



# International Student Travel Risk Management: K-12 and Higher Education Considerations

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# Speakers



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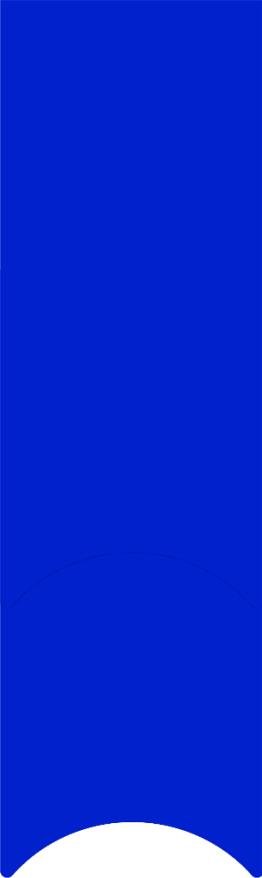
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# Trends in K-12 Domestic and International Travel Programs

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**The Institute for Global Learning (formerly GEBG) connects educators with the community and resources they need to engage their students with the world, in the classroom and well beyond.**

### **What We Offer:**

- **Professional Learning**
- **Research and Resources**
- Student Programming
- Collaborative Community

### **Areas of Focus:**

- Global Perspectives and Issues across the Curriculum
- Intercultural Dialogue
- Students as Engaged Global Citizens
- Climate Education
- **Off-Campus and Experiential Learning**

# The Institute for Global Learning support schools by...

- Collecting and benchmarking data
- Deepening understanding of three key risk areas in K–12 off-campus programs
- Guiding schools in developing their own consistent, effective policies and practices across programs

# Annual Data: Independently and in Partnership with NAIS

**GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT DATA REPORT – FEBRUARY 2026**

## NAIS – Institute for Global Learning Global Engagement Data Report

### Introduction

Through a multi-year partnership designed to better understand the state of global learning in K-12 education, the Institute for Global Learning (formerly GLEO) and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) collected and analyzed data from over 500 participating schools across North America and beyond from October to December 2025. The data reported by schools is for the 2024-2025 school year, the last completed school year at the time of data collection.

This data report benefits from having the largest number (510) of participating schools that either organization has seen for a global engagement survey. It also benefits from using a data collection tool that included many of the same questions as the survey from 2023 in which close to 500 schools participated. This allows both for general observations between the two sets of results and, more importantly, for direct comparison between the data points from 2023 and 2025 for the 260 schools that participated in both. With 51% of participating schools submitting data to both surveys, this report is able to include accurate analysis of any changes, and these have been included in the report where they are notable. This report also provides some further analysis and breakdown of the data when there were differences of interest, specifically by school size and geographic region.

### Participating School Demographics

schools participated

- 53% IGL members or 7% IGL members only.
- 92% NAIS members only.
- 46% Members of both NAIS and IGL.

It's important to note that the membership is self-reported in this survey by participating schools, and may not illustrate the exact number of members of either or both organizations.

### Division

Global Engagement by Division

| Division             | Count |
|----------------------|-------|
| Elementary only      | 79    |
| Elementary-Secondary | 125   |
| Secondary only       | 280   |

| Division          | Global Engagement (%)   |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| High School       | 83.2%                   |
| Middle School     | 60.3% (down 4% from 23) |
| Elementary School | 39.4% (down 4% from 23) |

NAIS - INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL LEARNING

**Institute for Global Learning**  
DATA REPORT COMPILED BY ELSIE STAFF AND DR. CLARE SISISKY

## Hitting the Road

### Annual Benchmark Data Report on School Travel Programs

In this year's annual benchmark survey, 229 schools participated out of 383 current member schools at a 60% participation rate. School participant demographics reflect school membership with the majority coed, day independent schools located in North America with an approximate average enrollment of just over 700 students. This year the survey collected an expanded set of data related to school organized travel programs that took place during the 2023-2024 school year. For the purpose of this survey, travel programs were classified as any overnight travel program (domestic or international) that lasted 2 or more days.

