

# PAIS CONNECTIONS

Good Morning,

I've been thinking about what you need from PAIS — on Tuesday morning when the calendar is full and the to-do list is longer than the day ...and also on a Tuesday in the not-so distant future which we cannot yet imagine. A recent ICAISA meeting reminded me that you simply need us to be collegial, sensible, and helpful.

**Collegial means investing in your classrooms.**

This spring, we want to bring people together for an extraordinary lineup of programming for teachers and students as well as Professional Growth visits to walk through a day in the life of another school. The strength of our association is ultimately reflected in student learning, so we are supporting the people closest to it.

**Sensible means not adding to anyone's plate.**

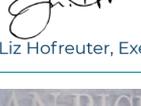
I am thrilled to offer an opportunity for your leadership teams to work smarter, strengthen operations, and free up capacity for the work that matters most: learning.

The Operational Excellence (OpEx) for Education™ pilot, launching June 15, is a collaboration between PAIS, PAISBOA, and NJAIS. OpEx is being thoughtfully aligned with accreditation processes to serve as a structured, value-added component of self-study and operational maturity. Pilot participants will help shape how that integration evolves, making this a genuine moment of co-creation between our associations and our schools.

[Learn more here.](#)

What I believe to be **most helpful to our schools** is the reflective but transformative power of accreditation. Our independence works because we choose accountability. We open our doors to our peers and we all benefit from it.

Scroll down for everything that's ahead. There is a lot to look forward to... and I am not just referring to spring break.



Liz Hofreuter, Executive Director



## STANDING ON HISTORY

*Karen Warren Coleman*

### ACCREDITATION

A PAIS accreditation holds schools to high standards through a thorough yet reflective process that affirms you are authentically living out your mission. Our process allows you to trust that your school demonstrates what it promises as your peers volunteer to walk the same halls in the same shoes you do. They understand your challenges because they share them every day.

Collaboration is an essential piece to the benefits of accreditation — between administration and faculty, and also between our schools. You choose such accountability because you believe your families deserve nothing less today, and your schools deserve nothing less as they plan their futures.



*Connecting with*  
**MICHELLE HOLLAND**  
HEAD OF SCHOOL  
GREENE STREET FRIENDS SCHOOL  
*on elevating the profession.*

### GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY

In light of the recent \$1.72 million penalty imposed against IMG Academy by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), [Venable shares this article](#) to remind independent schools that OFAC expects all U.S. entities to implement and maintain a risk-based sanctions compliance program.

## PAIS Elevate Learning Conference JANUARY 2026



### CONNECTIONS

PAIS is proud of the diversity of our member schools. Each school offers a unique experience. We designed the Professional Growth Visits program to promote connection among members and offer the professional growth opportunity for our members to visit other schools. The goals of the PGV program are to:

- Experience professional learning in community
- Build a cross-school community of peers and resources
- Affirm your school's processes and programs, and learn from other schools



*"Participating in a PAIS Professional Growth Visit gave me so much insight! I learned a lot about how to streamline practices at my own school and I had the opportunity to discuss the challenges of my role with peers with whom I had not been previously able to meet. We exchanged ideas and left our time together feeling more informed and connected."*

Check out our upcoming [Professional Growth Visits](#) on April 14 and April 27. Only a few spaces remain so register today!

## PAIS Professional Growth Visit ST. JOSEPH'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL FEBRUARY 2026

### PROGRAMMING

PAIS is committed to providing professional growth opportunities for our teachers. Ultimately, the strength of an association depends on its schools, which is reflected in the student experience. Our teaching and learning programs are relevant and responsive to educators' needs. We care deeply about the impact on student learning.

- DEI-focused: [Cultivating Belonging with Culturally Responsive Curricular Design and Teaching](#)
- SEL-focused: [The Advocate Educator](#)
- Pedagogically-focused: [Student Engagement Summit](#)
- The science of learning- focused: [Executive Functions in MS and US](#)

Connect with fellow teachers and expand your professional toolbox by participating in one or more of the programs detailed below.

