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## Headline News

### SABIS® Solidifies Plans for Africa Expansion

In early January 2016, leaders from SABIS®, Investbridge Capital (IBC), and Centum Investment Limited (Centum), the parties that make up the ACE consortium, met at SABIS® headquarters in Adma, Lebanon, to firm up plans for the SABIS® International School – Nairobi. The meeting in Lebanon was the first time ACE members came together since July 2015, when they officially announced their partnership and revealed plans to open schools in East Africa, starting in Kenya.



*ACE leaders meet at SABIS® headquarters in Lebanon*

In two days of meetings in Lebanon, ACE leaders identified the steps necessary to realize their partnership and outlined plans to establish the SABIS® International School – Nairobi in Kenya in September 2017. The new school in Kenya will join the global SABIS® Network of schools and offer a top-quality, college preparatory education to local and international students. The purpose-built school campus will be housed on approximately 70,000 square meters of land and feature state-of-the-art facilities. In its initial stage, the school will welcome students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 and add an additional grade level in each subsequent year of operation.

Both IBC and Centum are looking forward to working with SABIS® to bring high-quality education to Africa. Mark DeSario, CEO of IBC, said: "We are thrilled to be partnering with SABIS® to bring their world-class education platform into Africa. We share SABIS®'s vision that every child in the world has the potential to achieve greatness and deserves the best possible education. We see tremendous potential [...] to succeed across the African continent, and we strongly believe that SABIS®'s education system

and proprietary content production coupled with the student led organization is second-to-none in preparing young people for opportunities in the future."

James Mworia, CEO of Centum, is equally pleased with the partnership. "Centum's partnership with IBC and SABIS® translates our vision of becoming active sponsors in the education space into reality, a sector that represents basic needs for the growing population in the East African region and beyond. The opportunity to partner with SABIS® to develop schools across sub-Saharan Africa so as to help students achieve their fullest potential excites us. We believe by leveraging SABIS®'s innovative proprietary curriculum, cutting-edge information technology platform, and a non-selective admissions policy will be transformative to Africa's most valuable asset, one child at a time."

To keep up-to-date about the SABIS® Network's development across the African continent, read SABIS® [Newsletters](#) and [Press Releases](#).

## Two SABIS® U.S. Charter Schools Celebrate Milestone Anniversaries

The SABIS® International Charter School (SICS) and the Holyoke Community Charter School (HCCS) are two SABIS® Network charter schools in the U.S. that are currently celebrating 20 and 10 years of successful operation, respectively.

SICS, one of the state of Massachusetts' original charter schools, opened shortly after the state passed a charter school law back in the mid-1990s and has been on a success path ever since. The K-12 school has been ranked among America's best high schools by *U.S. News and World Report* for six consecutive years. The school has consistently closed the achievement gap between minority and Caucasian students and between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. In its 20-year history, the school has graduated over 1,100 students, all of whom have gained admission to college and several of whom have received scholarships. In the 2014-15 academic year, SICS graduates earned over \$9.6 million in college scholarships.



*SICS team showing their enthusiasm for the future*

HCCS, located in Holyoke, Massachusetts, opened its doors in 2005 and welcomed 702 students, many the children of Puerto Rican immigrants to the U.S. Students at the K-8 public charter school have set a high bar of achievement, most recently earning recognition on the National Spanish Examination. HCCS students are active, engaged members of the Holyoke community and are looked up to as role models by others, even earning a citation from the governor of Massachusetts for an anti-bullying campaign implemented at the school.

Both schools have held events throughout the 2015-16 academic year to celebrate their milestone anniversaries. Kick-off anniversary events for both schools were held in late September 2015 and involved the entire school communities. Most recently, the celebrations continued with dinners for all staff members at each school.



*HCCS faculty, staff, and administrators pose for a group photo*

HCCS faculty, staff, and administrators got together for an evening of celebration on March 16, 2016. The dinner, which gave everyone the opportunity to come together as a team, included a welcome from School Director, Dr. Sonia Correa Pope, and was followed by a speech from SABIS® President, Carl Bistany, who commended the staff on their efforts. "By working as a caring and cohesive team under the leadership of Dr. Pope," stated Bistany, "and using the SABIS® Educational System, all of you have contributed to helping HCCS students build a solid academic foundation and develop essential life skills." He went on to encourage everyone to continue working together to make a difference in students' lives.

At a similar event held for SICS faculty, staff, and administration, attendees were welcomed by Karen Reuter, SICS School Director, who invited Carl Bistany to speak. His message praised SICS for its many accomplishments and pointed out the challenge that often accompanies institutions that have been placed on pedestal. "For the times ahead when you feel the pressure mounting and need something to motivate and sustain you, remember that no one picks on #2," he said.

Following the speeches, celebrations continued, giving the teams at both schools the opportunity to renew their commitment to the active pursuit of success through the end of the current academic year as well as for years to come. Mr. George Saad, SABIS® Vice President – U.S. Operations, who attended the dinners characterized the spirit of the events: "The energy and camaraderie were palpable; the message of encouragement and resilience echoed loudly and was timely as both schools gear up for the final stretch before students take state exams."

Reflecting on the event, HCCS's Dr. Pope said, "The ten years have flown by. It's heartening to see all the lives we have touched and the positive impact this SABIS® Network school has had." Mrs. Reuter from SICS echoed her sentiments and offered a bright outlook on the future of the school. "We are fortunate to be able to draw on momentum built up over years of success," she said. "Moving forward, together with ongoing support from SABIS®, we can leverage that momentum to carry our students even further."

For more information about SICS, visit [sics.sabis.net](http://sics.sabis.net). To learn more about HCCS, visit [hccs.sabis.net](http://hccs.sabis.net). To keep up with the latest information about the SABIS® Network, subscribe to our [Newsletter](#).

## SIS UK Signs Cooperation Agreement with ULink College of Shanghai

In early January 2016, several months of discussions to establish a cooperation agreement between SABIS International School UK (SIS UK) and ULink College of Shanghai were realized. The final agreement opens the door for ULink students to attend SIS UK for 12 weeks in Term 3 starting in the 2015-16 academic year.

Up to 45 ULink students who have a minimum 8<sup>th</sup> grade English proficiency will be eligible for the program, which will integrate students into the SABIS<sup>®</sup> Educational System implemented at SIS UK and provide an opportunity for them to experience all aspects of boarding school life alongside SIS UK students.

Carefully designed to facilitate successful cooperation between ULink and SIS UK, the agreement provides for ongoing communication between the two schools. Prior to the arrival of ULink students in the U.K., a SIS UK educator of Chinese heritage will travel to Shanghai to participate in a 3-week orientation for eligible ULink students. This will help ensure that interested students have a clear expectation about the SIS UK academic program and life at a U.K. boarding school. When ULink students arrive at SIS UK, they will be accompanied by a ULink teacher, who will work with SIS UK to help them settle in before returning to Shanghai. Additional support for ULink's students will be provided by a Chinese houseparent employed by SIS UK.



