



March 13, 2023

Dear Superintendent:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education, we send greetings and appreciation for the past support school districts like yours have provided by hosting international students and for promoting the global competency of U.S. students.

We write to encourage your district and schools to host international students this academic year and in the future through the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Secondary School Student Program. The program includes an impressive class of Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX), Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX), and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) students from countries all around the world who would be a valuable addition to your student body. With the more than 100,000 service hours these international students volunteer each year, they will also provide significant contributions and vitality to your communities.

American high school exchanges are a fundamental part of U.S. public diplomacy efforts and some of the U.S. government's earliest grassroots exchanges, having begun in significant numbers following the Second World War. Today, these programs are enormously popular with tens of thousands of students from nearly 60 countries applying for approximately 2,100 CBYX, FLEX, and YES slots. Every young student wants the chance to come study in a U.S. high school classroom and to live with an American host family. For these three fully funded programs, we select only the best and the brightest to be placed at outstanding U.S. schools around the country. In addition, more than 20,000 privately funded high school students come to the United States under the BridgeUSA program. Each one of them goes through a rigorous application process and receives support from a nonprofit sponsor organization during their time in the United States.

In July 2021, the U.S. Departments of State and Education committed to work together and with other U.S. government agencies to promote the importance of international education and exchange in a Joint Statement of Principles in Support of International Education. This statement asserted, "U.S. students, researchers,

scholars, and educators benefit when they engage with peers from around the world, whether overseas or through international education at home.” This is especially true at the high school level, where the presence of international students in our classrooms benefits American students and schools by promoting cultural curiosity, a global mindset, and mutual understanding. In addition to helping students develop global competencies, high school exchanges also contribute to a world that is increasingly interconnected – a shared goal of both our agencies.

To ensure these programs succeed, we invite as many districts and schools as possible to commit to hosting exchange students. Please consider what your district can do to further assist in this effort and thank you in advance for encouraging international exchanges.

Sincerely,



Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State



Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.  
Secretary of Education