### Primary Reasons for Offering Travel Programs

Participating schools were asked to select their primary reasons for offering overnight travel programs. As might be expected, the primary reasons relate to student development of global competencies but over 60% of schools report that a primary reason for offering this kind of learning opportunity is to fulfill their school's mission.

n=228

| Reason  | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| To get students engaged in global citizenship and intercultural learning            | 79.6%      |
| To teach knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perspectives related to global education | 78.3%      |
| To fulfill the school's mission   | 61.1%      |
| To provide language learning and practice   | 44.3%      |
| To provide opportunity for deeper learning in discipline-specific content           | 43.9%      |
| To differentiate the school from other schools in the area                          | 27.6%      |
| To engage students in community service   | 25.3%      |
| To improve college acceptance rates   | 5.4%       |

**Institute for Global Learning**  
LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT IMPROVING STUDENTS

## Experiential Education Week(s) Report

### A 2023 REPORT ON EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION WEEK, MINI-MESTER, OR MAY-TERM PROGRAMS

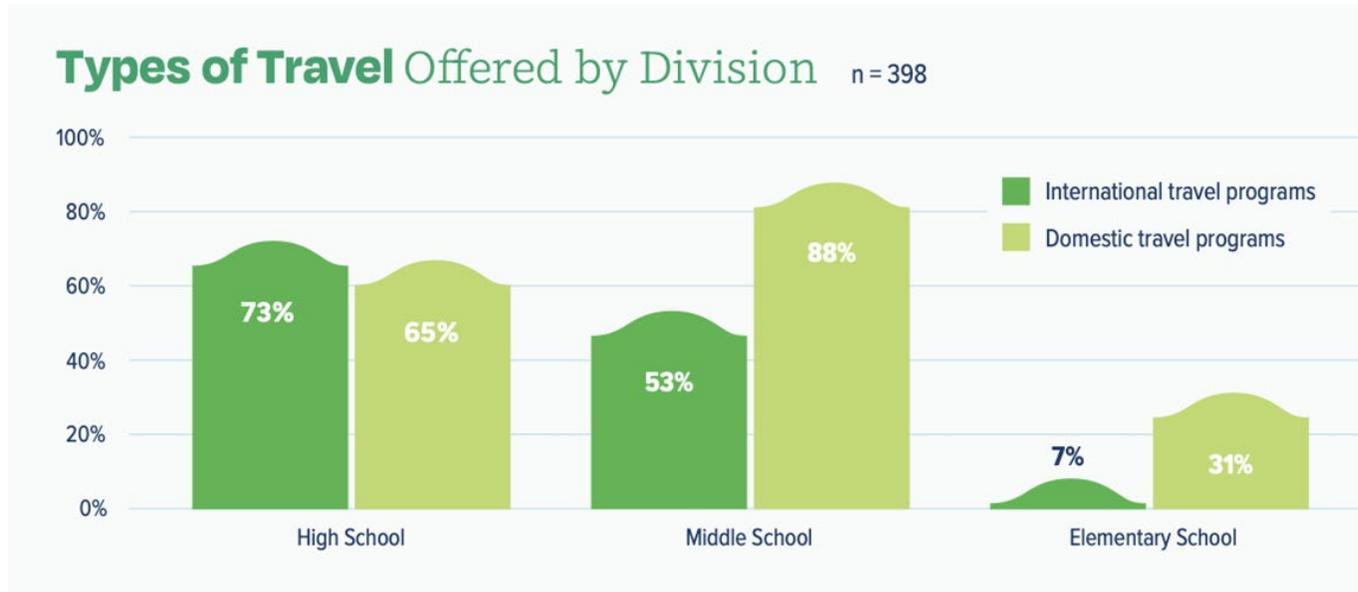
Dr. Clare Sisisky, Executive Director  
Elsie Staff, Director of Operations

While a number of Institute for Global Learning member schools have long-standing programs which engage students in intensive periods of learning that employ experiential education pedagogy, many additional schools are in the process of considering designing and creating such programs for their students. Schools have shared for years that the opportunity to take a deep dive into a specific topic or immerse in place-based learning can provide student growth and development in key global competencies as well as deeper understanding of complex global issues. This report seeks to provide benchmarking data for our member schools who have or are considering a program of an intensive week or weeks which engage experiential learning as a tool to further student development of key competencies.

The benchmarking data and analysis conducted by the Institute for Global Learning (formerly GLEO) serve as both a roadmap for program design and a self-assessment tool to support ongoing program development.

| PROGRAM STATUS                                 | 2 | ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE                                |
|--|---|---|
| Programs Implemented for 2022-2023 School Year |   | Program Administration                                    |
| Programs Under Consideration                   |   | Funding Models  |
| Existing Programs Years of Implementation      |   | Financial Assistance                                      |
| TEACHING AND LEARNING                          | 3 | BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION WEEK(S) |
| Common Features Related to Student Learning    |   | School Observed Benefits Related to Student Learning      |
| Curriculum Drivers                             |   | School Observed Challenges of the Program                 |
| Student Choice                                 |   | Program Names   |
| PROGRAM DESIGN                                 | 6 | SAMPLE MATERIALS FROM SCHOOLS                             |
| Program Timing                                 |   | Mission and Learning Outcomes                             |
| Student Ages                                   |   | Curriculum and Courses                                    |
| Program Location                               |   |   |

