ADMINISTERING YOUTH EXCHANGE
a guide from the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel

The U.S. High Schools’ Guide on International Student Exchange
ABOUT CSIET

Mission and Services

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is a not-for-profit organization committed to quality international educational travel and exchange for youth at the high school level.

The purpose of CSIET is to identify reputable international youth exchange programs, to provide leadership and support to the exchange and educational communities so that youth are provided with meaningful and safe international exchange experiences, and to promote the importance and educational value of international youth exchange.

The mission of CSIET shall be to:

- Establish standards for international educational travel abroad by American high school aged youth and by foreign youth traveling to the United States;
- Monitor compliance with those standards by educational travel and exchange programs on behalf of schools, students, educational groups and the exchange community in the United States;
- Provide and manage a process by which international educational travel and exchange programs can be reviewed and evaluated as to their compliance with the standards;
- Annually publish an CSIET Advisory List of International Educational Travel and Exchange Programs to disseminate findings and decisions relative to compliance with the standards in a manner which will constructively serve the exchange programs, exchange students and their families, and the schools;
- Promote the value and facilitate the development of international educational travel and exchange experiences for young people.

CSIET Advisory List

The Advisory List provides a resource from which prospective exchange students, their parents, and school leaders can confidently glean an understanding of the scope, background, and operations of programs that have been reviewed. The Advisory List includes descriptions of exchange organizations that, upon evaluation, were found to comply with CSIET standards and were accepted for listing.
Additional copies of the Administering Youth Exchange guide are available.

To order an additional copy, or to purchase multiple copies, please contact CSIET at 703-739-9050 or via e-mail at mailbox@csiet.org.

Single copies will be sold for $10.00 in the United States, includes postage and handling.

Discounts on bulk rates for CSIET members are available. Contact CSIET for these rates.

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CSIET Project Coordinator, JaeIn Lee
INTRODUCTION

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is pleased to present the 2nd edition of Administering Youth Exchange for U.S. high schools to help you in your work with international youth exchange programs.

This handbook will help you to better understand how international youth exchange programs operate, what you can expect of reputable exchange programs, and tips on making exchange students feel welcome in your school. We also explain the functions and differences between CSIET, a private nonprofit which sets standards for exchange, and the U.S. government agencies which regulate these programs.

This publication is intended for principals and assistant principals, school administrators, guidance counselors, and for foreign language and social studies teachers. We intend it specifically as a resource tool for the individual in your school or school system, who is responsible for working with exchange students, but it also can serve as a reference guide for educators and administrators who take an interest in exchange and how it operates.

Many schools and school districts have established policies to assure consistency in how international exchange students—and the programs that sponsor them—are considered for admission and the guidelines that govern those students’ participation in various school activities. These policies vary, sometimes widely, from locality to locality. To assist you administering youth exchange programs and developing school policy for international student exchange programs, we have developed the CSIET Model School Policy.

We at CSIET are very interested in your comments about the usefulness of this handbook and any suggestions for future editions. The handbook will be updated periodically. CSIET continues to produce the Advisory List each year as an indispensable tool for U.S. high schools for identifying reputable exchange programs.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you, administrators and educators at U.S. high schools, for your outstanding participation in international youth exchange—you are helping to mold our next generation of world leaders.

John O. Hishmeh
Executive Director
Council on Standards for International Educational Travel
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE —
An Effective Tool to Bring Global Education to Your School

Today, not only parents, but government, business, and industry are depending upon America’s high schools to ensure that their graduates are internationally aware and interculturally competent, in short, prepared to participate effectively in today’s diverse workplace and global marketplace. The stakes are high, as our nation’s security and standing in the world are riding upon our schools’ ability to prepare students to be citizens of the world. The demands are pervasive in every sector of society, and international youth exchange can help your school meet these challenges.

According to the U.S. government, the need for expertise in world languages is a crucial component not only for international education but also for the national interest:

“Our nation must engage with the rest of the world. But to be successful, we must listen. Our interaction with the world must be a conversation, not a monologue. Many of these conversations begin with exchange programs run by the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). These exchanges are a strategic pillar of our nation’s public diplomacy.”

Dina Habib Powell
Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs
United States Department of State

“As September 11 showed us, when the State Department issued urgent calls for speakers of Arabic, we don’t have enough national capacity in the major world languages to meet the need of our intelligence and counter-terrorism communities, of our military, for effective partnership with our allies, or for homeland security. Police, public health and law enforcement officials will increasingly need to be able to deal with many different language groups… And they are not simply looking for translators, but for analysts and experts in many fields who can interpret the cultural context, too.”