ULink College of Shanghai team at SABIS<sup>®</sup> headquarters

*"We are very excited to have signed this cooperation agreement with ULink," said Mr. John Nicholson, SIS UK Director. "SIS UK will have the opportunity to experience an even more diverse environment and ULink students will have the chance to experience a U.K. boarding school environment while maintaining high academic standards."*

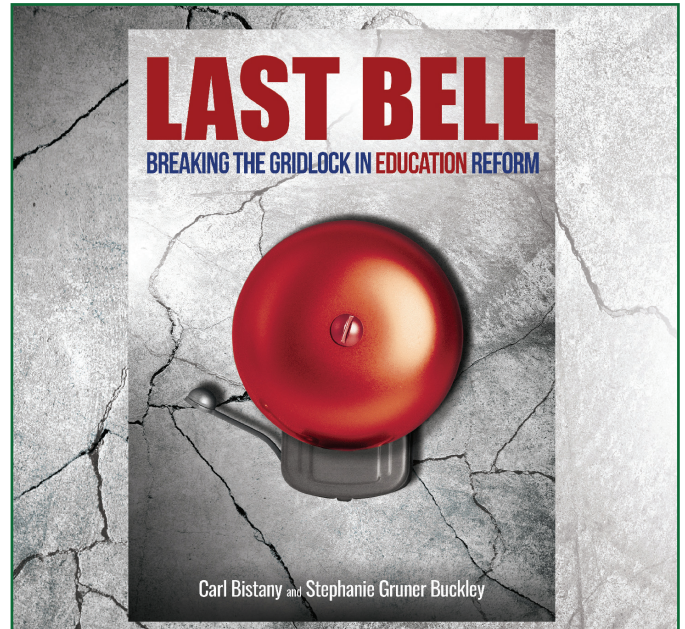
To learn more about SIS UK, visit [sisuk.sabis.net](http://sisuk.sabis.net) or follow SIS UK on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/sisuk). For information about ULink College of Shanghai, visit [ulink.cn](http://ulink.cn).

## Interview: Last Bell

**Last Bell: Breaking the gridlock in education reform**, a book co-authored by SABIS<sup>®</sup> President Carl Bistany and journalist Stephanie Gruner Buckley, was released in early November 2015. The book challenges legislators, school officials, and education reform leaders to do better by America's children by taking a free market approach including for-profit education providers.

In delivering its message, *Last Bell* portrays the alarming state of U.S. public schools, examines thirty years of failed reform efforts, and concludes that the nation must attract the best public education providers, including for-profit companies, to boost achievement and secure America's future.

The SABIS<sup>®</sup> Newsletter team sat down with Carl Bistany and Stephanie Gruner Buckley to talk about the book, its message, and impact.



*Last Bell* by Carl Bistany and Stephanie Gruner Buckley

**SABIS<sup>®</sup> Newsletter (SN):** Mr. Bistany, what inspired this book?

**Carl Bistany:** SABIS<sup>®</sup> has long believed that the way to raise the education standards for all is to take a free market approach, one that specifically embraces the for-profit private sector. Unfortunately, not many people see or understand the benefits of a for-profit approach in education, and rather than trying to understand more about for-profits and their benefits, over the past few years, people have made the for-profit private sector a target, particularly in the U.S. charter school market.

In writing *Last Bell*, we wanted to get SABIS<sup>®</sup>'s voice out there by providing a book that gives a complete picture. We wanted to present the arguments against for-profits and show how they are faulty. We wanted to show the benefits of for-profit school management and use one of SABIS<sup>®</sup>'s U.S. charter schools as an example of how these benefits are helping students succeed. And finally, we wanted to include some policy recommendations based in SABIS<sup>®</sup>'s experience to help guide advocates and legislators working on issues facing U.S. public education.

***"As Last Bell points out, eliminating the obstacles to for-profit charter schools would enable a real revolution in U.S. public education."***

-- William Edgerly, former CEO State Street Bank Charter School

**SN:** Mrs. Gruner-Buckley, based on your research for the book, what do you see as the biggest issues facing U.S. public education?

**Stephanie Gruner-Buckley:** The biggest issue is the failure to fix the chronic achievement gaps between different races and ethnicities and between students from rich and poor families. White and Asian students living in wealthy suburbs have access to perhaps the best public education in the world, while black, Hispanic, and other minority students in far less affluent inner city neighborhoods would probably be better off going to school in Vietnam, Latvia, or Russia. Perhaps that's overstated, but the point is that people should be outraged by the inequality of public schools, and legislators should appreciate the huge social and economic consequences that result.

**SN:** The widening achievement gap and inequitable access to quality education seem like quite significant issues. Mr. Bistany, how do you see *Last Bell* potentially impacting the work to solve them?

**Carl Bistany:** Yes, these are quite significant issues that are not new to U.S. public education; they have been around for the last 30 years, whether people want to admit it or not. What makes the problems particularly disturbing today is that we now more clearly understand the impact that they will have on the future of the U.S. if they are not solved. In short, if the U.S. does not find a way to improve public education standards for all students, its position as a global leader will be in jeopardy.

That is where the message in *Last Bell* comes in – as a resource for those who are really committed to finding a solution. The book outlines several of the major efforts over the past 30 years to improve public education standards. The advent of public charter schools was one of these efforts and, in my opinion, is the one that has had the greatest impact. These schools were created in order to inject competition and accountability into public education in the U.S. They were designed to operate free from many of the regulations that restrict traditional public schools and their student outcomes. Unfortunately, charter schools, and for-profit managed ones specifically, have been met with resistance, limiting the scope of their impact and scalability. *Last Bell* clearly identifies the hurdles facing U.S. charter school operators – many of them erected by teachers unions and politicians afraid of alienating unions – and seeks to remove them using logical, rational arguments.

**SN:** Do you see the impact of *Last Bell* as being limited to the U.S. or does it have a broader application?

**Carl Bistany:** Although the book uses the U.S. and the charter school model as the vehicle to point out the benefits of for-profit engagement in public education, the book's message is applicable to any country seeking to raise education standards for all students.

**“Last Bell by Carl Bistany and Stephanie Gruner Buckley is a primer on how to roll up your sleeves and go in ‘eyes open’ with market driven principles to effect substantive change in the American system of public education.”**

-- Gregory J. Riccio, Ph.D

**SN:** Mrs. Gruner Buckley, why do you think for-profits are not embraced in the education sector? Do you think that it is realistic to think this could change? And has the process of working on this project changed the way you look at for-profits in education?

