

S I N C E 1 9 8 1



ENTRY PLAN FOR AISG'S NEW DIRECTOR

# KEVIN BAKER

SCHOOL YEAR 2019-20





## OUR MISSION

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TO NURTURE  
FUTURE-READY  
INDIVIDUALS TO  
ASPIRE, ACHIEVE  
AND CONTRIBUTE

## OUR VISION

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A LEADER OF  
DYNAMIC,  
COMPASSIONATE  
AND CONNECTED  
LEARNING

# A LETTER FROM THE NEW DIRECTOR

KEVIN BAKER



**Welcome to a new school year and a new chapter in the incredible history of AISG!**

It is an honor and a privilege to be joining the AISG community as Director. I am humbled by the opportunity and excited about our bright and promising future that awaits us! I, along with my wife, Dee, look forward to getting to know everyone in this dynamic community as we join in – shoulder to shoulder – in the good work that lies ahead as we build partnerships and work together to fulfil OUR SHARED MISSION to **nurture future-ready individuals who WILL aspire, achieve and contribute!** The achievement of our mission for our students requires trust, a shared vision and a deep collective commitment.

In **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**, Stephen Covey makes the case that leaders must “first seek to understand, then to be understood”. The transition activities outlined in this plan are intended to enable me to gain a deep understanding of the context of AISG and to build deep and enduring relationships with this special community. I look forward to learning each stakeholder’s perspectives on what you feel are the immediate and long--term challenges and opportunities we face and the identification of our shared hopes and dreams.

This entry plan reflects my strong desire to make a thoughtful and intentional entry into AISG. My goal is to seek to build relationships and establish trust by being authentic, approachable, transparent and trustworthy. I desire to take the necessary time to listen and learn about AISG so that we can work collaboratively to develop, articulate and execute a shared educational vision for our future. This plan is organized to gather a great deal of information, input and ultimately insight into how best to strengthen and build upon the current and historical success of AISG as the premier school in Guangzhou.

We are at an exciting new chapter of our history. Thank you for joining us on this journey as we fulfil our mission together!

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Kevin Baker  
Director

American International School of Guangzhou

# PURPOSE:

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The purpose of this entry plan is to assist the new Director and the AISG community in achieving a smooth and positive leadership transition. The entry plan activities will aid in accelerating the leadership transition by quickly gathering critical information about past, present, and future needs of the Board, administration, staff, students and community. The implementation of the entry plan will allow the new Director to establish a strong community presence early on and build relationships, while assessing the school's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for advancement. This plan will also assist in identifying important opportunities facing AISG while building a network of personal contacts and/or resources. Overall, the entry process will assist the Director in developing a strong knowledge base of the character and values of the AISG community.

# DURATION

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The duration of the entry plan will be implemented from the time of the Board's appointment of the new Director until the end of the 2019-2020 school year. This plan will occur simultaneously with the full responsibilities of operating the school. Overall, the plan will be organized into four phases.

The phases are:

**PHASE 1** | TRANSITION & PRE-ENTRY  
September 2018 through July 2019

**PHASE 2** | ENTRY  
August 2019 through November 2019

**PHASE 3** | SYNTHESIS / EVALUATION  
December 2019 through February 2020

**PHASE 4** | STRATEGIC DESIGNING  
March 2020 through June 2020

# ENTRY PLAN GOALS

1. To ensure a smooth transition of leadership while becoming a new member of the school and community.
2. To implement a structure for open dialogue and communication with all constituencies in order to build trust, listen broadly, and learn comprehensively about AISG so that all are heard and valued. I desire to ensure that multiple perspectives and voices are heard.
3. To begin the process of developing a cohesive leadership team and building strong working relationships with the Board, school administration, teacher leadership, faculty, students, staff and key people/organizations within the school and community.
4. To review, in depth, the organization's climate, curriculum, finance, infrastructure, policies, practices, technology and other key initiatives of the school in order to ensure alignment of resources, efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of all students.
5. To complete a comprehensive school scan that will provide the foundation for the creation of a shared vision for our future and to update our strategic design as a first step towards the reaffirming a climate of continuous improvement and innovation for the benefit of all of our students.