Ambassador Nicholas Platt


“America needs people who understand foreign cultures and who are fluent in locally-spoken languages… The stability and economic vitality of the United States and our national security depend on American citizens who are knowledgeable about the world. We need civil servants, including law enforcement officers, teachers, area experts, diplomats, and business people with the ability to communicate at an advanced level in the languages and understand the cultures of the people with whom they interact.”

U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii

The demands for an internationally skilled citizenry are also increasing in the private and business sectors. In order to ensure their competitiveness, business and industry leaders are relying on workers with international knowledge and skills, who speak the languages and understand the cultures of the countries with which they do business.

“The U.S. will be less competitive and less secure if our schools do not urgently expand instruction in world languages, economics, and cultures… Knowledge of the world is no longer a luxury for the few, it is a necessity for all.”

Vivien Stewart
Executive Director, National Coalition on Asia and International Studies in the Schools

“As a nation, we are losing our edge. In the lab, in the classroom, and in the marketplace, the United States is seeing its competitive advantage dwindle… There is no doubt that America’s economic well-being hinges on our preeminence in science and technology, which provides the foundation for our historical leadership in producing goods and services and creating personal and national wealth. But, in a globalized economy, our national well-being also hinges on future CEOs, managers, professionals, and entrepreneurs who are competent to conduct business in a global environment.”

Henry Kaufman and Thomas S. Johnson
Institute for International Education, Board Members

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“Toyota’s investment in international exchange is one way to enable young people to see, hear, discuss and feel, first-hand, the impact of living in a country where customs, traditions and ways of thinking are different from their own. The skills that these future leaders develop, in relating to different peoples and different cultures, are critical in today’s global workplace.” 6

Jana Martin Kemp
Assistant Project Manager
External Affairs, Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing North America, Inc.

University admissions officers may be best qualified to articulate the impact of a high school exchange experience on individual students fortunate enough to participate in these programs.

“Over the years I have found that students who have returned from a significant international experience tend to have a broader outlook on the world and other cultures. They are usually risk-takers in the classroom and more engaged in the campus community. International experience seems to lead to very positive personal growth.” 7

David Borus
Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Vassar College

State Departments of Education and American universities have responded. Almost half of the State Departments of Education have joined the Asia Society’s “States Institute” and many American universities are now encouraging, if not requiring, international exchange experiences of its American undergraduates.

This type of language and cultural expertise cannot be developed in a brief language immersion course. The earlier American students are given exposure to native-speaking foreign students, the easier they will find it to study abroad and have meaningful cultural exchanges, which they can apply to future cultural discourse.

How does this translate into America’s high school classrooms? Many groups have, in recent years, begun to define some of the international and cultural competencies that should become the basis for State Education standards. These often include such skills as:

- understanding foreign cultures,
- recognizing cultural differences and avoiding stereotypes,
- understanding the interrelationships between local and global issues,
- proficiency in a second language,

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6 Kemp, Jana Martin. Personal Interview with YFU staff. 16 October 2006.
Hosting exchange students and encouraging American students to study abroad, provides an opportunity to bring international and intercultural learning alive in your classrooms and communities. By including hosted international students and newly returned American students in classrooms, new perspectives are brought to discussions which had previously been limited to an American teacher and American students trying to think beyond their own cultural biases and experience. Such discussions make it almost impossible not to see the interrelatedness of lives lived across the world.

As students discuss different issues, they will develop an appreciation for diverse perspectives, and will come to understand that some differences are personal and some are cultural. Class discussions shaped by different cultural perspectives and experiences are often richer and more engaging. Such discussions model the types of interactions students can expect later in multi-cultural business meetings.

Many of the issues that we will face in this century are issues which will have to be addressed by a global citizenry—hunger, resource sharing, protecting our environment, and achieving peace. Discussions with exchange students can help your students to appreciate the need to engage people from other countries in addressing such universal issues.

Language classes have an added dimension when native speakers add to linguistic and cultural background information. Recent studies have shown that the bonds of friendship

√ ability to solve problems collaboratively with individuals from diverse backgrounds, respect for differences,
√ ability to understand and critically evaluate world events from different perspectives, recognizes the interdependence of the world.

In fact, it is high school teachers and administrators who speak most eloquently about the impact of hosting students from abroad on American high schools and their students.

“We have found that welcoming foreign exchange students into our school provides not only a life-changing experience for the international student, but an even greater impact on our American students. Our school community has become more cognizant of the world around us and the interdependence of our global society.”

Dr. David Waters
Principal, Timberland High School
Wentzville, Missouri

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that develop during hosting experiences help students grow in their understanding and appreciation of diversity. This leads to an increase in tolerance.

It follows that world events take on a new significance when we have personal relationships with people from the places in the news.