**Stephanie Gruner-Buckley:** I think it's always about money and power. Unions and school district officials are extremely influential and they do not want to lose funding or control. And so they vilify outsiders in any way they can. The irony here is that they use the money argument to persuade legislators and parents that for-profits are inherently evil and money-grubbing when the reality is that many of them are fighting for-profit involvement exactly because it threatens their own hold on the money. I don't think this will change until there is a crisis point so severe that there's no other choice.

Before researching this subject, I admit I probably would have bought the argument that for-profits were in it for the money. My experience as a business reporter tells me that it's usually about the money. But then I did the reporting and changed my mind. Students are suffering, as is America as a whole, because of this gross inequality. I believe we should use every means possible to change things. I was also fortunate enough to spend time talking to people on both sides of the debate and meeting people at SABIS® Network schools, including teachers, parents, and students. I was genuinely moved by the stories I heard. I wish that all legislators and opponents of charter schools and for-profits could hear these stories too. I wish they would take the time and listen. I'm sure they would come away with a different view, and America would be far better off.

**“For our children’s sake, Last Bell should be required reading for every legislator in the country!”**

-- Anne Darcy, Board President, Holyoke Community Charter School

**SN:** Mr. Bistany, how has *Last Bell* been received? What has been the feedback on the message of the book?

**Carl Bistany:** Any discussion about for-profits and education is sure to turn up differing points of view. Some people out there subscribe to the belief that providing education should be a purely humanitarian pursuit and should not involve profits. They believe that you should not mix the desire to make societal change with making money. They are afraid that the presence of a money motivator will jeopardize quality. But there are also others, like SABIS®, who know from experience that this is simply not the case. We see that a money motivator has the exact opposite effect from what some fear -- it keeps entrepreneurs from skimping on the product; it drives innovation and contributes to competition, which ensure a better and better outcome in terms of student performance and higher education standards.

In answer to your question, the feedback on the message of the book has been mixed as we would expect. I'm glad that we have made the case for for-profit engagement in public education and given those who are interested a resource they can use to debunk some of the myths out there about for-profits. I'm also optimistic about the role that *Last Bell* can play in informing policymakers about the power and potential of a for-profit approach in education.

For more information about *Last Bell*, visit [lastbellnews.com](http://lastbellnews.com).

## Academics

### SABIS® Curriculum Prepares Students for College and Career

One of the many strengths of the SABIS® Network is the ability of each network school to offer students a top-quality, international education that is effectively aligned with local and national education standards. As the network continues to expand into new countries, from Kenya to Brazil, the SABIS® Academic Development Division is dedicated to aligning the SABIS® curriculum to ensure that students are prepared for success on official external examinations and gain acceptance to university.

Long before SABIS® opens a school in a country that is new to the network, the SABIS® Academic Development Division begins the curriculum alignment process in order to understand the educational requirements of the country. A 360 degree perspective of the required standards and a specific grade-by-grade breakdown are completed in order to fully comprehend curriculum requirements. With this knowledge and information, the division then reviews the SABIS® curriculum and the SABIS® Book Series, aligning all concepts with the regulations.


There are a number of examples that reflect this process in action. One interesting example is the current review of


all material to align with the Brazilian Ministry of Education standards and requirements prior to the opening of the SABIS® Escola Internacional – Campinas in 2018. In Brazil, for example, curriculum standards are heavily focused on topics such as Amazon culture, farming, and natural heritage; therefore, content must be developed to meet these requirements.

Another example is the recent alignment of the curriculum across the SABIS® Network to meet new SAT standards that were introduced in 2016. The changes included, among other things, a revision of the types of vocabulary words assessed and a greater focus of math questions on linear equations, functions, and proportional thinking. In view of these and other changes, the SABIS® Academic Development Division integrated specific SAT preparation content into the curricula implemented in SABIS® Network schools around the world. New content was strategically added at all levels including primary, middle, and high school to ensure that students are ready on exam day.

SABIS® Network schools are committed to educating students who are college and career ready. Through a rigorous and dynamic curriculum, students in SABIS® Network schools, regardless of where they are around the world, are prepared to meet both local and international requirements.


For more information about the SABIS® Educational System, visit [sabis.net](http://sabis.net). To keep up-to-date with SABIS® news, follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/sabisnet).



 **SABIS®**

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*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*


**4-Week Program** | July 18<sup>th</sup> to August 12<sup>th</sup>  
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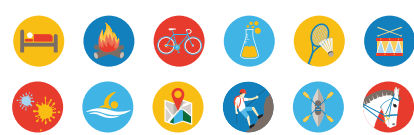


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## SABIS® Offers English Program for Teachers

In 2008, two years after the opening of the International School of Choueifat – Erbil in Kurdistan, SABIS® embarked on a Private-Public Partnership (PPP) with the Kurdish Regional Government in order to bring the top-quality SABIS® Educational System to students enrolled in public schools. In addition to helping to raise public school student performance in the region, SABIS®'s approach to PPP schools also has the added benefit of building teacher capacity.

SABIS®'s capacity building plan includes an English for Adults program, which assists teachers in the development of strong English language skills and strengthens their effectiveness in the classroom. As English is not the official language of Kurdistan, many teachers benefit from the English for Adults program, which helps them acquire first-language competence in English and in turn improves their students' fluency.



*PPP teachers pose with their English certificates*

The program, which is offered after school hours, consists of five levels that include introductory, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced, with each level taking at least 100 hours to complete. Each level includes a focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English. Course materials, supplementary support including audio, video, podcasts, and worksheets, as well as assessments are part of the training program to ensure that teachers achieve first-language competence in English.

According to Hawar Barzenji, a math teacher at Kalar International School, one of the SABIS® PPP schools in Kurdistan: "With regard to the English training, I benefited a lot from it. I had a fair knowledge of the English language and good vocabulary prior to taking the training. However, the course has enriched my grammatical and linguistic skills in English. The most important part of the course is that our trainers are native speakers and, therefore, focus a lot on pronunciation, which in turn improves our speaking skills."

SABIS® has also begun offering the English for Adults program to non-native English speaking faculty and staff around the world. To date, the English for Adults program is offered in the U.A.E., Kurdistan-Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan. Further implementation is planned for schools in Azerbaijan, Brazil, and Panama.

To stay up-to-date with the latest SABIS® news, follow us on Twitter at [SABIS\\_EDUCATION](#). To learn more about SABIS®, visit [sabis.net](#).

## IT

### SABIS® 360 Helps Directors Maximize Achievement

As an education system that integrates frequent summative and formative assessment, the SABIS® Educational System captures important data performance points for every student. This data is stored in a complex system that uses specialized retrieval tools for various users at the school level. Among the latest tools to have been released is SABIS® 360 for directors.