# PRIMARY ENTRY PLAN OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this entry plan is to:

*Listen.*

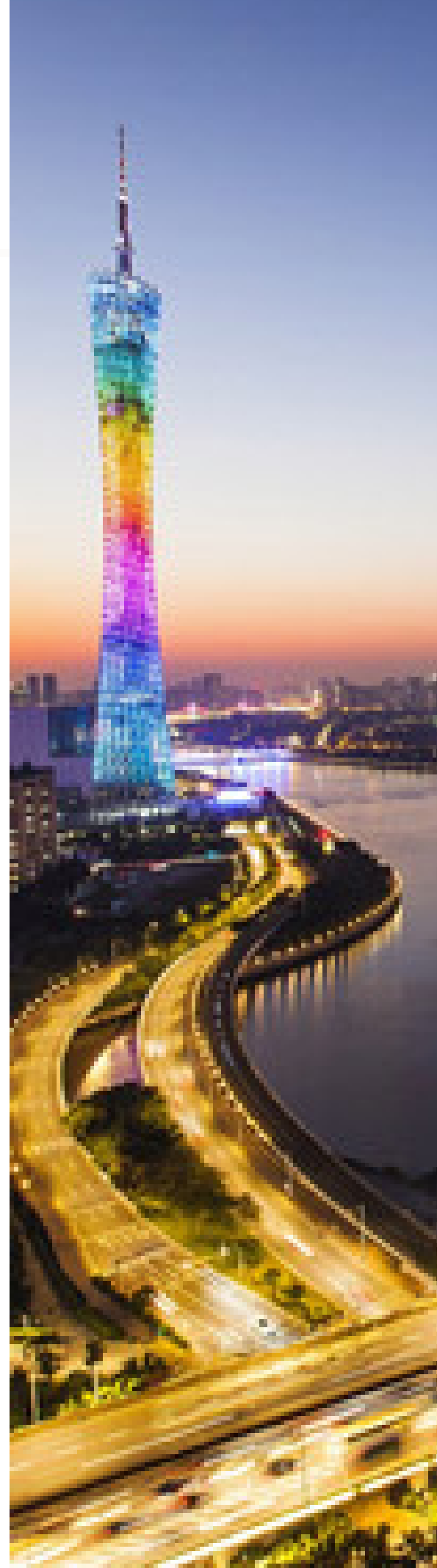
*Learn.*

*Lead.*

## Entry Plan Structure

The most important part of entry is engaging in purposeful efforts to listen, learn, and begin to develop plans in collaboration with the Board and the AISG community. The following activities are the core components of this plan:

- School Visibility
- Meetings and several retreats with the Board of Governors
- One--on--one interviews with key stakeholders
- Community "Listening Tour" meetings for parents, students, educators and other community leaders
- Data analysis and document review



# SCHOOL VISIBILITY

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It is important to spend as much time as possible in the school listening and learning from teachers, school leaders, students and parents. Therefore, my plan centers on time being spent within all aspects of our school community.

## TEACHERS

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Teachers are the cornerstone of our school system. I need to connect with and understand the expertise and perspectives of our teachers. Teacher focus groups will be invited to join me for conversations about the strengths, challenges and opportunities they see for our school.

## SCHOOL LEADERS

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A strong instructional leader and leadership team is necessary for a school to support all of our students in achieving their very best. The principals and senior leadership team members will have the opportunity to share their insights and data demonstrating school and student level successes and challenges. In addition, input on school resources, supports and recommended priorities will be gathered to inform the continuous improvement of our school.

## STUDENTS

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No one knows more about what happens in classrooms and at AISG than the students and teachers who inhabit them. Therefore, I will take time to visit with student leadership groups and focus groups to give me the opportunity to learn what students see as successes and challenges in our school and hear their expectations of the education they receive.

## PARENTS

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AISG parents, like all parents, care deeply about the education of their children. Our school seeks to be a pillar of the community that attracts diverse and globally-minded families seeking a high quality international educational experience for their children. I intend to capitalize on the power of parental engagement and partnership to ensure that AISG is meeting all of our student's needs by seeking their input and ideas on how we can continue to improve our quality services.

# BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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AISG's Board of Governors are volunteers who deeply desire for AISG to be the best at fulfilling its unique mission for the international students in Guangzhou. I, too, passionately share in this commitment. Therefore, during this entry period, we will work together to examine, discuss, clarify and agree on the philosophy and mechanics of our working relationship.

Through a series of meetings and discussions we will work together to address:

- Communication protocols
- Roles and responsibilities
- Performance evaluation criteria
- Agenda setting
- Protocols and processes for addressing constituent concerns
- A process for developing a shared vision for the future of AISG and our strategic goals for reaching that vision

# CENTRAL OFFICE / SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES

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To meet the needs of all students at AISG, it is critical that central office functions are "best in class" and provide outstanding service excellence.

I will work alongside office leaders to:

- Review major initiatives underway, successes and significant or potential problems in each area and major decisions that need to be made in the coming year
- Review the scope and breadth of the AISG curriculum, co-curricular program, as well as our continuous improvement recommendations from our recent accreditation visit.
- Review the effectiveness of our school communication strategies, and our information--data management system with a special focus on student achievement, budget and human resources systems
- Review all functions around teacher and leader talent acquisition and development – as research has shown us that the most important factor in a quality education is the quality of the teacher and the leadership



# EDUCATOR, STUDENT, PARENT AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

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Several community "Listening Tour" meetings will be held during the first few months of my entry plan. These meetings will provide opportunities for educators, parents, students, community members and other interested parties to provide input, ideas and perspectives on AISG and to begin to develop relationships and partnerships to take us into the future.

## CONCLUSION

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As the new Director for the American International School Guangzhou, this entry plan will afford me the opportunity to listen and learn from a vast array of AISG stakeholders and gain a deeper understanding of the context and structure of our international education efforts in our community. This entry plan will help us to begin to formulate ideas and strategies to strengthen and build upon our strong record of student success and to chart a course to an even brighter and promising future! We have the opportunity, right here and right now, to make a difference for each AISG student as we prepare them to be 'future ready'!

I look forward to your partnership, active participation and positive contributions through my entry process!

**Go RamNation!**

Enthusiastically,



Director  
American International School Guangzhou

# TRANSITION & PRE-ENTRY

(September through July)

The pre-entry transition phase allowed my wife and I time to establish a presence in the AISG community in advance of assuming my duties as the next Director.

To initiate certain aspects of this phase, I dedicated time to visit the school numerous times to help facilitate a smooth transition for AISG. During this time, I met with many key individuals in order to gain a greater understanding of current school operations. Tasks that were accomplished during this time included:

- Meetings with the Board of Governors and the Board Chairman and attending several board meetings, retreats and workshops
- Numerous transition meetings with Dr. Carmody, the departing Director
- Meetings with the AISG leadership team, learning leaders and other key staff members
- Numerous meetings regarding the Master Facility Plan
- Meetings with students and attending a few school community events, including the APAC Band concert
- Establishing my commitment to visibility and approachability while on campus
- Meetings with the PTA board and many parents
- Reviewing key school documents such as policy manuals, handbooks, reports and plans
- Joined the AISG leadership team at the Search Associates Teacher Recruitment Fair in Bangkok
- Numerous meetings with the outgoing DFO
- Led the DFO search committee and hired a new DFO for AISG
- Monitoring of our admission process for new AISG students
- Assisting with our Orientation Program for our new faculty in July and August
- Leading of a teambuilding retreat for our new senior leadership team in July



# ENTRY

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## (August through November)

The entry phase will be about the Director being a listener and learner within the school and community. A high degree of visibility will be utilized throughout the school and community in an effort to reach out to all constituencies. Emphasis will initially be focused on making introductions, building relationships, listening, and being seen by staff, students and community members.