Exchange students are ready and willing to engage with your teachers and students to provide an international perspective to any type of class or activity. They have come to the United States to learn about our people and our culture and want to share information about their own. American students who have studied abroad are also eager to share their stories and experiences. The more a school plans to engage exchange students—whether hosted students or Americans returned from programs abroad—the greater the benefit to both student and school community.

To take advantage of the benefits of having international exchange students contribute to your school community, you only need to open your doors to hosting and consider how you can support and accredit the experiences of young Americans who go abroad. If you have any questions, CSIET is here to help.
The following section is intended to provide a framework to guide in the planning of a successful foreign exchange student program in your school community. Recognizing that school communities often have unique characteristics and concerns, these questions will assist in developing a foreign exchange student policy that best suits your local environment.

1. Who is the designated person in the school or district office who reviews applications of exchange students?

2. Who in the school or district offices must be provided with paperwork on accepted exchange students (e.g.: medical records, academic records, emergency contact information)?

3. What information must be submitted to the school official with exchange student applications? (See pages 15 and 16 of this handbook for guidance.)

4. Are exchange organizations required to be designated agencies registered by the Department of State for the issuance of J-1 visa applications? Are students with F-1 visas permitted to enroll?

5. Are the students traveling on an F-1 visa or a J-1 visa? If the student is traveling on an F-1 visa, is the school aware that they have taken on the total responsibility for that student? Do school policies apply equally to students with F-1 and J-1 visas? (Refer to program differences on pages 20 on this handbook.)

6. Are exchange organizations required to be on the current year CSIET Advisory List?

7. Is there a limit to the number of exchange students in your school or school district to be accepted in a given year? Can exceptions to this limit be made, and if so, under what circumstances? (Such exceptions might include a transfer of an exchange student to that community or district when, as happens, there is not a happy match of student to host family in another community.)

8. What are the policies with regard to student participation in graduation ceremonies or receipt of diploma? (See page 15.)

9. What are the policies with regard to student participation in driver’s education? (Some exchange organizations do not permit participation of their students in driver’s education.)

10. What are the policies with regard to student participation in athletics and other school activities? (Contact state high school association for any relevant guidelines.)
11 Is there a deadline for exchange student applications?

12 Are semester students or 12 month students allowed to enroll in addition to the 10 month academic year students?

13 Will the school enroll students for the second semester (in January)?

14 How is the grade level for a student to be determined and will academic credit be offered to the students for the courses they are enrolled in?

15 Does the school or district encourage U.S. students to participate in international exchange programs? How?

16 Does the school or district grant credit to U.S. students who participate in academic semester or year exchange?

17 Have you verified the student’s age and number of years of their school previously attended (see page 15)?

18 Does the administrator responsible for exchange students annually review the CSIET Advisory List to identify reputable program operators?
The successful operation of a youth exchange program requires the careful cooperation of many partners. A student is usually recruited by an exchange organization that is based in his or her home country. A partner exchange program in the destination country sponsors the student, with their local coordinators identifying a host family and, in the case of a semester or year exchange, a school willing to host the student.

**Student Recruitment**

The process begins with the recruitment of students. In the case of exchange programs bringing students to the United States, the American organization enters into a contractual agreement with an overseas partner to recruit international students, and if offering an outbound program for Americans, for that organization to host American students. Some organizations have related or affiliated organizations abroad while other organizations work with an independent partner. Program promotion and selection activities usually occur well in advance of the exchange period, often up to a year earlier. Some countries may have a large number of organizations advertising and recruiting for exchange programs so prospective students have many options. Many students apply to more than one program and make their decision based on references, prices, and subjective factors.

**Program Pricing**

Pricing for exchange programs includes fees assessed by the two partnering exchange organizations and varies depending on what is included and on market factors in each country. Fees cover program services, such as the recruitment, screening, and orientation of students; support to the student’s natural parents and host parents during the program; assistance in obtaining the proper visa; monitoring and counseling the student during the program; and overhead costs of operating the program. Prices may also include international transportation, transportation within the destination country, and health insurance.

**Screening Participating Students**

One of the most important functions performed by the home country organization is the screening of students. Using guidelines provided by the destination country partner, the organization begins the student assessment and screening process. A personal interview with each student assesses the motivation and expectations for the exchange. At least a portion of this session is conducted in the language of the destination country as a preliminary assessment of the student’s language ability. Most organizations also interview the natural parents in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the applicant and his/her reasons for participation in an exchange program. The organization may then ask the student to complete a comprehensive application, which includes school transcripts, teacher references, medical history, student and parent letters as well as answering program specific questions. Many organizations also require a language proficiency test.
While all exchange students coming to the United States must have a level of English which will allow them to function in the U.S. high school after an initial adjustment period, most American students can qualify for an exchange program without meeting minimum language requirements. Most overseas hosting organizations offer supplemental language learning at their orientation for American students, and foreign high schools agree to enroll such students, since many American students do not have the level of language competency which would prepare them for study in the school system abroad.