School directors are the core of the administrative structure in SABIS® Network schools. They are tasked with fostering a positive, school-wide learning environment that facilitates strong academic results, promotes active student engagement, and creates clear avenues of communication. To help directors meet their responsibilities, SABIS® launched SABIS® 360 for directors on a limited basis in the 2015-16 academic year.

SABIS® 360 for directors gives directors a bird's-eye view of what is happening at school through a dashboard with three key areas of focus: academics, discipline, and attendance. Based on parameters that are set regionally by SABIS®, SABIS® 360 notifies the director of areas of concern as soon as issues arise. Directors are then able to mobilize relevant staff, create an action plan, monitor progress of the plan, and follow up until issues have been resolved.



*Directors learn to use SABIS® 360*

As a tool that minimizes the amount of data analysis required by a director, SABIS® 360 helps maximize student achievement. "SABIS® 360 is another tool that helps keep students from falling through the cracks," says Frida Ghibril, Deputy Director at International School of Choueifat – Choueifat, Lebanon. "With SABIS® 360 in the hands of the director, students in the SABIS® Network cannot fail in peace."

SABIS® consistently strives to provide schools with innovative and useful tools to help ensure that students achieve their full potential in the most productive school environment possible. SABIS® 360 for directors is one of these tools and will soon be available to all directors across the network.

### SABIS® Tightens Cybersecurity across the Network

The SABIS® IT Department has always been committed to protecting the data that drives the organization and the learning process in SABIS® Network schools. The department implements multiple layers of IT security hardware and software to ensure that data is well protected at all times and that security solutions run 24/7. In

In addition, global IT security policies are developed, implemented, audited, and regularly updated to ensure that the same high IT security standards are followed throughout the network. However, in a world that is constantly changing and witnessing the introduction of new, sophisticated cyber-threats, the SABIS® IT Department has taken additional measures to tighten cybersecurity.

“Now, more than ever, safeguarding intellectual property, financial information, and reputation is a crucial business strategy for any organization,” commented Mr. Serge Bakhos, SABIS® Group Vice President – Information Technology, Creative Design, and Book Publishing. “With the number of threats and the sophistication of attacks increasing at an astonishing rate, data protection is one of our top priorities. We are constantly tightening our cyber defenses across the board.”

As part of the plan to tighten cybersecurity on an organizational level, SABIS® recently launched a network-wide initiative designed to create and build awareness among all individuals by emphasizing the role and responsibilities each person has to protect and safeguard company data and information. The new SABIS® IT Security Handbook pinpoints the most important security measures and defines the parameters of employee accountability for data breaches when using a computer or device in a SABIS® Network school or in a SABIS® corporate office.

To further educate individuals on IT security and potential risks, the SABIS® IT Department is developing a series of IT security awareness videos that cover a broad range of topics. These videos are intended to provide individuals with the necessary know-how and skills to avoid becoming a victim of cybercrime.

By understanding the cybersecurity threat that all organizations face today and by creating the necessary awareness among users, the SABIS® IT Department is committed to continuing efforts to safeguard the network’s data.

**SABIS®**

**USE PASSPHRASES**  
as they are more secure and less vulnerable to attacks.  
Example: tBornoTB/tisq!7 is a passphrase that stands for “To be or not to be/that is the question!”

**CREATE**  
passwords that are at least 10 characters long.  
“!Htr10bDtcy”

**INCLUDE**  
uppercase, lowercase, numbers, and special characters.  
“r!t!0@[E2Rp”

**USE DIFFERENT**  
passwords for every service.

**DON'T USE**  
common words in languages or words that are slang in any language.

**DON'T GIVE**  
out your password to anyone.

**CHANGE**  
your password every 90 days.

**DON'T BASE**  
your password on personal information (date of birth, family name, etc.).

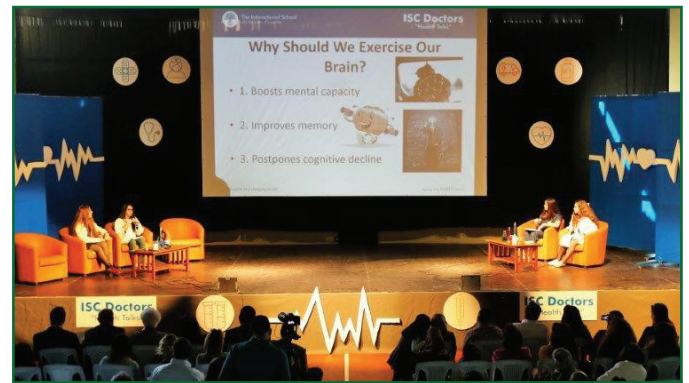
**DID YOU KNOW?**  
To hack a password it takes:  
• 0.003 seconds for a 5-character lowercase password  
• 52 seconds for an 8-character lowercase password  
• 58 years for a 10-character password holding all types (lowercase, uppercase, numbers, and special characters)

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## SLO®

### ISC-Choueifat Stages Health Awareness Event

On November 21, 2015, the SABIS Student Life Organization® (SLO®) Sports & Health Department at the International School of Choueifat (ISC-Choueifat) in Choueifat, Lebanon, planned and hosted a live talk show called “ISC Doctors: Health Talks.” Following the same formula as the popular television show “Doctors,” ISC-Choueifat prefects discussed a number of health issues in front of a live audience of more than 200 guests.



SLO® prefects on stage at ISC Doctors: Health Talks

The objective of the event was to create awareness about the health issues that affect the lives of youth today and to promote general wellbeing in a fun, lively way that would resonate with the audience. In preparation for the event, SLO® Sports & Health Department prefects thoroughly researched and prepared presentations about their topics which included drug and alcohol abuse, fitness and nutrition, living with illness, asthma, and first aid tips – all of which they had pre-approved by health care professionals.



SLO® prefects discussing health topics at ISC Doctors

The event created a sense of excitement in the school and involved prefects from all SLO® departments. From backstage management, sound effects, and event promotion to welcoming guests, hosting, and presenting, prefects were involved in all aspects of the event.

On the night of the event, students, parents, teachers, administrative staff, and VIP guests, including SABIS® third generation leader Mrs. Leila Saad, attended the show. The audience was amazed by the students’ performance, and a sense of pride filled the room. “ISC Doctors: Health Talks’ was

*the highlight of the year; it exceeded all our expectations. The happiness and pride in all our guests was truly touching,”* said Ghassan Abdel Baki, ISC-Choueifat Director.