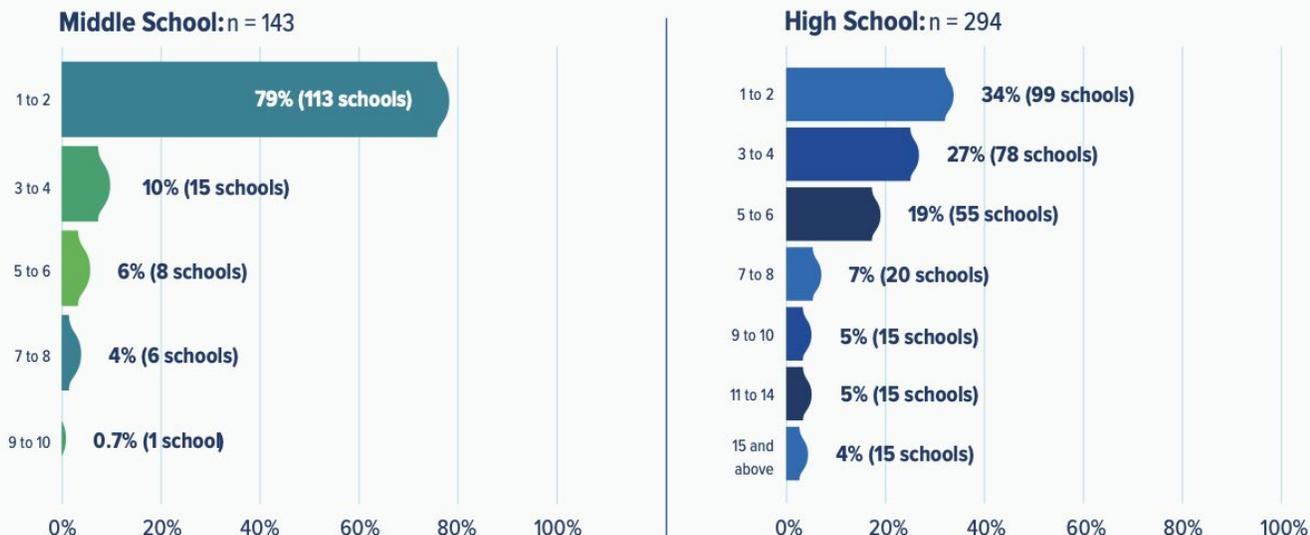
# Commitment to Experiential Learning



- Schools remain deeply committed to off-campus and experiential learning.
- 93% of schools offered overnight travel programs in 2024–2025, even amid rising costs and global uncertainty.
- International programs continue to expand. Among schools participating in both surveys, international travel programs increased from 88% in 2023 to 92% in 2025.

# Off-Campus/Overnight Programming Across the K–12 Experience

## Number of School-Sponsored International Travel Programs in 2024-2025



- Experiential learning spans the K–12 experience.
- Most high schools and middle schools offer both domestic and international travel, and over 30% of elementary schools now organize overnight programs.
- Many schools run multiple international programs each year.
- 61% of high schools offer 1–4 international programs annually, while 14% offer nine or more programs.

# Common Destinations

## Most Visited States and Provinces

(for North American schools' domestic travel programs)

| Rank | State/Province       | Schools Visited |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1    | District of Columbia | 131             |
| 2    | New York             | 102             |
| 3    | California           | 82              |
| 4    | Massachusetts        | 65              |
| 5    | Florida              | 63              |
| 6    | Georgia              | 45              |
| 7    | Alabama              | 39              |
| 8    | Pennsylvania         | 35              |
| 9    | North Carolina       | 35              |
| 10   | Arizona              | 31              |