Another program component handled by the home country partner is assisting the student with the process of obtaining the proper visa documents. In the case of exchange students coming to the United States for a semester or year, the U.S. organization most often issues the accepted student a DS-2019 form to present to a U.S. embassy along with a valid passport, photos, as well as visa and the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fees in order to obtain a J-1 exchange visitor visa valid for the duration of the program. In some cases, exchange students utilize the F-1 visa (I-20 form) where the school is the legal visa sponsor. (For more visa and SEVIS information, see page 20)

Student Admissions

Although the student assessment process begins with the sending organization, the final decision of student acceptance rests with the exchange organization in host country. Each organization in the United States carefully reviews students’ complete applications to determine if the students’ qualifications meet the standards required. Applications are also assessed for qualities that result in a successful exchange, such as flexibility and adaptability.

Once a student is accepted, the process of finding a suitable host family and school begins. Student applications are sent to field staff, who search for a host family and school to host the student.

The organization in the destination country usually charges the recruiting partner a flat fee for their part of the program. These fees are used to operate the program in the destination country. The most important component of every exchange program is the group of committed people who work for it. They range from managerial and operational staff at the program’s headquarters to the regional and local coordinators who work in the field finding host families, coordinating with high schools for student enrollment, and supporting students through the difficult and complex process of cultural adjustment.

Host Families

Families who agree to host exchange students are also active partners. Once carefully selected and screened (including a criminal background check), they provide housing, meals, and local transportation for exchange students, but in reality they do so much more. Host parents are the surrogate parents for an exchange student with all of the rewards and challenges of parenting. The destination country partner organization provides host families with orientation and resources to prepare them for this experience, stressing that the essential quality of a successful host family is patience and open and con-
stant communication with the exchange student. Exchange students need time and understanding to help them adjust to a completely different way of life, far from the comfortable familiarity of home. Both students and host families have the support of the local coordinator and operational staff in making these adjustments. However, the student and the host family do the most important work on a day-to-day basis.

**Schools**

The school component of an exchange rounds out the program, giving exchange students exposure to the host country educational system and its role in the life of that country’s teenagers. While exchange students to the United States generally are academically equipped to succeed in an American high school, an adjustment period is necessary for even the most successful students. The high school environment in other countries is often more formal with few of the extracurricular activities so common to most American high schools. The educational system in many countries does not allow interaction between students and teachers, so that exchange students also have to adjust to being an active participant in most American classrooms. Additionally, even students with excellent English skills can require a few weeks to become comfortable communicating in a second language. Participating high schools should rely on the expertise of program personnel to deal with any adjustment problems. Communication between the school, student, host family and program officials is essential during this period so that misunderstandings or special needs may be addressed before they become more serious.

American students planning to study abroad for an academic year or semester program are encouraged to work with their home high school in advance to make arrangements for credit for their work abroad. U.S. high schools are encouraged to be flexible in granting full credit to their American students for foreign language, mathematics, science, and social studies and literature courses taken abroad. Students who require U.S. history or English literature in order to graduate are encouraged to double up the year before or after their exchange, or make up the requirement via correspondence or summer school coursework.
MODEL SCHOOL POLICY ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE

Introduction

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), in partnership with the secondary-school community, has developed the following document to assist American schools in the process of administering successful international student exchange programs. The CSIET Model School Policy was developed with valuable input from individual high school administrators, exchange program managers, and national advocates for youth exchange. These suggested guiding principles will provide a foundation for local school policies and encourage every U.S. school to engage in international youth exchange programs.

Current events clearly show how much more interconnected all of us are to the whole world. This gives schools ever more impressive reasons for accepting international exchange students enthusiastically and using them as resources to broaden student and community perspectives on the world.

Youth exchanges provide students with a cultural experience, through which they develop a more balanced understanding of the country. They encourage new perspectives for the school’s own students that open their minds to the world. More importantly, these connections help teenagers on both sides of the exchange grow and gain maturity.

The concept of exchange programs began more than half a century ago with the Fulbright-Hays Act. High-level officials have supported international student exchange every year since. These cross-cultural experiences offer unique opportunities for American schools to help their students and communities:

- Learn first-hand about other cultures and customs,
- Create life-long friendships across cultures,
- Gain new perspectives on the United States and the world,
- Begin to understand how tightly connected the peoples and countries of the world are to each other, something our world seriously needs, and
- Open young minds to the importance of understanding other languages and other cultures, particularly with respect to career and personal opportunities.