The SLO® Sports & Health Department focuses their efforts on increasing health awareness among the students by promoting healthy choices and an active lifestyle. At the very core of the department is their mission to “foster an appreciation for sports and healthy habits/lifestyle while encouraging students to get and stay in shape.” The organization of “ISC Doctors: Health Talks” is one of the many ways that the department succeeds in fulfilling their mission at ISC-Choueifat.

For more information about ISC-Choueifat visit, [iscchoueifat.sabis.net](http://iscchoueifat.sabis.net). To learn more about exciting SLO® events, visit [slonews.sabis.net](http://slonews.sabis.net).

## SLO® Academic Department Helps Raise the Bar

The SABIS Student Life Organization® (SLO®) is an integral part of the day-to-day experience in any SABIS® Network school. As such, students across the SABIS® Network are strongly encouraged to join SLO® and play an active role in all aspects of school life.

In addition to providing many opportunities for personal, social, and moral growth, SLO® also plays a critical role in raising the academic standards of the school. In particular, the SLO® Academic Department implements engaging academic activities – including peer tutoring, academic competitions, study groups, and Shadow Teaching® – that are designed to build students’ confidence in learning and develop their academic skills.

In Frankfurt, Germany, students at the International School Frankfurt Rhein-Main (ISF) fine-tune their academic skills through SLO® academic competitions. One of many annual events held at the school is the trivia challenge, with questions ranging from history and sports to food and world culture. “Students enjoyed this year’s trivia challenge so much that some of them researched a topic further so that they can be prepared for the next competition,” ISF Student Life Coordinator Tracy Chute said.

The peer tutoring program at the Ruwais Private School (RPS) in the U.A.E. is another example of how SLO® is helping to raise the bar of academic performance. Working together, prefects from the SLO® Academic Department and Lower School Department have dedicated their break time and weekends to helping young students become more confident about new academic concepts. “The tutors practice leadership, teaching skills, increase self-confidence, become more socially responsible and mature, and earn the great feeling of helping a fellow student,” commented the school’s Student Life Coordinator, Sam Horness.



*Peer tutoring in action*

Study groups can come in many forms. At the International School of Choueifat (ISC-Choueifat) in Lebanon there are study sessions that serve every students’ academic needs. They include afternoon and Saturday study groups as well as specialized study groups focusing on Periodic and final exams. “Study groups have created a positive spirit among the students, encouraging them to help one another and receive help in order to improve grades and overall academic performance,” said ISC-Choueifat Student Life Coordinator Zeina Abou Zelof. “More students have developed better study habits due to the extra support they have been receiving during sessions.”



*Saturday study group at ISC-Choueifat*

At the International School of Choueifat – Lahore (ISC-Lahore) in Pakistan, Shadow Teachers® have been providing additional support in the learning process. Shadow Teachers® are students who excel in specific subjects and who assist the teacher by conducting a lesson after being properly trained and prepared. Shadow Teachers® can also be called upon throughout the academic year to assist a substitute teacher if a regular teacher is absent from class. “We have held an event called Shadow Teachers® Day each year now for the past two years,” explained ISC-Lahore Student Life Coordinator Abdula Idilbi. “This year, 177 Shadow Teachers® in grades 3-12 confidently delivered lessons to their peers.”



*ISC-Lahore Saturday power study sessions prefects*

Whether through peer tutoring, academic competitions, study groups, or Shadow Teaching®, students in SABIS® Network schools around the world are encouraged to play an active role in their education and the education of their peers. Through involvement in the SLO® Academic Department, students help their peers succeed and raise the academic bar.

To learn more about the SABIS Student Life Organization® and the many ways it contributes to enriching students’ education, visit [sabis.net](http://sabis.net). Stay up to date with the most recent SABIS® news by following [SABIS\\_EDUCATION](https://twitter.com/SABIS_EDUCATION) on Twitter.



# Making a Difference

## Learning the Importance of Giving Back

In addition to providing an outstanding education, SABIS® Network schools around the world focus on educating students who are committed to making a difference in their communities and helping those who are less fortunate than themselves. By developing a sense of empathy for others, students in SABIS® Network schools grow into young adults who are socially aware and ready to actively contribute to their communities.

Having been in operation for over 30 years, The International School of Minnesota (ISM) in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, has a particularly impressive track record of social responsibility that the school builds upon each year. With the SLO® Social Responsibility Department at ISM taking the lead, the entire school is involved in several meaningful projects.



*ISM students attend We Day and celebrate making a difference*

Helping to spark ideas for meaningful ways to make a difference, ISM partners with *Free the Children*, an international charity and educational partner that educates and empowers young people to take the lead in social service through its *WE Schools* program. The *WE Schools* program provides educators and students with educational resources and a full calendar of campaign ideas. Using the skills developed through SLO®, ISM students plan, organize, and carry out various fundraisers. Mr. Stéphan Michaud, ISM Student Life Coordinator said, "Our focus is not only on getting students to organize fundraising events, but also to encourage them to volunteer in local organizations, making a difference by being directly involved and becoming caring citizens."

Through numerous fundraisers over the past two years, ISM has donated an impressive \$39,000 to support the remote village of Mondaña in Ecuador. ISM has helped the residents of Mondaña by building a kitchen for their school and working to install a water distribution system for the village. Teams of ISM students, staff, and parents have traveled to Mondaña to help dig trenches and install water conduit from a water source located about 1 KM from the village. "I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to be able to help and raise awareness about the important issues that involve the environment and our local and global community," said Emily Heegaard, Grade 11, Deputy Head Prefect of Social Responsibility.

Equally impressive is how ISM has been able to contribute to the fight against hunger by participating in the *We Scare Hunger* initiative. Over the last two years, ISM students have collected over 6,100 pounds of non-perishable food items to support two

local food shelves. They have also packed over 101,000 meals for children in Africa. This amount of pre-packaged meals will feed 273 children in Africa for an entire year!

In addition to *We Scare Hunger*, other SLO® Social Responsibility Department projects have included: *We are Silent*, where 140 ISM upper school students took a 24-hour vow of silence against bullying and wore t-shirts they had purchased in an effort to raise awareness; *Me to We*, a mini-store in the school from which all profits from items sold as well as proceeds from the school vending machines are compiled for donations; and *We Race for Change*, a two-week fundraising competition among homerooms in the school which in itself raised \$16,000 and is a reflection of the entire community's commitment to impact the world around them.

The impact of ISM students' commitment is also felt locally. The school helps create a happier holiday season each year through its *Adopt-A-Family* campaign. Each ISM homeroom adopts a local family in need and provides them with gifts and essential items for the holiday season. The school's efforts in December 2015 raised over 400 items for 18 families. "I am very proud of what we have accomplished and the fact that more and more students are getting involved in the community," said Lauren Casson, Grade 12, SLO® Head Prefect.