## Most Visited Countries

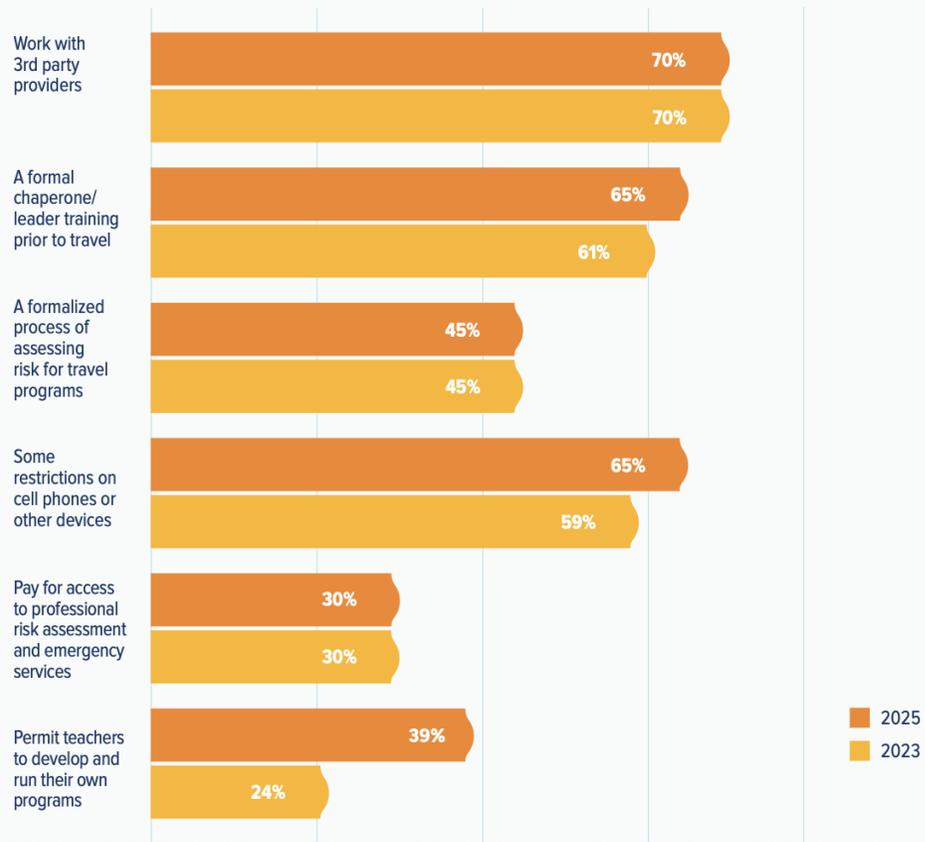
(excluding U.S. and Canada)

| Rank | Country        | Schools Visited |
|------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1    | Spain          | 139             |
| 2    | France         | 135             |
| 3    | Costa Rica     | 100             |
| 4    | Italy          | 89              |
| 5    | United Kingdom | 81              |
| 6    | Germany        | 53              |
| 7    | Japan          | 43              |
| 8    | Iceland        | 37              |
| 9    | Greece         | 35              |
| 10   | China          | 29              |

# Program Design and Preparation

## Common Travel Program Policies and Practices

n = 388



- Risk management practices are becoming more formalized.
- Travel programs are intentionally designed as learning experiences.
- Schools are strengthening the educational structure of travel.
- Over 90% of schools provide pre-departure preparation, and 68% offer post-travel reflection or learning sessions.
- 65% of schools now require formal faculty training before leading travel programs, reflecting growing attention to safety and preparation.