At the same time, schools have a right to expect that international exchange students and student exchange programs to adhere to guidelines that will minimize problems and make success more likely. In all international exchange programming, the human dynamic may sometimes complicate matters for administrators. However, the critical element is the ongoing relationship between the exchange program and the school—as well as the responsiveness of the exchange program. Once this relationship is formed and articulated, problems can usually be managed effectively and ultimately resolved.
International exchange students offer an exciting resource. Many schools have created special events and programs to encourage all students to get to know these guests from other cultures and expand their own horizons and interests. Such efforts also help exchange students feel comfortable in an all-new life by taking full advantage of their opportunities.

International youth exchange programs internationalize American high schools—one exchange at a time. Thank you for your support of these seminal programs. You are helping to mold our next generation of world leaders.

**Number of International Exchange Students**

American high schools should strive to accept international exchange students each year. The number of international exchange students that a high school will accept and the timing/deadlines for the process vary. These guidelines suggest a middle ground that recognizes the needs of schools and exchange programs, taking into account the increasing difficulty of securing early student applications and host family commitments. Ideally, schools should work toward a goal of 1% of the total student population being comprised of exchange students. Acknowledging that school conditions vary locally, it is important to set a personal goal that best fits each school community.

**Timing of Placement Process**

- The school asks that organizations contact the school each year to indicate an interest in placing exchange students. Exchange organizations should provide schools with advance notice of their intent to place.
- The school is to be notified as soon as Student and Host Family match-ups are confirmed.
- Recognizing the timing of school staffing and resourcing, exchange organizations should submit Student and Host Family applications as early as possible or up to two weeks prior to the school’s start date. However, acknowledging the difficulty of securing Host Family commitments, the school will try to accept applications until school starts (Note: The U.S. State Department federal J-visa regulations permit the placement of exchange students up to August 31 of each year).

**Selecting Student Exchange Programs**

- The school reserves the right to work with exchange organizations that have proved their commitment and responsiveness.
- The school will also be open to new organizations that demonstrate a serious commitment to the school and community.

**School Expectations of Student Exchange Program**

All schools should reserve right of final approval on all student placements. Additionally, schools should require that each individual student exchange program:
• Be listed in the most current CSIET Advisory List (for the current list visit www.csiet.org).
• Maintain a network of qualified and trained local representative living in or near the community with responsibility for each student—and provide orientation and ongoing support for both the host family and student.
• Provide continuing hands-on monitoring and responsiveness—from local representative to national headquarters—including student selection and preparation, selection and screening of host families, ongoing contact with host family and student, and communication with the school and responsiveness to school needs.
• Receive school enrollment authorization for placements each year prior to contacting potential host families—and follow school policy on timing and requirements.
• Screen and prepare exchange students while monitoring their progress during the school year, responding to issues or problems as they develop.
• Arrange host family placements before exchange students leave their home country. Exchange students are expected to be in their host family and school placements by the first day of classes.
• Personally interview and screen all potential host families, matching student and family interests and personalities.
• Not knowingly place exchange students based on their athletic abilities.
• Make arrangements for tutoring/ESL help in the event that it is needed and ensure that the student accepts financial responsibility for it.
• Provide the school with a complete student application which includes the following:
  o personal letter from the student,
  o detailed information on student and natural family,
  o proof that the student has sufficient language ability to function in an American classroom,
  o original transcript of student’s high school grades, with English translation (and this must meet school requirements), and
  o necessary medical history, including proof of immunization as required by the school district, any medical/physical restrictions and a recent physical exam with proof of required immunizations.

School Expectations for Students on J-1 Visa Sponsorships

• Each exchange student must be qualified to participate in regular classes and maintain a typical schedule—this means an acceptable level of proficiency in the English language, a commitment to treat coursework as important, and the social skills to enjoy participation in social and extracurricular activities.
• International exchange students must be aware that participating in interscholastic athletic teams means they must comply with district and state athletic eligibility regulations, and that many teams require try-outs.
• The school appreciates the difficulty of a student’s plunge into a different language/culture/institution, but exchange students are expected to attain passing grades by the end of their first semester.
• Exchange students’ enrollment eligibility will be for one year only. Exchange students and host families are expected to know and must follow all school policies and rules.
- Exchange students must have medical and accident insurance that meets or exceeds U.S. Department of State guidelines.
- Since there is wide variation of graduation policies in the United States, exchange students will understand that they are not guaranteed the ability to graduate or be granted diplomas.