During the first 90 days of school, I will conduct a "Listening Tour" of the school community. This will allow me to meet with a variety of individual stakeholders and large/small groups including, but not limited to, members of the Board of Governors, administrators, association leaderships, faculty, support staff, students, parents, community members, bureau officials, ministry officials and media representatives. The primary purpose of my "Listening Tour" is to hear individual and large/small groups' perspectives, experiences and opinions related to AISG. I will keep my individual thoughts and beliefs to myself at this time, so individuals can feel free to share their impressions, suggestions and/or opinions.

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## August 2019

### **First Day of Work at AISG**

- Conduct a school walk around and personally introduce myself to all staff that are working on that day on both campuses.
- Conduct a site visit to review the Master Facilities Plan construction progress.

### **First Day of School at AISG**

- Be visible and greet students and parents outside as they get off the buses and enter campus. This will be a daily routine for me.
- Participate in schoolwide assemblies to welcome everyone to our new school year
- Walk through all divisions and be present at any other opening assemblies to meet and greet students
- Be present outside at the end of the day to monitor bus loading procedures and to say goodbye to our students
- Meet with the school leadership team after school to debrief the first day and to highlight any issues that need to be addressed

# ENTRY

## August 2019

### First Week of School

- Continue visibility routines
- Work with the leadership team to trouble shoot any start up issues
- Send my first communique to AISG parents about our first week
- Begin scheduling individual and group Listening Tour meetings

### Subsequent Weeks

A. Work with the Board Chairman to review:

1. Agendas
2. Procedures
3. Communications
4. Board Annual Calendar schedule
5. Expectations

B. Continue to hold regular leadership team and learning leader meetings

1. Focus on a team approach
2. Clarifying roles and communications
3. Review current administrative and supervisory meeting schedules

C. Begin "Listening Tour" meetings

1. First month
  - Individual meetings with each member of the Board of Governors
  - Individual meetings with each administrator, manager and coordinator
  - Individual meetings with association leaders

D. Attend faculty and staff meetings to answer questions and observe so as to get a pulse on the organization

E. Visit with custodians, food service, maintenance and transportation staff both during the day and after hours, as appropriate

F. Attend AISG cocurricular, sport and community events

G. Continue to closely monitor the Master Facilities Plan progress

H. Host, in partnership with our PTA, a culminating community activity to celebrate our new beginning and to build community

# ENTRY

## September 2019

- A. Monitor and adjust the entry plan as needed
- B. Continuously make regular visits to divisions and maintain commitment to visibility
- C. Continue senior administration team and other meetings
- D. Continue regular meetings with association leaders and key community leaders
- E. Continue regular contact with Board members
- F. Continue "Listening Tour" meetings
  - 1. Individual meetings with local leaders
    - Other community leaders (chambers., etc)
  - 2. Individual meetings with local media contacts (as appropriate)
  - 3. Group meeting (during the day)
    - Student Council groups
    - Building faculties and staff
  - 4. Schedule and conduct evening group meetings:
    - PTA
    - Parent forum meetings
    - Student forum meetings
    - Faculty forum meetings
    - Staff forum meetings
    - Business leaders and community leaders at an AISG Business Advisory group breakfast meeting
    - Guangzhou City Officials, other political leaders and service groups
- H. Start review of personnel and re-contracting process for the next school year
- I. Continue to attend extracurricular, sport and/or community events, as possible
- J. Continue to closely monitor the Master Facilities Plan progress

## October 2019

- A. Monitor and adjust the entry plan as needed
- B. Continue with established management activities
- C. Continue to closely monitor the Master Facilities Plan progress
- D. Continue "Listening Tour" meetings
  - 1. Follow up meetings with PTA
  - 2. Follow up meetings with Parents
  - 3. Follow up meetings with other groups as needed
  - 4. Individual meetings with company Human Resource reps that have students at AISG
  - 5. Individual meetings with Guangzhou relocation companies
  - 6. Conduct any additional individual or group meetings as needed

# ENTRY

## November 2019

- A. Conduct general school business, meetings and/or operations reviews with the DFO
  1. Business and Operations review with a focus on expense monitoring, budgetary communications and overall development efforts
  2. Curriculum review
  3. Assessment data review
  4. Infrastructure and facility review
  5. Technology review
  6. Transportation review
  
- B. Continue to closely monitor the Master Facilities Plan progress



# SYNTHESIS/EVALUATION

## (December through February)

The 3 to 6 month phase will be about synthesizing and evaluating my continuous learning experiences from my first three months as Director. Time will also be utilized to adjust the schedule of the entry plan and "Listening Tour," as needed. Emphasis for Phase 3 will focus on the development of a cohesive leadership team, formalizing routines, compiling and analyzing the findings of the 'Listening Tour' and identifying SWOT themes to help guide the next phase of the entry plan. This compilation and qualitative study of the school community will assist in the refreshing of our strategic plan.