# Increasing Complexity

## Top Three Most Common Challenges

n = 385

**57%**

reported competing school priorities

**51%**

reported a lack of financial resources

**41%**

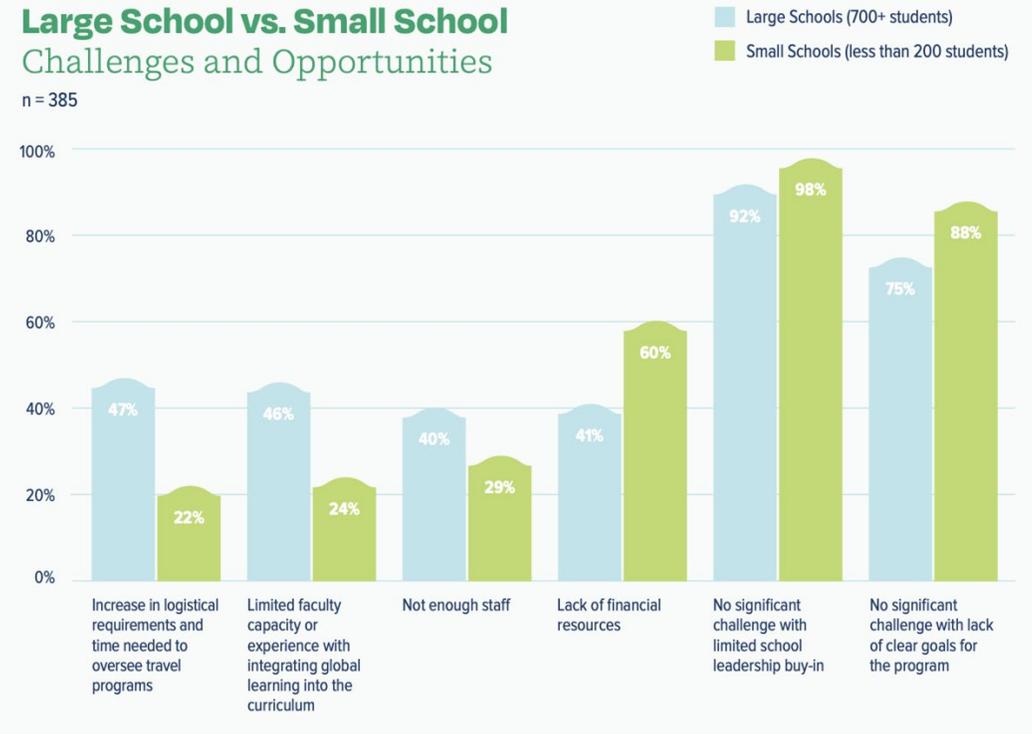
reported not enough time

The data shows that schools remain deeply committed to experiential learning, but the operational complexity around these programs has grown significantly.

Schools are not stepping back from travel. They are strengthening the systems that support it.

## Large School vs. Small School Challenges and Opportunities

n = 385



# Key Risk Areas (Medical, Security, and Liability)

**Child Protection and  
Travel with Minors**

**Limited Time,  
Resources, and Training**

**Tension – Independence &  
Close Supervision at all Times**

**Limited Consistency  
Across Programs**

**Medical Oversight and  
Medication Dispersal**

**Parental Need for  
Wrap-around Support**

# Emerging Risks

**Increase in Third Party  
Provider Use**

**Student Wellbeing  
(Mental Health)**

**Change in Geopolitical  
Landscape/Reevaluation of  
Program after Registration**

**Parental Involvement:  
Shadow Trips/Showing  
Up/Tracking**

**Differentiating Program  
with Identity in Mind**

**Border Crossings &  
Documentation**

# Resources: Ongoing Risk Assessment of Location and Activities

## WHERE YOU'RE GOING

- What expert sources is the school utilizing to determine **the likelihood and severity of medical, security, and liability risks associated with the location of travel**? Are these sources sufficient?
- Are there any **particular thresholds** that, if crossed, would result in a program being possibly or immediately canceled or re-routed?
- How might the school **differentiate risk assessment** or risks be different for students or faculty members with different backgrounds or identities? Are you hearing concern from a particular group of families?

## WHERE YOU'RE GOING

- What capacity does the school and any subcontractors have to **change the location/s of travel or adjust the itinerary**?
- Is there a certain point in the **timeline** at which the program would be canceled and not possibly rerouted?
- To what extent is the school **prepared for the communications, financial, and reputational risks** of such a change or cancellation (or lack thereof)?

# Resources: Custom Work, Data Reports, and Partnerships

## Risk Management For Overnight Programs Workshop Overview

- Part One** What is (and isn't) risk management, and why should I care?
- Part Two** What are the three primary risk areas of overnight travel?
- Part Three** Next Steps & Resources

## WELLBEING AND LIABILITY RISKS IN SCENARIO

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Wellbeing (Medical and Security)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Concerns</li> <li>• Environmental Factors</li> <li>• Physical injury</li> <li>• Existing conditions</li> <li>• Separation from group—getting lost, breaking rules</li> <li>• Indirect supervision</li> <li>• Other unknowns</li> </ul> | <p><b>Liability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard of Care</li> <li>• Informed Consent</li> <li>• Vetting provider/drivers</li> <li>• Reputation (perception of insufficient supervision)</li> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Inconsistent decision-making or practices</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## Opening Scenarios

Your group is on the Chesapeake for a Physics of Sailing trip. After a sun-filled few days on the water, you wake up on day 4 to overcast weather, with reports of a storm passing around midday. The bay looks choppy, but still tolerable, though, and the staff at the sailing club that you are working with say that you can still have your morning sailing/windsurfing workshop (3 hours' duration) as planned. While you would get a refund on the wetsuits you had rented, you would not get a refund of instructional time.

- Consider the options**
- **Option A.** Have the sailing workshop as planned, with different parameters around where students and instructors/chaperones can sail when out on the water, and hope you don't encounter the storm.
  - **Option B.** Stay inside with the students and teach them extra physics and landtime.
  - **Option C.** Find another site for your group to explore further inland.
  - **Option D.** Have an extended breakfast at your lodging and pay it by way.
  - **Option E.** Something else.



