential risk for their insureds. iJET International delivers intelligence driven, integrated risk management solutions that enable multinational organizations to operate globally with confidence. iJET's end-to-end, tailored systems integrate world-class threat intelligence, innovative technology, and response services to help organizations avoid threats and mitigate risk. Via the Worldcue Planner, CISI can provide detailed information on specific destinations in regard to crime, security, civil unrest, terrorism and kidnapping. Detailed briefs are available with up-to-the-minute latest intelligence.

### **ACIS Emergency Protocol**

In the rare event that an overseas incident has the potential to impact the safety of our travelers, ACIS follows a comprehensive plan to review the situation, check in with groups and facilitate communication with families at home. ACIS' Emergency Response Team is able to quickly utilize our global network to confirm the location and well-being of all participants, assess and monitor ongoing global situations, provide notifications to loved ones at home and take appropriate action should it become necessary. For details on each step of our Emergency Protocol, please refer to the ACIS Safety & Security Handbook.

# 24-Hour Global Safety Coverage

# **24-Hour Duty Officer System**

The safety and well-being of our participants is always our primary concern. We have a 24-hour Duty Officer system operating seven days a week in the United States and overseas to deal with any emergency quickly and professionally. We maintain extensive assistance networks everywhere we travel, including staff who can be on the scene as quickly as you need them.

If for some reason a participant needs to be reached during the tour, parents can call the toll free number below at any time and an ACIS representative will help them establish contact with the group.

800 888 2247 toll free

### **Tour Manager**

Every group is accompanied by a full-time, vetted and trained ACIS Tour Manager for the duration of their stay overseas. They weave learning into every moment, while making sure everything from bus routes to meal times to museum entrances go forward without a hitch. We carefully check our tour managers' backgrounds, educate them through rigorous training programs that include role-playing for specific scenarios or potential issues, and evaluate them regularly.

# **ACIS Emergency Card and Travel App**

Every ACIS Group Leader and student participant receives a laminated emergency card containing phone numbers that connect to ACIS' international emergency network from anywhere in the world—peace of mind for your pocket.

In addition, all participants are encouraged to download the free ACIS Travel App before departure. The Travel App includes the addresses of each hotel used on a trip, and features maps that can guide participants back to their hotel from their current location without having to access a cellular or internet connection.

### **Team Assist from On Call International**

Team Assist provides round-the-clock, 365-day travel assistance. In cases of illness or injury, Team Assist works together with the tour manager and families to provide care and support.

888 505 2474 toll free (within the United States)
743 244 2474 collect or WhatsApp (outside the United States)
CISIAssist@RobinAssist.com

If the participant is unable to call collect, Team Assist will offer reimbursement.



# **ACIS' Industry-Leading Protection Plans**

ACIS' Basic Protection Plan coverage is included for all participants and provides standard health coverage, program interruption, and travel delay/ quarantine protection while on tour. Participants may also choose to upgrade their coverage to our Ultimate or Ultimate-Plus Protection Plans. Group leaders and chaperones are automatically covered by our Ultimate-Plus Protection Plan.

Our Ultimate-Plus Protection Plan affords students and their parents the comfort of knowing that they may cancel at any time, for any reason and receive a cash refund. In addition to the best cancellation policy in the industry, it allows participants to benefit from expanded travel protection while on tour.

### **Protection Plans**

Please see the chart below and visit <a href="www.acis.com/travel-protection">www.acis.com/travel-protection</a> for more information.

Coverage	Basic Protection Plan <b>Good</b>	Ultimate Protection Plan  **Better**	Ultimate-Plus Protection Plan **Best!	
Health Protection Includes 24 hour medical assistance, consultation, monitoring and emergency evacuation where deemed necessary by Team Assist.	Coverage up to \$15,000. \$200 deductible.	Coverage up to \$50,000. No deductible.  Team Assist will pay up to \$1,500 for an immediate family member to travel to the trip destination in the event that a participant under age 21 is hospitalized for more than 48 hours or more than 1 week if age 21 or older.		
<b>Trip Interruption</b> Medical and other interruption reasons as stated below.	Up to \$250 toward the cost of a one-way economy ticket to the United States.	Up to \$1,500 toward the cost of a one-way economy ticket to the United States.		
Baggage Delay/Loss	No coverage is included.	If bags are delayed for more than 24 hours on your outbound journey, ACIS will pay \$50 for emergency purposes. If bags are stolen or lost, up to \$1,000 total will be reimbursed if a signed police or airline report accompanies the claim. \$50 deductible applies.		
Travel Delay Protection	If your trip is delayed 12 or more hours, up to \$150 per day of traveling expenses will be reimbursed by Team Assist up to a maximum of \$1,500. Travel Delay Protection coverage also applies if you are forced into medical isolation overseas by a recognized government authority due to having, or being suspected of having, a contagious disease.			