**School Responsibilities**

- Students on U.S. State Department-sponsored programs (J-1 visas) generally pay no tuition, but they are expected to pay all normal expenses, including standard course and extracurricular activity fees. The school has no obligation to provide any special services, tutoring, supplies, or equipment.
- International exchange students have all rights and privileges accorded to community students—EXCEPT the right to a diploma.
- The school will make every effort to integrate international exchange students into the school’s social fabric. In turn, schools shall encourage international exchange students to participate enthusiastically in school activities, to make friends, to make a personal contribution to the school—and to help spread the word about their country and themselves, informally and by making presentations in classes and to community groups and talking to media when asked.
HELPING EXCHANGE STUDENTS SUCCEED

International students are an exciting resource. Many schools create special events and programs to make the most of the opportunity, as well as to encourage all students to get to know these guests from another culture in order to expand their own horizons. The following suggestions for welcoming international exchange students and working with international student exchange programs may be helpful.

In order to make a classroom a welcome environment for an exchange student, it is important for them to watch, listen, adapt and learn from their peers. The exchange student’s primary focus is to fit in, learn and make friends. They may need a little help adjusting, especially in the beginning. These suggestions may also help teachers and American students in making the exchange students feel welcome.

• **Make their presence known with school staff.** Notify all relevant staff and administrative personnel that the school will be welcoming an exchange student. You may want to introduce the new exchange student at a teachers’ or staff meeting if possible. This helps the student feel welcome, while also helping administrators and teachers think of ways to incorporate the student in their day-to-day lessons. If possible, provide a copy of the student’s application to each of his/her teachers prior to the start of school so they will learn of the exchange student’s background, both personally and academically.

• **Encourage American students to interact with the exchange students.** Establish a “buddy system.” Ask students who have been on an exchange themselves, or who are involved in student council, clubs, sports or foreign language classes to hook up with one of the exchange students. This enables the exchange student to establish a support network. They may have questions they feel are “stupid” or are too embarrassed to ask that their “buddy” can help them with. This person can also introduce them to all facilities, clubs and other opportunities your school offers.

• **Internationalize your classrooms and school with the help of the exchange students.** Trying to help the exchange students adjust to live in America does not mean assimilation, but rather adaptation. The student should add another dimension to the classroom, not merely blend in.
  
  o **Invite the exchange student to present on their culture:** students can do presentations about their home culture in relevant classes, explain their take on current events, or discuss the differences in holiday traditions. This not only educates American students, but tends to bring a lively discussion to the class, forging friendships and fostering better understanding. Don’t forget to include American students who have returned from exchange programs in the same way.
  
  o **Help internationalize your hallways:** put up maps, have cultural days or events, present news stories from around the globe. This helps make all students more aware of world events and culture.
  
  o **Ask American students studying abroad to serve as foreign correspondents** for the school paper, or publish their travel journals in print or electronic media.
• **Foster open communication between and with the students throughout the year.** All students will have some adjustment issues along the way, especially when they first arrive, and then again around major holidays or personal events. It is helpful to touch base with them so they know they have a support in school. Contact a student’s local representative sooner rather than later if the student seems to be consistently unhappy or has other problems.

  - *Have the exchange students get together with one another:* bring all exchange students together to see how things are going. Are they making friends? Are they having trouble with a particular course or teacher? Etc. They will likely feel most comfortable talking about these issues around one another, and will be comforted to know others feel like they do.

  - *Give the exchange students a high school handbook* which will explain school policies as well as make them aware of the facilities, services, and opportunities available to them.

  - *Touch base with teachers, administrators who are around the students often:* these people are most likely to notice any behavioral or mood concerns. If the student appears to be troubled, contact the local representative of their sponsoring organization. If a student is having problems with his or her host family, it is particularly important to call the local representative or sponsoring organization. These parties can mediate between the student and family and arrange a student move if the differences between the two remain irreconcilable.

International students and American student returnees of exchange can be an invaluable resource for teachers and students to help bring global education competencies to your school population. Helping them feel welcome and accepted in the school, while valuing their experiences and perspectives, is a large part of turning them into active contributors to your school community.
Youth exchange program participants, like all non-U.S. citizen visitors to the United States, are subject to U.S. immigration laws. Educational institutions, including high schools, are subject to immigration regulations with regard to non-immigrant students who visit the United States as F-1 academic students. High school student exchange organizations are subject to regulations with regard to non-immigrant students who visit as J-1 exchange visitors.

**Guidance Related to No Child Left Behind**

Maria Hernandez Ferrier, Ed.D., Director of U.S. Department of Education’s (USDE) office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, has provided guidance to states regarding foreign student exchange programs in relation to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Following are excerpts from Dr. Ferrier’s letter:

“Foreign student exchange programs have been very successful at helping our students learn about the language, culture, history, and government of other nations. In addition, the foreign students who come here to attend school learn about America, and bring a better understanding of our nation back to their home countries. I strongly support these programs because they are educationally effective and help foster international understanding.”