### GUIDING QUESTIONS IN SUPPORT OF ONGOING RISK ASSESSMENT OF LOCATION AND ACTIVITIES

These questions are intended to help guide discussions to determine an institution's risk-tolerance around a particular travel location and the activities planned there. It is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, it is intended to help facilitate a collaborative conversation among key stakeholders, including those who manage wellbeing, safety, and liability risks for students, faculty, and the institution. These questions are based on the various approaches used to assess risk of off-campus programs by Institute for Global Learning (formerly GEBG) member schools.

#### WHY YOU'RE GOING

- How does this program support your school's mission?
- What are the program's student learning targets?
- For whom have they been communicated and how?

#### WHERE YOU'RE GOING

- Is the location of a program connected to the learning targets of that program? Is every location in the itinerary necessary to accomplish these learning goals? Could some of the learning objectives be met without being in the location of travel (i.e. another location or virtually)?
- What expert sources is the school utilizing to determine the likelihood and severity of medical, security, and liability risks associated with the location of travel? Are these sources sufficient? Are there any particular thresholds that, if crossed, would result in a program being possibly or immediately canceled or re-routed?
- How might the school differentiate risk assessment or risks be different for students or faculty members with different backgrounds or identities? Are you hearing concern from a particular group or families?
- What capacity does the school and any subcontractors have to change the location/s of

#### WHAT YOU'RE DOING

- Are all of the activities of a travel program mission-driven? Who is responsible for determining if so? Could some of the learning objectives be met without engaging in that specific activity (particularly in terms of high-risk activities)?
- How is the school assessing the likelihood and severity of medical, security, and liability risks associated with the activities in an itinerary? What other activities might be possible if changes need to be made?
- To what extent has the school gotten informed consent for all definite and possible activities associated with a program? What systems does the school have in place to get informed consent in the case of an activity needing to be changed significantly?

travel? Is there a certain point in the timeline at which the program would be canceled and not possibly rerouted?

- To what extent is the school prepared for the communications, financial, and reputational risks of such a change or cancellation (or lack thereof)?

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## Data Report on International Border Crossings into the United States by School Groups between January-April, 2025

The Institute for Global Learning (formerly GEBG) connects educators with the community and resources they need to engage their students with the world, both close to home and beyond. Between April 17 - May 2, 2025, the Institute for Global Learning conducted a statewide survey of member schools, a vast majority of whom are independent schools in the U.S. and Canada, to capture top concerns/questions and any recent experiences or challenges that involve crossing an international border into the United States.

Member schools of the Institute for Global Learning (formerly GEBG) are preparing for school travel programs in the coming months that involve crossing an international border into the United States (either upon departure from or return to school). It is important to emphasize the mission-aligned reasons that your international programs are an essential part of your school's education, developing essential skills such as resilience, independence, empathy, and open-mindedness. With increased media attention on international border crossings into the United States as well as reports from schools of challenges related to these crossings, this data report documents school experiences on this topic from January - April, 2025. The report also captures school-reported 'lessons learned' that might be helpful as schools' prepare for future programs.

While we do not have specific data that indicates an increase in incidents related to this type of border crossing for our community of schools because we do not have previous comparable data, we have heard from security experts that "border agents and immigration officials are enforcing strict controls as part of a 'maximum vetting' policy instituted by the United States."

In order to provide you with benchmarking data to better understand this complex issue, the Institute for Global Learning collected data from 88 member schools. This data does not include independent travel of school employees or international students, rather it focuses on an under-documented area of international programs: school international travel programs.

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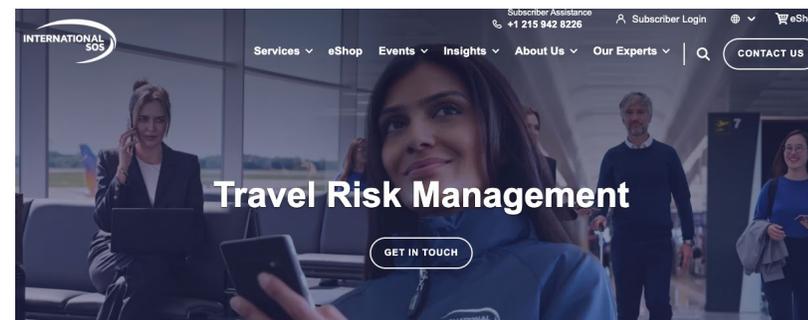
## Student Well-Being on Overnight Programs Guided Activity

Traveling as a group is inherently stressful - this is both normal and expected! This exercise is designed to offer program facilitators and participants time to reflect on the stressors that can arise during travel, to brainstorm on how one might cope with those stressors, and to verbalize how to request and accept assistance in support of one's well-being. This exercise is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, it is intended to help facilitate a collaborative conversation among key stakeholders, including those who manage wellbeing, safety, and liability risks for students, faculty, and the institution.