# Protection plans must be selected and premiums paid in full in order to be $\underline{\text{activated}}.$

ACIS Protection Plans are updated each fall for the following travel year. Once finalized, a Health and Program Cancellation/Interruption Coverage booklet that outlines the specific coverages in place for the upcoming year will be available online.

### **Cancellation & Supplemental Coverage**

Cancellation coverage is underwritten by the Zurich American Insurance Company and ACIS.

Full plan details are available at https://policy.covermore.us/366ZA-0123. Refund amounts include the cost of overseas health protection.

	Basic Protection Plan	Ultimate Protection Plan	Ultimate-Plus Protection Plan		
Refunds when Cancelling for Any Reason					
180+ days prior to departure	All payments less \$200	Full refund less \$200	Full refund less \$200		
179-130 days prior to departure	All payments less \$500	Full refund less \$200 ACIS Travel Voucher (and the cost of the protection plan itself)	Full refund (less the cost of the protection plan itself)		
129-90 days prior to departure	All payments less \$750	Full refund less \$225 ACIS Travel Voucher (and the cost of the protection plan itself)			
89-65 days prior to departure	All payments less \$1,250	Full refund less \$325 ACIS Travel Voucher (and the cost of the protection plan itself)			
64-30 days prior to departure	All payments less \$2,000	Full refund less \$500 ACIS Travel Voucher (and the cost of the protection plan itself)			
29-4 days prior to departure	No refunds	Full refund less ACIS Travel Voucher for 25% of total payments (and the cost of the protection plan itself)			
Less than 4 days prior to departure	No refunds	No refunds	No refunds		
Refunds when Cancelling for Covered Reasons Outlined in <u>Plan Contract</u>					
Any date up to departure	Standard refunds above apply	Full cash refund (less the cost of the protection plan itself)			

# **Experiential Learning and Curriculum Support**

Educational travel brings classroom lessons to life, promotes personal growth and inspires interest in learning. Confucius once said, "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." ACIS recognizes the need for students to engage themselves with the world around them and become self-directed learners. In today's increasingly global society, international exploration is crucial to broadening student horizons and the development of cultural competence.

Our itineraries are designed to combine the right mix of fun, exploration, insightful commentary and immersive, hands-on learning. ACIS' carefully crafted Cultural Connection activities, included on every tour, allow participants to learn by doing, seeing and creating, with each type of learning style engaged. Our tour managers are constantly on the alert for opportunities to help students teach themselves. Mini-lessons focused on valuable life skills and personal development as global citizens are guaranteed to be part of the educational travel journey. Depending on the travel destination and itinerary, students' educational touring experience may be further enriched by including a service learning project or an enriching workshop with a global industry leader.

The educational benefits of travel are far-reaching. Students will better understand cultural differences, improve language skills and sharpen their critical thinking skills. They will become life-long learners!

# **Support and Services for Teachers**

ACIS is committed to being partners in education with the teachers who lead our trips. We work hard to help them select and personalize a travel program that fulfills their curriculum objectives, get to know them on a personal level and support them through every stage of the educational travel experience.

### **Direct Partnership**

Every teacher works with a dedicated ACIS International Program Consultant to develop a travel program that's tailored to the needs of their unique group. In cases where a local representative lives nearby, that veteran educator can provide additional regional, in-person support to help the teacher get their trip running and students registered.

One of the oldest rules of travel is, "the more you know before you go, the more you'll see and experience when you're there." To help group leaders prepare for their educational tour, we provide the tools they need to teach their students before they begin their journey. From White Papers on engaging multiple intelligences through travel, to "How to" papers written by ACIS Tour Managers, there's a wealth of information available on <a href="https://www.acis.com">www.acis.com</a>.

On tour, teachers have 24/7 support, wherever they might be. Their full-time ACIS Tour Manager is partnered with them from the moment the group lands until departure day. Tour managers know the cities like locals (often they are!) and can do it all—from locating a great lunch spot for a student with a food allergy to finding a needed remedy at a local pharmacy. ACIS has a network of offices and affiliate partners worldwide, ensuring on-the-ground support is never far away. Our 24-hour emergency Duty Officer Phone system operates seven days a week and is just a guick call from anywhere, at any time.