“Recently, I have learned that some school districts are concerned that requirements of No Child Left Behind might make it more difficult for them to accept foreign exchange students. I want to assure you that the overriding purpose of No Child Left Behind is to provide American students with the best education possible. Consequently, No Child Left Behind does not seek to discourage school districts from participating in a foreign student exchange program. In fact, we believe that foreign exchange programs enrich the education of our students.”

“An important goal of No Child Left Behind is to help English language learners who reside in the United States attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging content standards expected of all students. The requirements of No Child Left Behind, however, should not deter a school district from accepting foreign exchange students.”

“Assessment results for foreign exchange students, who are enrolled in a school in the United States for less than a year, even if they are limited English proficient, are not to be included in the school-level measurement of adequate yearly progress required by No Child Left Behind.”

“No Child Left Behind does not prevent or make it more difficult for school districts to participate in foreign student exchange programs.”
“No Child Left Behind does not prevent or make it more difficult for school districts to participate in foreign student exchange programs. A school district’s decision on whether to participate in a foreign student exchange program, therefore, should only be based on the educational value of that program.”

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) implements section 641 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, Public Law 104-208, which requires the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to collect current information, on an ongoing basis, from schools and exchange programs relating to non-immigrant foreign students and exchange visitors during the course of their stay in the United States.

SEVIS is an Internet-based system that provides tracking and monitoring functionality, with access to accurate and current information on non-immigrant students (F and M visa) and exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-2, M-2, and J-2). SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications, via the Internet, to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State throughout a student’s or exchange visitor’s stay in the United States. SEVIS is informed of status events for international students and exchange visitors including, but not limited to, entry/exit data, changes of address, program extensions, employment notifications, and changes in program of study. SEVIS provides system alerts, event notifications, and reports to the end-user schools and programs, as well as for Department of Homeland Security and Department of State offices.

F-1 and J-1 Visa Categories

The following general description of the immigrant regulations for the F-1 and J-1 visas is by no means complete; readers are urged to seek further clarification as needed from knowledgeable experts and appropriate government offices.

F-1 Students and Approved Schools

The F-1 academic student program is a non-immigrant visa category intended for use by nonresident aliens whose primary purpose for visiting the United States is to study full-time at an approved institution. Key features of the F-1 visa exchange are as follows:

- The visa is regulated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
- The school is the responsible party in the United States, accountable to DHS.
- The visa cannot be used for elementary (K-8) or adult training exchanges (see the discussion of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, below).
- The student must pay tuition to the public host school.

Upon receiving approval from DHS, a school is authorized to issue certificates of eligibility to students for use in securing a visa and admission to the United States. Form I-20A-
B is the certificate of eligibility for F-1 students. The Designated School Official, who is obliged to ensure that the school complies with DHS regulations, may issue it. Schools that are authorized to issue I-20 forms are required to register on the SEVIS system.

Congress enacted limitations on certain foreign students planning to study in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools. The “Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996,” which took effect on November 30, 1996, places the following restrictions on students seeking F-1 visas who wish to study at public secondary schools. The student (or his or her sponsor) is required to reimburse the public secondary school for the full, unsubsidized per capita cost of education for the intended period of study. Proof that such tuition has been paid must be evidenced on the I-20A-B application form for the visa. Waivers are not allowed. This law also limits school attendance to a maximum of twelve months for secondary students under F-1 visas. Overseas advisors should know that this law additionally prohibits attendance in public elementary schools, K-8, or publicly funded adult education programs by any individuals coming under F-1 status. These restrictions do not apply to students who come to the United States under a J-1 visa, nor do they apply to private schools. Violating the law or failure to reimburse the school district can lead to a student being barred from the United States for five years.

F-1 non-immigrant students must maintain a full course load while in the United States. They must follow a specific transfer procedure if they change schools. They are eligible for certain types of employment, provided the Designated School Official or DHS grants permission before the employment begins. The F-1 foreign student’s obligations under U.S. immigration regulations are to:

- provide evidence that the unsubsidized cost of tuition for any academic study in the United States is paid in order to obtain their visa,
- have sufficient financial resources for the anticipated stay in the United States,
- have a residence abroad to return to upon completion of the program in the United States, and
- always maintain lawful immigration status while in the United States by keeping a valid passport, not working without authorization, and leaving the United States upon expiration of the visit or securing an extension of permission to stay if needed.

### J-1 Exchange Visitors and Program Sponsors

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is a non-immigrant visa category designed to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through bona fide educational and cultural exchange. Sponsors of such programs, as described in the Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act (the “Fulbright-Hays Act”), may be considered for an Exchange Visitor program designation. Program designations are made by the State Department upon application from an eligible program sponsor. Generally, Exchange Visitor programs for secondary school students may be sponsored by the government, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. Key features of the J-1 High School visa are as follows:
o Regulated by the State Department as cultural/educational exchanges under the Fulbright-Hays Act.

o Designated nonprofit organizations which have to comply with certain orientation and selection criteria are the sponsors and responsible parties.

o Students are generally not required to pay tuition to schools.

o Students must be between the ages of 15 and 18 \( \frac{1}{2} \) at the start of the program or not have graduated from high school.