#### LIMITATIONS

This exercise is neither definitive nor exhaustive but is rather intended as a reflective tool to assist schools' discussions regarding school-related travel programming. Each school must assess their unique risks and capacities, and come to their own conclusions and decisions regarding student travel programming and supporting student well-being before and during programming.

This exercise was created by Leah Rockwell, Licensed Professional Counselor, and Counselor-in-Residence at GEBG. This content is meant to provide educational and informational guidance and should not be considered a substitute for medical or legal advice related to student mental health.



# Resource Library

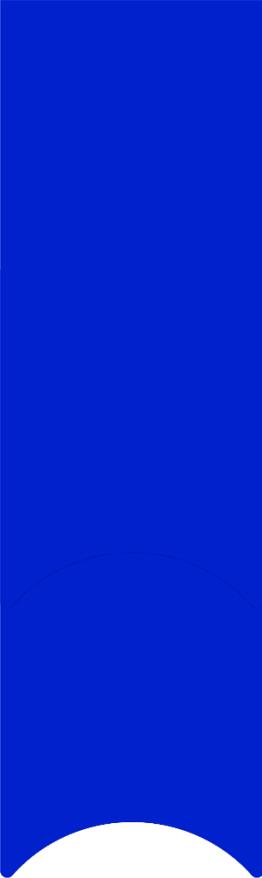
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|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Section 1: Vision &amp; Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Program Mission Statements</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Global Scholars Programs</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Climate Action Plans and Strategic Planning</a></li></ul> | <p><b>Section 2: Governance &amp; Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Global Director and Climate/Sustainability Leader Job Descriptions</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Global and Climate Budgets</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Financial Aid Models</a></li></ul> | <p><b>Section 3: Teaching &amp; Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Climate Curricula</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Travel Curricula</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Evaluation Tools</a></li></ul> |
| <p><b>Section 4: Stakeholder Communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Program Websites</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Travel Communications</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Student-Facing Climate Communications</a></li></ul>              | <p><b>Section 5: Program Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Travel Policies and Procedures</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Exchanges and Host Families</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Insurance and Documentation</a></li></ul>                                      | <p><b>Section 6: Risk Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Risk Analysis</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Leader Training</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Emergency Planning</a></li></ul>            |

# Questions?

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# Mitigating Risk in Global Study Abroad Programs

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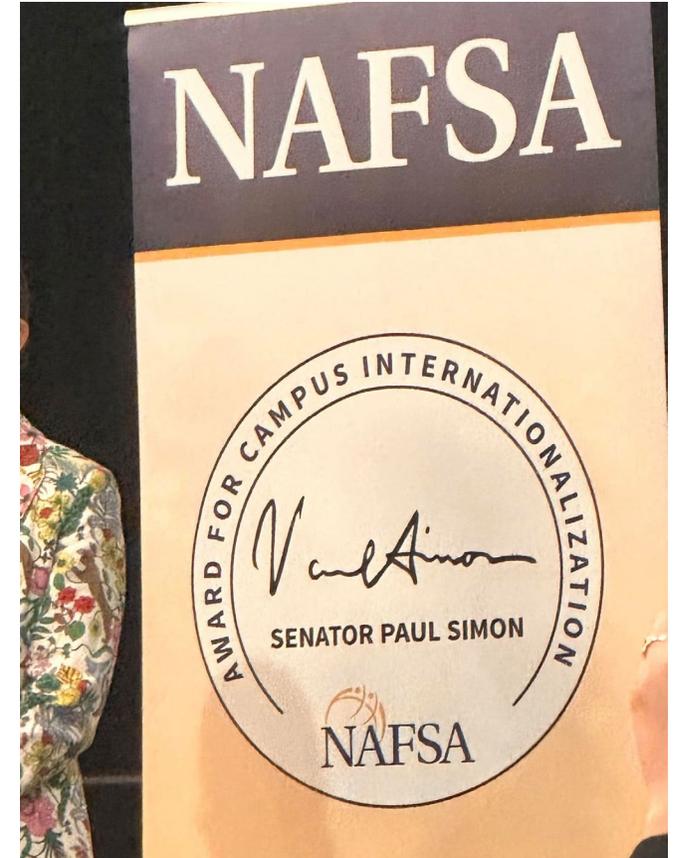
# Points of Pride

- 1890 Land-Grant Institution (HBCU)
- Enrollment of 10,137 students
- Carnegie Research II
- #6 Return on Investment
- #1 producer of African Americans in Architecture
- # 3 producer of African Americans in Agriculture
- #5 Best Value in Texas by Smart Asset 2023
- # 3 producer of African Americans in Nursing among TX public Universities # 2 producer of African Americans in Engineering
- #5 Ranked MSN Program in Texas
- 18th US News and World Report Ranking for HBCUs.