# **Student Behavior Guidelines**

ACIS foremost asks groups on tour to abide by the rules and policies of their school district and will enforce any rules that the individual group has set. In addition, ACIS provides recommended disciplinary policies and Student Behavior Guidelines that all participants should obey to ensure everyone experiences a safe and respectful time on tour. For the full list, visit <a href="https://www.acis.com/behavior-guidelines">www.acis.com/behavior-guidelines</a>.

### **Professional Development and Training**

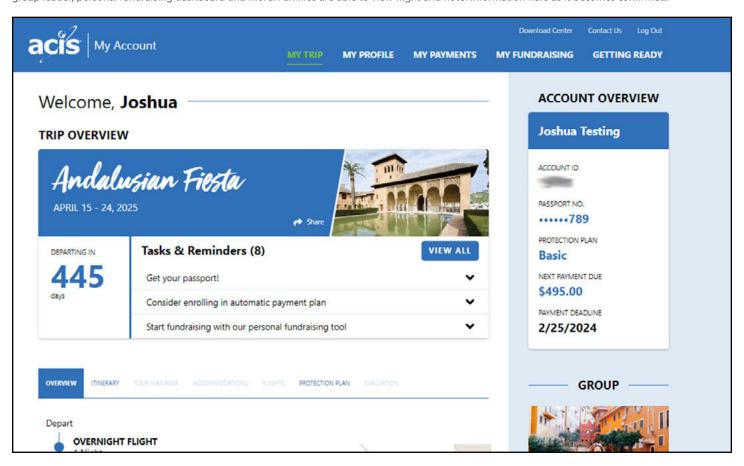
First-time group leaders are invited to join ACIS for an overseas training session (if permissible within their district) that features sessions and information on how to ensure a successful student travel program as well as collaborative discussion with fellow educators on maximizing their trip's educational impact. Teachers can also earn Graduate-Level Professional Development Units through ACIS' partnership with the University of the Pacific's Center for Professional and Continuing Education.

# **Support and Services for Students and Families**

The culture of care at ACIS extends to each and every person who becomes part of our travel family by enrolling on a tour. We have a dedicated Traveler Support team to answer students' and parents' questions and assist them through the process of registration and payment. Further resources for travelers and their families can be found on www.acis.com, including a page dedicated to the most Frequently Asked Questions at www.acis.com/parents/fags.

### My Account and Online Resources

Every student has access to their own unique My Account, offering a personalized trip page, account balance info, payment info, announcements from the group leader, personal fundraising dashboard and more. Families are able to view flight and hotel information here as it becomes confirmed.



ACIS' online resources also provide students with destination information, packing tips, helpful hints on credit card and ATM use, spending money guidelines, tipping customs and options for staying in touch with home.

### **Affording the Trip**

ACIS wants all interested students to have the opportunity to travel. To that end, the ACIS website outlines some ways that students and their families can help afford this valuable experience:

- Payment Plan Options
- Create a Personal Fundraising Page
- Travel is Education Scholarship Contest
- Traditional Fundraising

Visit www.acis.com/parents/paying-for-your-trip for more information.

To learn more, we invite you to read our free ebook,
"A World of Possibilities"



Can travel make a difference in students' futures? It certainly can and does every single day. In fact, we surveyed 930 former ACIS travelers to see how their tours abroad as young adults influenced their choices in education and paved a way for future careers. Many of them credit travel as a defining moment in their adolescence, and below is a recap of our findings.

# education



# 81%

of those that traveled in middle school or high school continued their studies at the college level compared to the national average of 68%.



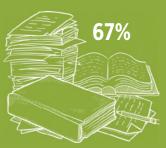
of travelers who went on to college said their travel experience influenced their field of study.



**57%** 

of respondents were motivated to study abroad during college.

# language skills



of students continued to study foreign language in college.



of ACIS travelers say they speak one foreign language fairly well compared with 18% of the American population.

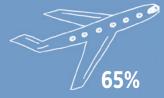
# personal development



94% felt more independent after their trip.

78% saw an increase in their problem solving skills.

92% noted improvement in their interpersonal skills.



have traveled overseas again since their ACIS trip.

# our **promise**

In educational travel, every moment matters. Pushing the experience from "good enough" to exceptional is what we do everyday. Our mission is to empower educators to introduce their students to the world beyond the classroom and inspire the next generation of global citizens.