- A. Continue regular visits in school (classes, departments, divisions)
  1. To support the development of a continuous learning culture
  2. To initiate scheduled classroom visits
    - To interact with faculty and students
    - To watch the instructional and learning process
  3. To attend regular meetings with departments, grade levels, etc., as practical to observe
- B. Commence regular meeting schedule as determined via Entry Phase
  1. Board of Governors meetings
  2. Leadership Team and Learning Leaders meetings
  3. Student Organizations
  4. PTA
  5. AISG Business Advisory Breakfast meetings
  6. Guangzhou Service and City organization meetings
  7. Guangzhou Consulates
  8. Other groups identified through the entry process
- C. Complete school and community "Listening Tour"
  1. Finalize any remaining individual interviews
  2. Finalize any remaining group interviews
- D. Continue to meet, develop and nurture relationships with all constituency groups
- E. Listen, listen, listen
- F. Meet with Board of Governors members
  1. Discuss Strategic Design process
  2. Work with the Board Chairman and Governance Committee to address priority issues and develop a governance agenda to focus on AISG strategic targets and future goals
  3. Review AISG operating procedures to ensure policy alignment
- G. Conduct administrative goal setting exercise

# SYNTHESIS/EVALUATION

H. Continue developing a complete knowledge of the school with executive administration and/or supervisors as appropriate:

1. Curriculum and Assessment

- a. Review current curriculum review system and accountability measures
- b. Review progress on WASC action plan
- c. Identify and review all student achievement improvement initiatives
- d. Review of professional development plan
- e. Review curriculum development and mapping program
- f. Review co-curricular program and development plan

2. School's financial positions

- a. Budget and expenditures
- b. Long-range forecast
- c. Grant funding
- d. Cash flow
- e. Fund balance
- f. Liabilities
- g. Reserves

3. Personnel procedures

- a. Recruiting strategy, process and materials
- b. Hiring, evaluation and exit surveys
- c. Certification and degree levels
- d. Appraisal and evaluation processes (in the words of Jim Collins: "ensure we have the right people on the bus and in the right seats.")
- e. Development and training
- f. Needs - create a short-term and long-term staffing plan
- g. Review central office structure and organizational chart - seek to maximize efficiencies

4. Student Support Services - Counseling and Pastoral Care

- a. Assessment review
- b. Programmatic review
- c. Staffing review

I. Address urgent issues that arise as part of the listening, learning and leading process (always taking care to allow the issues to be resolved as close to the source as possible)

J. Start review of interview protocols, observations and notes for strategic planning phase

K. Continue to attend a wide variety of cocurricular, sport and community events

L. Join Guangzhou civic organizations to join for professional and school benefit



# STRATEGIC DESIGNING

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## **(March through June)**

The strategic designing phase is the next step after the culminating report to the Board on the feedback collected during the "Listening Tour." The perspectives, experiences and opinions collected during each phase via interview protocols, observations and/or notes will be analyzed in order to qualitatively develop key themes within the school. The goal is to take these themes and incorporate them with the previous strategic planning work that the AISG community has undertaken so as to develop a revised and refreshed strategic plan that will lead the school into the future and advance student excellence in all areas of our mission. After the development and approval of an updated strategic plan, we will begin the process to develop a comprehensive multi-year action plan to systematically ensure that our resources and efforts are aligned to achieve our desired outcomes.

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NURTURING FUTURE-READY INDIVIDUALS TO ASPIRE, ACHIEVE AND  
CONTRIBUTE