

## **History of the Connecticut-Shandong Relationship**

In 1986 the Governors of Connecticut and Shandong signed a trade agreement that resulted in the formation of the Connecticut-China Council, a group charged with assisting Connecticut companies doing business in China. In 1993 a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program, funded through Yale University, became the first K-12 education contact with the Shandong Provincial Education Department and schools in the province. The fall of 2002 was the pivotal point in the development of current relationship with Shandong Province. Another Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program, funded through the Connecticut State Department of Education, brought additional Connecticut teachers to Shandong Province. It was during this visit that the deputy commissioner of the Shandong Provincial Education Department initiated an offer to form an education agreement with the Connecticut State Department of Education. The fall of 2002 was also the beginning of a series of China delegations coming to Connecticut to study education sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Beijing. The trade relationship, the exposure of Chinese educators to Connecticut schools and the desire on the part of Shandong Province to form an education relationship all led to a growing case for a more formal relationship. In January 2003, the Shandong Provincial Education Department and the Connecticut State Department of Education signed an education agreement connecting the two entities, the first education agreement at that level with China. The agreement called for the formation of sister schools to facilitate cultural exchange for students and educators. Today there are more than 100 school to school partnerships between Connecticut and Shandong.

## **Connecticut Shandong Exchange Programs**

Adult and student exchange has become a vital part of the Connecticut-Shandong relationship. During the Freeman Foundation funding period from 2004 to 2007, 127 Connecticut educators have conducted field study and established partnerships in Shandong Province. During that same time period 115 Shandong educators have come to Connecticut. Over 580 educators representing all provinces in China have come to Connecticut. In 2007-08 more than twelve Connecticut schools have or will be sending student delegations to Shandong and six Shandong schools have or will be sending student delegations to Connecticut.

Connecticut schools are motivated in forming school partnerships with Shandong by the desire to prepare students for an international world, to develop Chinese language programs in their schools, and foster cultural and historical knowledge and understanding between two very different cultures. All of these goals are being developed by local schools throughout Connecticut. Shandong schools seek to improve their classroom instruction, improve their English language programs and foster cultural and historical knowledge between the two cultures.

The following programs are currently promoted and/or initiated through the Connecticut State Department of Education.

*Summary of Annual Exchange Programs*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Delegations to China and Shandong</b>	<b>Delegations to United States and Connecticut</b>
Adults (Administrators, Teachers, Board of Education Members, Business/Community)	Principal Shadowing and Teacher Confucian (12 Days, April) Sister School Program (10 Days, April) Education Leadership (10 Days, November/December) Education Leadership (7 Days, June) Theme-Focused Field Study (17 Days, June – July)	Shandong Teaching Methods (10-12 Days, Fall) Shandong Principal Shadowing (8-10 Days, Fall) Shandong Leadership Delegations (2-3 Days, Fall/Winter) Shandong Visiting Resource Teacher in Residence (5 Teachers, 3 Weeks, September – October) CCSU Shandong Scholars Program (Internships in Government Offices, 2 Months, September – October) Ministry of Education, CEAIE (5 to 8 Delegations, 2-3 Days, Fall and Winter)
Students	Local School (10-14 Days, March – June) Summer Camp Proposed 2009 (14 to 17 Days, July/August) Local School Virtual Exchange (Ongoing)	Local School Exchange (5-10 Days, September – February) Local School Virtual Exchange (Ongoing)

## **Delegations to China and Shandong**

The **Principal and Teacher Shadowing** field study to Beijing and Shandong Province is a follow-up professional development program for Connecticut principals and teachers seeking an in-depth cultural experience with their existing sister school. Approximately thirty educators participate in this program for twelve days annually in April.

The **Education Leadership** field study to Beijing and Shandong Province is designed to introduce school leaders to Chinese history and culture and build on existing or established school partnerships in Shandong. Participation by administrators, school board members, university personnel and community leaders participate in this program annually in the summer or fall.

The **Sister School** field study is the flagship program to establish new sister schools in Shandong Province. The ten day program has been conducted annually in April since 2004 and supports two participants each from ten schools to initiate a new school partnership in Shandong.

The **Theme-Focused** field study to explore the history and culture of China are supported primarily for advanced study by participants who have been to China before. This self-funded program is designed during the summer for fifteen to seventeen days for twenty to thirty participants.

**Local School** student exchange by participating Connecticut sister schools are organized locally by individual schools or by schools banding together to form delegations to qualify for reduced group rates. There are currently ten to fifteen participating Connecticut schools being hosted by their sister schools in Shandong for two to three days annually between March and June.

A proposed **Summer Exchange Camp** for Shandong and Connecticut students is currently being negotiated for the summer of 2009 in Shandong. The proposed program would focus on language, culture, the arts, and outdoor activities. The fourteen to seventeen day program would provide an in-depth exchange experience for Connecticut students and their Shandong sister school counterparts.

Shandong-Connecticut Sister Schools, especially those at the elementary level, engage in pen-pal programs or **Virtual Learning** via e-mail or mutually agreed upon projects. These programs are ongoing depending on the level of interest and relationship development in the school partnerships.

## **Delegations to the United States and Connecticut**

The **Shandong Teaching Methods** program annually brings twenty of Shandong's most honored and revered teachers to Connecticut. These teachers are hosted by Connecticut sister schools for ten to twelve days in the fall, participating in school activities and hosted by a family in the local

community. In addition, the Shandong teachers participate in a two-day program designed to introduce American teaching methods and the American system of education.

The **Shandong Principal Shadowing** program annually brings twenty of Shandong's principals to Connecticut for eight to ten days in the fall. These principals participate in school activities and are hosted by a family in the local community. In addition, the Shandong principals participate in a two-day program designed to introduce the role of the principal in an American school and the American education system.

Beginning in the fall of 2008, the **Chinese Resource Educator in Residence** program will bring five English language professors to Connecticut schools to serve as culture and language resources for volunteer Connecticut schools. The professors do classroom observation, teach lessons, participate in school activities and are hosted by families in the local community. This program was made possible by a special arrangement between the Connecticut State Department of Education and Shandong University of Finance.

The Central Connecticut State University **Shandong Scholars** program is a six-month ongoing professional development provided by the U.S.-China Business Center. Shandong participants include mid and upper level government managers in Shandong. Participants drawn from the education sector have their internship experience at the Connecticut State Department of Education for two months. The program provides a vital role in developing relationships with Shandong education officials that often results in education program agreements between Connecticut and Shandong.

Since 1999, the **China Education Association for International Exchange, Ministry of Education**, has brought more than forty delegations to Connecticut for a two-day professional development program on an education reform topic. Hosted by the Connecticut State Department of Education, these delegations visit Connecticut schools and provide an important preparation function for schools seeking to form a sister school in Shandong province.

**Local School** student exchange by participating Shandong sister schools visit Connecticut schools during the fall and winter months. There are currently five to ten participating Shandong schools being hosted annually by their sister schools in Connecticut.

Shandong-Connecticut Sister Schools, especially those at the elementary level, engage in pen-pal programs or **Virtual Learning** via email or mutually agreed upon projects. These programs are ongoing depending on the level of interest and relationship development in the school partnerships.