In recognition of the extent of ISM's investment in social responsibility, the school has been invited for the past three years to attend *WE Day*, an exclusive, invitation-only event that celebrates youth who make a difference. *WE Day* 2015 was another star-studded event that featured performers and speakers including Grammy® Award winning singer Ciara, Academy® Award winning actress Marlee Matlin, actor Henry Winkler, and Chelsea Clinton, Vice Chair of the Clinton Foundation. Seated to reflect the level of each school's community engagement, ISM was in the front row and received special recognition at the event as well as the honor of hosting the Kenyan Boys Choir, a traditional African male choir which sang at the 2009 inauguration of President Obama.



*ISM students packaging food to help fight hunger*

ISM students are committed to making a difference in the world and take social responsibility very seriously. "Being a part of SLO® Social Responsibility Department has connected me to other students excited about service and has inspired me to become involved in my community outside of school," said Rachel Buckland, Grade 12, Deputy Head Prefect of Social Responsibility 2014-15. "I know this experience has made me a better citizen, and as I go into college, I will be more prepared to make a positive impact on the world."

For more information about The International School of Minnesota, visit [ism.sabis.net](http://ism.sabis.net).

## SABIS® Network Schools in Egypt Get Together for their First Alumni Gathering

On December 5, 2015, the SABIS® Global Alumni Association (SAGA) held their first ever alumni event in Cairo, Egypt, for graduates from the International School of Choueifat – Cairo (ISC-Cairo) and the International School of Choueifat – City of 6 October (ISC-6 October). Excited to reconnect with old classmates and make new friends, 300 people including alumni, their families, teachers, and administrators attended the event.

Held at ISC-Cairo under the theme of “Let’s Get Together,” the event included speeches, live music, and lunch. The alumni and family members in attendance reminisced about their time at the schools, reconnected with former teachers, learned about SAGA updates, and rekindled friendships.



SABIS® alumni from Egypt enjoying SAGA event

“It was a great afternoon that was truly enjoyed and appreciated by all attendees,” said Mr. Salah Ayche, SABIS® Executive Regional Director. “We all relived the past, appreciated the present, and anticipated the future. Alumni spent hours talking about their time at ISC-Cairo and ISC-6 October as well as the impact their experience and education have had on their lives. It certainly was an excellent afternoon with a great turnout.”

By all accounts, the event was a huge success. “The reunion brought back many memories of those great days at school that every single person reminisces about. I was completely honored to be there. I look forward to attending more events like this,” said Rawan Lasheen, an ISC-Cairo alumna.

As the number of graduates from SABIS® Network schools increases, so too are the number of members of SAGA, making the association a valuable platform for networking, socializing, and enjoying the alumni experience. Around the world, SAGA regularly organizes events to connect graduates and widen their social and professional circles.

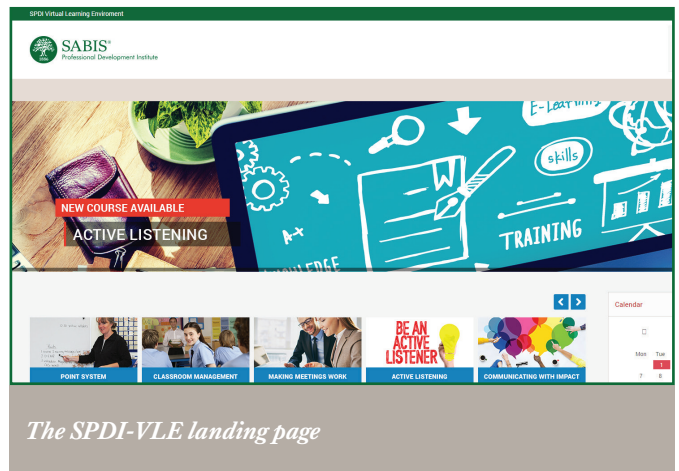
To learn about SAGA events that will be held in your region, go to [saga.sabis.net](http://saga.sabis.net) or follow SAGA on Facebook at [facebook.com/SABISalumni](https://facebook.com/SABISalumni).

## SPDI Launching Online Workshops

As a successful, global organization on a growth path, SABIS® is committed to identifying and helping employees realize their potential and preparing them to take on new positions as opportunities arise. Working closely with all departments within the organization, the SABIS® Professional Development Institute (SPDI) has developed a series of online workshops which will be launched over the coming months.

The SPDI works hand-in-hand with SABIS® corporate and regional HR offices to ensure that talented individuals within the network receive the development and training they need in order to excel at their jobs and take on new and exciting career prospects as and when they become available. With new schools planned for Panama, Brazil, and Kenya, it is no surprise that talent development is a top priority for the network.

With over 8,000 employees working in SABIS® Network schools located in 16 countries on four continents and a growing demand for tailored, targeted professional development, delivering training workshops and seminars is a big undertaking. “The trend is increasingly shifting toward online or ‘E-learning’ as an effective means to overcome the logistical challenges of bringing together a group of busy individuals in a physical classroom environment,” explained Mr. Jimmy Char, SABIS® Director – Training and Talent Development.



The SPDI-VLE landing page

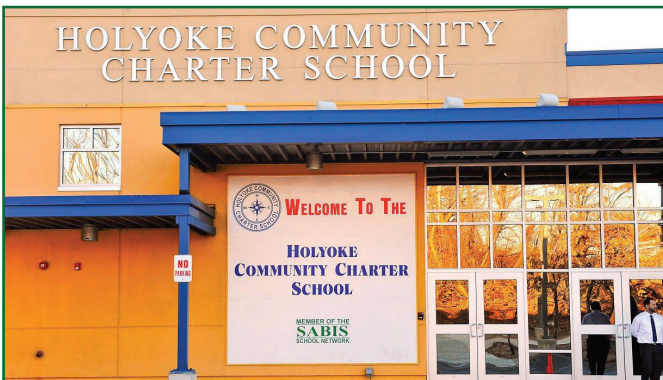
In the first phase of the E-learning project, which is set to be active in July 2016, workshops will be made available to employees in SABIS® Network schools by logging on to SABIS® Professional Development Institute – Virtual Learning Environment (SPDI-VLE). Once they have finished a course, employees will be asked to complete a short assessment to ensure that the information covered in the course has been understood and the learning objectives achieved. Further down the road, SPDI will be launching “live streaming” sessions which employees can sit in on and participate in as part of a virtual classroom. The SPDI-VLE will also include valuable opportunities for employees from around the network to discuss specific topics, case studies, and effective practices within public and private forums. Scenario-based “videos-on-demand” will also be made available to all employees to develop their skills.