# PVAMU Snapshot of Global Engagement

- PVAMU Office of International Programs (OIP)
- Award-winning B-GLOBAL initiative
- NAFSA & AASCU Internationalization Awards (2024)
- 182 students abroad in 2023 (up from 49 in 2016)
- Programs in Africa, Latin America, Europe
- Title III-funded strategic expansion
- Director of Study Abroad + full-time staff
- Peace Corps Prep & Consular Tour Programs
- Freshman Bridge Abroad launched 2023
- Focus on global citizenship and local engagement
- First Fulbright in 2024



# Comprehensive Risk Management Approach

## 3-Phase Model:

### 1. *Pre-Departure*

Cultural sensitivity, implicit bias

### 2. *In-Country Experience*

Crisis management, safety protocols, group dynamics, conflict resolutions

### 3. *Re-Entry & Recovery*

Each stage requires preparedness, leadership, documentation, and coordinated response.

## Pre-Departure: Foundations of Safety

- Risk assessment based on global travel advisories (Assess, Prepare, Communicate, Adapt)
- Mandatory student orientations and liability waivers
- Emergency contact info, insurance, passport prep
- Faculty trained in risk leadership roles
- Communication trees and incident protocols established

# Risk Management Approach

## In-Country: Active Risk Mitigation

Faculty conduct daily safety briefings

- Student check-ins via WhatsApp/GroupMe
- Strong ties to U.S. embassies and consulates Step Program (registered)
- Local partners for real-time logistics & medical support (contractual). Build strong local partnerships
- Copies of passports, insurance, allergies, and meds on hand. Identify “what if” scenarios. Safe password. Identify Student captain/co-leads



B-GLOBAL Students Visiting Dolores Hidalgo, MX

## Re-Entry: Debrief, Reflect, Recover

Post-travel debriefing and academic integration

- Mental health and wellness check-ins
- Incident documentation and evaluation
- Curriculum tie-ins to global learning outcomes
- Assessment data shared for program improvement



2024 American Association of  
State Colleges and Universities  
Excellence in Innovation  
Award for International  
Education.



# What's Working?

- Faculty leaders are not trip planners but frontline educators and risk managers
- Gaps experienced: lack of debriefing and faculty aftercare
- Institutions providing 24/7 emergency support
- Faculty check ins
- Administrative liaisons for on the ground collaboration
- 7,043 students have taken two or more global classes.
- 120 students have completed the **Certificate of Global Awareness and Leadership**
- 100 students completed an international experience
- 200-course sections and 80 faculty trained



Consular Tours Program with Columbia and B-GLOBAL ED-Talks Focusing on Important Intercultural Ideas

# What Did Not Work Well?

- Inconsistent faculty participation and uneven implementation across programs
- Communication gaps between program offices, housing, and academic affairs, student affairs
- Slow student response/engagement early in the semester (recruitment)
- Scheduling conflicts that limited participation in pre-departure experiences
- Data collection and assessment processes are now improved and ongoing



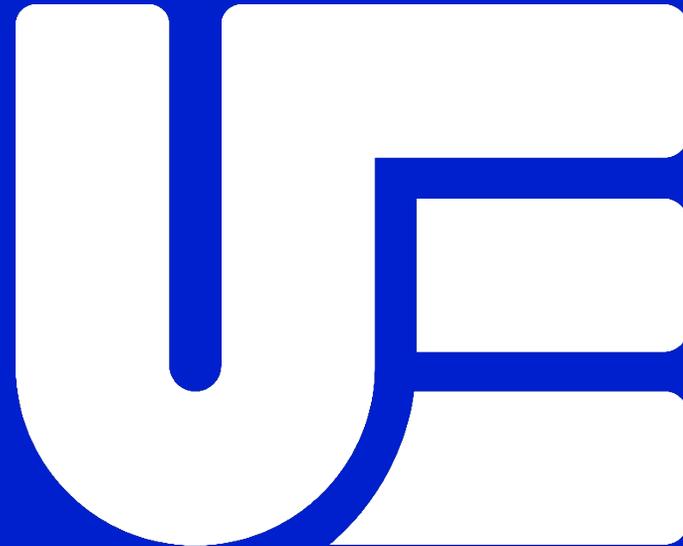
# Questions?

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