 MAR 3 • 3:45-4:45 PM	<b><a href="#">Cultivating Belonging With Culturally Responsive Curricular Design &amp; Teaching</a></b> <i>Part of the Teaching &amp; Learning Series; open for individual registrations</i>
 MAR 5 • 4-5 PM	<b><a href="#">From the Classroom to Courtroom: Hot Legal Topics &amp; Governance Trends for Trustees</a></b> <i>A PAIS Trustee Series; open to Series Schools only</i>
 MAR 9	<b><a href="#">Emerging Leaders 2026-27 Opens for Applications</a></b> <i>Applications Due June 12</i>
 MAR 17 • 3:45-5 PM	<b><a href="#">Executive Functions in Middle School and Upper School Make the Difference!</a></b> <i>A PAISTA Pittsburgh program open to everyone in PAIS!</i>
 THROUGHOUT MARCH	<b><a href="#">Circle of Peers Roundtables</a></b> <b>Mar 3:</b> Counselors/School Psychologists & Learning Specialists   <b>Mar 4:</b> Associate/Assistant Heads of School   <b>Mar 5:</b> Athletic Directors, Aux, Programming, Deans of Students   <b>Mar 6:</b> Ed Tech Directors   <b>Mar 13:</b> Librarians
 APR 10 • 9 AM-3 PM	<b><a href="#">Developing High Performing Teams</a></b> <i>Move your team from functioning to high-performing! Villa Maria Academy High School, Malvern PA</i>
 APR 14 • 9 AM-3 PM	<b><a href="#">Professional Growth Visits</a></b> <i>Community Day School, The Ellis School, Lancaster Country Day School, The Miqon School, YSC Academy</i>
 APR 15 • 7:30-8:30 PM	<b><a href="#">Happier Parenting: Evidence-Based Strategies for Improving Parent Happiness</a></b> <i>An ISACS/PAIS Parent Series; open to Series Schools only</i>
 APR 21 • 1-2:30 PM	<b><a href="#">Heads Well Series: Leading with Vision and Resilience in Complex Times</a></b> <i>Program 3 of 3 for PAIS Heads; offered at no charge</i>
 APR 23 • 9 AM-2 PM	<b><a href="#">Middle School Student Purpose &amp; Impact Summit</a></b> <i>Presented by World Leadership School for students in grades 6-8</i>
 APR 24 • 9 AM-2 PM	<b><a href="#">Student Engagement Summit</a></b> (registration opens the week of March 9) <i>A PAISTA Pittsburgh program; open to all in PAIS. <b>CALL for PROPOSALS OPEN</b> - due March 5</i>
 APR 25 • 9 AM-3 PM	<b><a href="#">JOY: A Student Diversity and Leadership Conference</a></b> <i>A collaboration of Friends Council on Education and PAIS. Philadelphia area location TBD.</i>
 APR 27 • 9 AM-3 PM	<b><a href="#">Professional Growth Visits</a></b> <i>Falk Laboratory School, Montgomery School, The Pilot School, Revolution School, Villa Maria Academy</i>
 THROUGHOUT APRIL	<b><a href="#">Circle of Peers Roundtables</a></b> <b>Apr 7:</b> US Directors, MS Directors, EC/LS Directors   <b>Apr 13:</b> Admissions Staff, Advancement/Development Staff   <b>Apr 16:</b> School Nurses
 APR 30 • 4-5 PM	<b><a href="#">The Year Before the Strategic Plan</a></b> <i>A PAIS Trustee Series; open to Series Schools only</i>

 [VIEW ALL UPCOMING PROGRAMS](#)

 [SAVE THE DATES](#)

 MAY 1 • 9 AM-3 PM	<b><a href="#">The Advocate Educator</a></b> <i>Friends Council on Education and PAIS collaboration. Join the authors of <a href="#">The Advocate Educator Handbook</a> to learn how to create schools where trans, non-binary, and ALL students thrive.</i>
 MAY 5 & 6 8:30 AM-2:30 PM	<b><a href="#">Leading with Insight: AI Readiness for Independent Schools, the Next Step</a></b> <i>Designed for school leaders to move beyond the "hype" of AI and engage in deep, strategic work. <b>May 5</b> at AIM Academy, Conshohocken &amp; <b>May 6</b> at The Ellis School, Pittsburgh</i>

### NEWS

## PAIS, PAISBOA, and NJAIS Announce June Launch of Operational Excellence (OpEx) for Education™ Pilot — A Learning Opportunity for Independent School Leadership Teams June 15, 2026, Radnor, PA

The OpEx for Education™ pilot, delivered in partnership with the [Institute of School Business Leadership](#) (ISBL), is designed to bring Heads of School and School Business Officials/CFOs into one shared learning experience. Pilot participation is limited to 30 leaders, and we strongly encourage school teams to attend together.

**Why This, Why Now**

Our schools exist to advance learning. So do we. We are all learning organizations. When we discovered a proven framework that could help school leadership teams work smarter, strengthen operations, and free up capacity for the work that matters most, we knew it belonged in our shared community. The OpEx pilot brings that framework to our schools through a disciplined, collaborative learning experience designed to generate measurable gains. We cannot continue to add more to anyone's plate. We see this opportunity as a way of helping schools build systems that sustain their mission over the long term.

The OpEx framework gives school leadership teams practical tools to:

- Identify operational inefficiencies and hidden capacity drains
- Strengthen financial sustainability and internal controls
- Reclaim time and resources through measurable process improvements
- Align business operations with strategic and accreditation goals
- Move from reactive crisis management to sustainable, systems-level practice

**Grounded in Accreditation**

This isn't another initiative layered on top of everything else. OpEx is being thoughtfully aligned with accreditation processes to serve as a structured, value-added component of self-study and operational maturity. Pilot participants will help shape how that integration evolves, making this a genuine moment of co-creation between our associations and our schools.

Just as accreditation requires schools to reflect on areas of strength and growth, the tools we bring to that process should do the same. OpEx gives us a disciplined, evidence-based way to make that real.

**What Leaders Are Saying**

"Independent schools are under increasing pressure — financially and operationally," said Elizabeth Hofreuter, Executive Director of PAIS. "This pilot is about learning together. By bringing Heads of School and business leaders into the same room, we're creating space to build sustainable models and generate real capacity gains." Kevin Ruth, Executive Director of NJAIS adds, "Inquiry and innovation are inseparable partners for the future of independent schools, and our associations' partnership around OpEx is meant to reflect that."

"Operational challenges often show up as isolated symptoms, but the underlying issues are structural," added Aggie Malter, President and CEO of PAISBOA. "This pilot gives schools a clear, disciplined framework to step back and make informed decisions that support long-term sustainability. When leadership teams learn together, the potential for meaningful change increases dramatically."

**What Comes Next**

Developed in the United Kingdom after research revealed significant opportunity for operational maturity across education systems, the OpEx framework has demonstrated substantial impact internationally, with participating organizations reporting measurable efficiency gains and improved operational clarity within the first year.

The June Associate Level workshop is the first of three certifications in the OpEx pathway. Lead and Strategic level sessions are tentatively scheduled for late July and early October, allowing participating schools to build momentum and apply learning between sessions.

Seats are limited to 30 participants, and we expect them to fill quickly. Schools interested in the June launch should complete the reservation form by clicking below. Please ask questions of your respective association directly.

 [REGISTER YOUR INTEREST](#)

### PAIS SPONSORS

*Thank you to our valued sponsors!*