By continually supporting employees in SABIS® Network schools around the globe and offering ongoing professional development through E-learning, the SABIS® Professional Development Institute continues to play a central role in developing a strong talent pool and helping individuals reach their full potential.

If you are an employee within the SABIS® Network and would like to learn more about what E-learning courses will be available, log on to the internal portal [MySABIS®](#) and visit the SPDI page.

## Feature School

### Holyoke Community Charter School



*Holyoke Community Charter School, Massachusetts, U.S.*

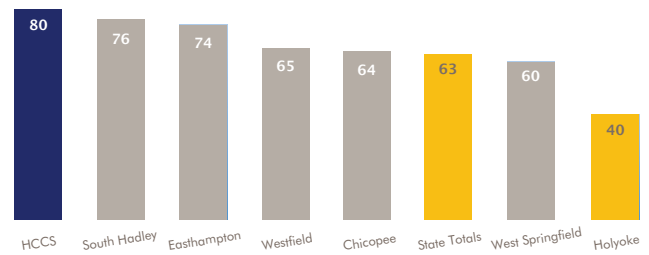
Holyoke Community Charter School (HCCS), a member of the global SABIS® Network, is a tuition-free, public charter school located in Holyoke, Massachusetts. HCCS is one of 12 SABIS® public charter schools that currently educate over 8,000 students in six states across the U.S. The K-8 school opened its doors on September 12, 2005, and has been enrolled to capacity (702 students) ever since.

#### Closing the Achievement Gap for HCCS Minority Students

In the U.S., closing the achievement gap between Caucasian and minority students in education is frequently referred to as the civil rights issue of the time. Performance gaps between students of different races and ethnicities have not changed much in reading or math since 2009, according to the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). Added to that, the achievement gap between high and low-income students has widened by 40 percent over the past three decades.

With a diverse student population (89% Hispanic, 7% Caucasian, 2% African-American, 2% multi-racial), and 83% of its students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, an indication of socioeconomic status, it would seem that the odds are stacked high against HCCS. However, HCCS is one of the schools that is making progress at closing the achievement gap. Based on the results of the 2014 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, HCCS **placed first** in comparison to its host school district, the state of Massachusetts, and wealthy surrounding suburban school districts. HCCS has successfully proven its ability to close the achievement gap and deliver a top-quality education.

#### ELA: 2014 MCAS for Grade 8 Low-Income: Pct Proficient/Advanced



*On the Grade 8 ELA exam, HCCS was 11 points higher than the state and as much as 25 points higher than the Holyoke district*

#### SABIS Student Life Organization®

In addition to providing a solid academic foundation, HCCS also offers students the opportunity to get involved in life at school. Through the SABIS Student Life Organization® (SLO®), HCCS students have countless opportunities to explore their talents, organize and participate in events, and contribute to making the school a warm and welcoming environment. Through the engagement of so many students, SLO® is the heart and soul of the school.

Through SLO®, HCCS students can participate in a whole range of activities outside the classroom. Academic activities include peer tutoring, spelling bees, math contests, and learning vocabulary through "Scrabble." Students can also participate in music, arts and crafts, cooking, and fashion design clubs in addition to a wide range of sports for boys and girls including basketball, soccer, cheerleading, and scouts.



*HCCS students celebrating friendship*

SLO® at HCCS also encourages students to become active members of their communities and learn the importance of giving back. In the 2015-16 school year, HCCS organized a book drive with Sparkling Crowns, a community-based organization, to benefit children at Shriners Hospital, a medical facility that treats children with orthopedic conditions, burns, and spinal cord injuries.

## Achievements

Over its 10-year history, HCCS has celebrated many achievements. In 2015, 65 students took the National Spanish Examination. Twenty-six (26) HCCS students received honorable mention, 5 received gold medals, 6 received silver medals, and 15 received bronze medals. "Attaining a medal or honorable mention for any student on the National Spanish Examination is very prestigious," said Kevin Cessna-Buscemi, National Director of the Exams, "because the exams are the largest of their kind in the United States with over 154,000 students participating in 2015."



*The HCCS Cooking Club hosting a bake sale*

HCCS is also very proud of its achievement in preparing students for acceptance into the country's leading, college-preparatory high schools once they have completed Grade 8. Most recently, two HCCS students were accepted to the prestigious Northfield Mount Hermon independent high school located in New England.

Further indications of the school's success are visible in the Holyoke community and state. Putting their life skills to work, HCCS students have become role models in Holyoke through several community service initiatives. They have also proven to be leaders of change and earned recognition from former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick for an anti-bullying campaign that was implemented at the school.



*HCCS school band*

## Advocating for Charter Schools

As a public charter school in the state of Massachusetts, HCCS is among 81 charter schools serving over 33,000 students in the state, numbers that are capped by current legislation. The

state cap is hindering HCCS's request to expand its offering through Grade 12 in spite of the school's excellent reputation and remarkable achievements.

Seeking to support the school's expansion application as well as raise the cap throughout the state, HCCS parents and students have been particularly active charter school advocates since 2014. In 2014, the school played host to Massachusetts State Senator Don Humason, who listened as the school's 8<sup>th</sup> graders expressed love of the school and shared their preference to remain there through graduation. HCCS Director Dr. Sonia Correa Pope is also actively involved in representing the school in the state legislature as part of a coalition of advocates. "We want children to graduate from our school, and from there we want to track students at a college level and make sure they're graduating from college," she was quoted as saying in a recent newspaper article.



*HCCS students create a positive and welcoming school environment*

With the support of the local community, parents, and students, HCCS will continue to do all it can to help others see the value of charter schools. Until then, HCCS is committed to providing a top-quality education for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 and providing them with a solid foundation that prepares them for the challenges that lie ahead.

For information about HCCS, visit [hccs.sabis.net](http://hccs.sabis.net).

*"What I most value about HCCS is the education system. Also, we like the testing system, which prepares students to get higher grades."*

— Parent of a child enrolled in HCCS

## Alumnus in the Spotlight

### René Morcos, ISC-Sharjah, Class of 1999



René Morcos, ISC-Sharjah, Class of 1999

Graduates from SABIS® Network schools around the world belong to an exclusive, yet expanding group of individuals who have leveraged the strong foundation they gained through a SABIS® education and gone on to achieve success in college and beyond. They hold high-level positions in the private and public sectors, contribute to the world of academia, make advancements in scientific research, contribute to healthcare, actively adopt worthwhile causes, and engage with their communities. René Morcos is a member of this exclusive group and we are proud to share his story.

In 1991, René Morcos joined the International School of Choueifat – Sharjah (ISC-Sharjah) in the U.A.E. as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader. Today, at just 34 years of age, he is at the helm of a leading artificial intelligence construction engineering company that operates out of Silicon Valley in California, U.S. His story is one of dedication, perseverance, and scientific achievement.