Upon receiving a designation from the State Department, an exchange organization may issue certificates of eligibility to its participants for use in securing a U.S. non-immigrant J-1 visa and admission to the United States. The J-1 certificate of eligibility is Form DS-2019 (formerly IAP-66) and may only be issued by a Responsible Officer from a designated program. This individual is obligated to ensure compliance with State Department regulations by both the sponsoring organization and its program participants. Consequently, the exchange student is the responsibility of the exchange organization and not the host family, school, or other party where the student is placed. State Department designated J-1 program sponsors are required to register on the SEVIS system (Schools hosting J-1 exchange students are not required to register on the SEVIS system unless they also issue I-20 forms for the F-1 visa).

Not all programs fall under the purview of the J-1 visa. For example, foreign students who participate in programs during the summer do not qualify for a J-1 visa status since they do not attend accredited U.S. educational institutions and the program duration is less than three months. Organizations that sponsor only outbound programs are not State Department designated because the State Department only regulates inbound programs.

The State Department regulations were amended on March 19, 1993, and control the J-1 program sponsor and participants, including stipulations about mandatory health and accident insurance and maintenance of accurate records for each participant.

Among the responsibilities of sponsors of Teenage Exchange Visitor programs are the following:

- to be not-for-profit organizations exempt from federal income tax,
- to limit their programs to participants between ages 15 and 18 \( \frac{1}{2} \) (as of the beginning of the program) or who have not completed more than eleven years of primary and secondary education (exclusive of kindergarten),
- to ensure adequate orientation to participants and their host families,
- to assure that participants from one program are not clustered together in one school; the limit is five per school unless a school requests more (an earlier requirement that no more than two from the same country has been dropped from the regulations),
- to ensure that no J-1 student is placed more than 120 miles from an authorized program representative,
- to maintain regular contact with student, host family, and host school, and
- to secure written permission from school officials before placing a student at the school.
J-1 participants themselves must:
- have sufficient financial resources for their stay in the United States,
- have a residence to return to upon completion of the program in the United States,
- maintain lawful immigration status while in the United States by keeping a valid passport at all times, not work without authorization, and leave the United States upon expiration of the visa or securing extension of stay if necessary, and
- have sufficient command of the English language to enable them to function well in an English-speaking academic and community environment.

Most youth exchange program participants are barred from employment in the United States. The State Department regulations state that students may not be employed on either a full- or part-time basis, but may accept "sporadic" or "intermittent" employment such as baby-sitting or yard work. Program participants must consult their J-1 sponsoring organization to secure permission for any type of employment while in the United States.

For more information on the J visa program consult the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. embassy or consular section in your country. You may also fax questions regarding visas to the Department of State at 202-203-5087.
There are numerous scholarship opportunities for international and American students to participate in exchange programs. Many programs offer financial aid. US and foreign governments sponsor exchange programs in order to further foreign policy aims. Corporations and foundations sponsor exchange programs as community philanthropy, as an employee benefit and as a means of developing a globally-competent workforce. A list of organizations which have such programs are included within the CSIET Advisory List. For a quick reference list, refer to the “programs-at-a-glance” section located at the very beginning of the Advisory List.

Students may also apply to a few exchange programs which the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State sponsors. These programs are administered by non-profit grantees of the Department of State. Students live with families and attend school in the United States or destination country for the academic year or for a summer. Students are granted scholarships that provide travel, medical insurance, cultural enrichment trips and activities, orientation programs.

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program provides full scholarships to German and U.S. students and is initiated and funded by the German Bundestag and U.S. Congress. The international exchange programs which participate in the Congress-Bundestag program are listed in the CSIET Advisory List.

The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program is an exchange with students from Eurasia. The scholarship is funded by the U.S. Government through the Secondary School Initiative of the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992.

The Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program was established in 2002 and sponsored by ECA to provide scholarships for secondary school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend up to one academic year in the United States.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs funds programs for American students to learn critical languages, like Arabic and Chinese, as well as programs that promote classroom to classroom exchange. Through programs such as the Fulbright exchange program, exchange opportunities are also available for U.S. high school teachers.

More information on current opportunities is available at the CSIET website (www.csiet.org) and click on “U.S. School Resources.”
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• General Information Resources – Access to CSIET information and guidance on international exchange student programming and federal regulations.
The following organizations endorse the mission and activities of CSIET.

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