When René joined ISC-Sharjah in 1992, it was an up-and-coming school located in an emirate of the U.A.E. that was still largely underdeveloped. When the school opened in 1976, there were just 17 students enrolled! Over the next four decades, and thanks to its success and reputation in the community, ISC-Sharjah grew to become one of the largest schools in the global SABIS® Network, educating close to 4,200 students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 in the 2015-16 academic year.

From the time he enrolled at ISC-Sharjah, René was captivated by the rigorous science program implemented at the school. His love for science grew with him over his school years and remains the driving force in his life today. *“Studying Einstein’s Theory of Relativity remains one of my greatest intellectual adventures,”* he recalls.

Upon graduating from ISC-Sharjah in 1999, with four As under his belt on his math, physics, mechanics, and chemistry A Levels and acceptances to both The American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon and Purdue University in Indiana, U.S., René chose

to study civil and environmental engineering at AUB. Upon graduating from AUB, René relocated to Afghanistan, where he worked as a construction project manager leading 114 people in designing and building the country’s first factory that produced professional PVC windows and doors. After a successful time in Afghanistan, he traveled through Latin America for six months before deciding to continue his studies.

In 2006, René moved to the U.S., where he pursued and obtained a master’s degree in construction management from the University of Southern California and later a Ph.D. in artificial intelligence applications in construction engineering from Stanford University.

Looking back on his academic career, René largely credits his time at ISC-Sharjah for laying the groundwork for his success. *“ISC-Sharjah gave me an unbelievable foundation in mathematics, physics, and the sciences, which I continued to draw upon during my Ph.D. at Stanford University. [...] ISC-Sharjah was the best school I could have attended. It gave me a great foundation. It was very hard, but once I succeeded at Choueifat, I could succeed anywhere.”*

In 2014, René founded ALICE Technologies. ALICE stands for Artificial Intelligence Construction Engineering, and it is the first system in the world that can, within minutes, automatically and parametrically generate thousands of valid ways to build construction projects, thus substantially reducing the cost and duration of construction. Prior to this system, it would take project managers weeks, even months, to create a single construction schedule. This new system generates thousands of schedules in a matter of minutes. Today, René continues to lead the company he founded and is a strong proponent of his alma mater.

*“What I cherish most about Choueifat is the extremely strong scientific background it gave me. This background allowed me to go from a school in the desert to not only being accepted to but also competing in some of the world’s most strenuous academic environments. It provided me something to fall back on when I needed it the most, allowing me to achieve my dreams thus far,”* commented René.

For more information about ALICE Technologies, visit [alicetechnologies.com](http://alicetechnologies.com). If you would like to know more about alumni who are making their dreams come true, read future SABIS® Newsletters and follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/alicetechnologies) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/alicetechnologies).

*“ISC-Sharjah was the best school I could have attended. It gave me a great foundation. It was very hard, but once I succeeded at Choueifat, I could succeed anywhere.”*

– René Morcos, ISC-Sharjah, Class of 1999



*SABIS® is a global education network that operates on four continents serviced through three independent corporations headquartered in the U.S., Lebanon, and the U.A.E. Schools in the SABIS® Network operate in 16 countries and educate 70,000 students.*

*Based on a proven, proprietary system, SABIS® Network schools provide students with a top-quality education that prepares them to meet the challenges of a changing world.*

## *Members of the SABIS® Network*

**AMERICAS PRIVATE SCHOOLS:** The International School of Minnesota - Eden Prairie, Minnesota, U.S.A. | **CHARTER SCHOOLS:** SABIS® International School - Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A. | Linwood Public Charter School - Shreveport, Louisiana, U.S.A. | Holyoke Community Charter School - Holyoke, Massachusetts, U.S.A. | Lowell Collegiate Charter School - Lowell, Massachusetts, U.S.A. | SABIS® International Charter School - Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A. | International Preparatory Academy - Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. | International Academy of Flint - Flint, Michigan, U.S.A. | Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy - Lansing, Michigan, U.S.A. | International Academy of Saginaw - Saginaw, Michigan, U.S.A. | International Academy of Atlantic City Charter School - Pleasantville, New Jersey, U.S.A. | International Academy of Trenton - New Jersey, U.S.A. | Mt. Auburn International Academy - Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. | **LICENSED SCHOOLS:** BelovED Community Charter School - Jersey City, New Jersey, U.S.A. | Empowerment Academy - Jersey City, New Jersey, U.S.A. | **EUROPE PRIVATE SCHOOLS:** SABIS International School U.K. - Bath, England | ISF International School Frankfurt Rhein-Main - Frankfurt, Germany | **LICENSED SCHOOLS:** International School on the Rhine - Neuss, Germany | Cambridge School of Bucharest - Bucharest, Romania | **AFRICA PRIVATE SCHOOLS:** The International School of Choueifat - Cairo, Egypt | The International School of Choueifat - City of 6 October, Egypt | **ASIA PRIVATE SCHOOLS:** SABIS® SUN International School - Baku, Azerbaijan | The International School of Choueifat - Lahore, Pakistan | **MIDDLE EAST REGION PRIVATE SCHOOLS:** The International School of Choueifat - Manama, Bahrain | The International School of Choueifat - Amman, Jordan | The International School of Choueifat - Dream City, Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq | The International School of Choueifat - Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq | The International School of Choueifat - Suleimaniah, Kurdistan, Iraq | SABIS® International School - Adma, Lebanon | The International School of Choueifat - Choueifat, Lebanon | SABIS® School El-Metn - El-Mtein, Lebanon | The International School of Choueifat - Koura, Lebanon | The International School of Choueifat - Muscat, Oman | The International School of Choueifat - Doha, Qatar | Jeddah Private International School - Jeddah, Saudi Arabia | Abdulaziz International School - Al-Wadi, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | Abdulaziz International School - Al-Sulaimaniah, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | The International School of Choueifat - Damascus, Syria | The International School of Choueifat - Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. | The International School of Choueifat - Abu Dhabi Khalifa City, U.A.E. | SABIS® International School - Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. | The International School of Choueifat - Al Ain, U.A.E. | The International School of Choueifat - Dubai, U.A.E. | The International School of Choueifat - Dubai Investments Park - Dubai, U.A.E. | The International School of Choueifat - Ras Al Khaimah, U.A.E. | The International School of Choueifat - Sharjah, U.A.E. | The International School of Choueifat - Umm Al Quwain, U.A.E. | **PPP SCHOOLS:** 7 Schools - Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq | Military High School - Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. | Ruwais Private School - Ruwais, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. | Military High School - Madinat Zayed, Western Region, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. | Military High School - Al Zaid, Mliha, Sharjah, U.A.E.

*Education for a changing world.®*