

**Outcomes from Module 1 – School policies – fact or fiction? Overcoming obstacles**

**OEC, Oct 21-23, 211**

**Summary of Obstacles that AFS volunteers face in terms of School Policies:**

Limit on the number of exchanges students allowable per schools (defined by district)  
That there is a lack of policy sometimes  
Policy deadlines that require specific arrival dates, registration dates  
For sending – getting school credit while abroad  
Not allowing AFS, or other organizations, to promote in schools  
Limiting the number of or denying exchange students  
Limiting the number of exchange student per organization  
District/school residency issues  
Age restrictions/no students over 18yr or already graduate  
For sending – graduation requirements  
Funding units per student (exchange student not paid for )  
Exclusive relationship with other organizations, not AFS  
English Language (SLEP) minimum proficiency required for foreign student  
Procedures – documentation, transcripts, immunizations – all need approval

**Summary of Obstacles of Perceptions held by Schools/Educators/Administrators:**

Never having experienced going abroad before – no experience with exchange students  
Afraid if American students go away, they won't graduate on time  
Getting credit for classes take abroad for applications to college is not acceptable  
Cost to school is high and too many school resources/too much work required  
High school population already diverse enough  
Bias: about the type of host family / All exchange students are affluent  
Ignorance of AFS/Exchange. Reference J1 vs F1 – are confused about who is responsible?  
Students can do exchange in college  
English standard of exchange students is not good enough  
Medical conditions and care abroad is inadequate  
Afraid of students from some parts of the world/country prejudice  
All organizations are the same  
Interferes with college acceptance  
Hosted require more work for teachers, /taking up ESL spots  
No child left behind policy excuses, don't think exchanges students grades are good enough/ impact scores  
Assume exchange students want/need diploma  
Education abroad isn't good enough / English – the world all speaks it, why go abroad?  
Competition for classes, sports and resources  
It's not safe abroad  
Feel the price is too high  
Inferior preparation of foreign students in history, language etc – schools will need \$ for tutoring  
Terrorism – bringing in terrorists  
Problem for integrating into US culture  
Taking the SAT will be a problem – when, where? How? / College won't accept you because you skipped a year

**What have you identified from the panel and morning discussion that schools want and need from an organization like AFS? What can AFS offer that meets these needs and wants?**

Schools need education about how the exchange industry, the system, works

Schools need education about AFS

AFS volunteers need to have face-to-face meetings with schools, not just when they need a PAF form signed

Awareness of what AFS brings to a school, clarification of what it doesn't do (i.e. is not an ESL drain)

Education that differentiates AFs from other organizations

Get message out to PTOs, PTAs

Get message out to Foreign Language Teacher organizations

Identify and communicate what motivates students and parents,

AFS needs to be positioned to offer a relationship with the schools

AFS needs to move beyond only being in schools when we need something – and not just asking for a meeting when we want to ask for something.

San Francisco Team shared that they now have a "School Champion" in their team – this person is the "go-to" person for the schools, the volunteer does not do everything related to hosting and sending but they are the go-to person.

Volunteers need to make their presence known throughout the year, invite educators to AFS social events, (suggested also invite members of the student body), recognition of the schools.

Do your homework before you reach out to a schools – research the school, what is the mission, what is the vision of the principal? Research the resume of the principal, find a connection

Get personal success stories out there

Know culture of school before you visit

Ask what the school/principal/ administrator is looking for or concerned about

Prepare students for that specific school

Have local liaisons be present in meetings with schools

Emphasize our mission in all communications with schools

Reinforce that AFS does, an how it does, set a higher standard

We heard today about kids needing to be better prepared for college and their future – get stats – prove the value that AFS brings to this, get more stats from universities, get quotes

Carol McCauley – has a model "lesson" she uses in CA in world history, can share on the wiki

Offer potential outreach to American Chambers of commerce and, can speakers come in with AFs to schools to talk about the value of global awareness for their careers and higher education

**Identify strategy and actions that can be taken to overcome the obstacles rooted in either policy or perception related to.....**

- 1) **Resistance to hosting for fear of cost, fear of work load, and fear of support issues**  
*argue reality and how the absence of student abroad affects hosting cost of student*  
*make a reality vs. popular perception sheet/chart*  
*exchangees get the "leftover" of choice of classes*  
*talk about non monetary benefits how its' again educational value*  
*for school fees they don't need to waive some school fees (ie.put on the application that stus may have to pay for some costs*  
*Let schools know that there are local support systems in place. Liasons, etc....*  
*Give teachers mini bios of incoming students – So they know what to expect*  
*Create and build partnerships with experienced administrators*  
*clarify if it's a bias or systemic issue*  
*Work with teacher to meet curricular needs*  
*Forms and protocols done by expert – AFS*  
*Do the "Pre-emptive work"*
  
- 2) **Resistance to support sending because of perceptions around no credit and delayed graduation**  
*Testimony from other schools and college administration*  
*SAT Testing abroad (opportunities)*  
*Online classes (to make up credit before, during and after)*  
*AFS-start informing middle schools/younger students*  
*for prep (bonus: earlier they know, earlier they can start fundraising)*  
*College credit for language*  
*Scholarship Opportunities*  
*Hold Forums for principals*  
*Personalize and be persistent*  
*Encourage alternate ways for credit like online learning*  
*Be knowledgeable about global curriculum*  
*Find help to translate transcripts*
  
- 3) **Resistance to host as perception is student body is already very diverse and exchange student not necessary**  
*Diverse background vs diversity through "first hand foreigner"*  
*mission to share culture vs mission to fit in and be American*  
*Future bridges to a country because they are going back*  
*global communication and shrinking world effect*  
*motivation to give back on return*
  
- 4) **Ignorance of exchange programs value and lack of experience**  
*arm yourself with statistics*  
*know closest school with success*  
*have a reference sheet when you visit*  
*correct local contact, ESL Teacher/Secretary/i.e. gatekeepers ( a communication link)*  
*publicizing AFS successes*  
*local newsletters to high schools*

*have returnee write "return home briefing" to share testimonials from famous people  
AFS article in school newsletters*

**5) Procedural issues**

*Get in the front door  
Develop a strong personal relationship and communication  
AFS to host Forums for administrators and teachers*

**6) Prejudices and perceptions**

*Data / lists of experience from AFS – New school contact (tailor locally)  
Contact of schools that are positive about AFS  
Expectations – have an open discussion  
Statistics – that reflect the region or areas placement  
Liaison training- what goes into it  
Transferable info  
Relationship building  
Overall need to form a basis of more robust plan to overcome preferences.*

**7) Limits of Students per school**

*Seek explanations/ Rationale  
Discuss school's mission and how AFS addresses it  
Discuss recommendations by CSIET and their endorsement of exchange programs/ benefits  
Connecting a supportive district to a non-supportive one  
Present on AFS at statewide conferences  
Hold Local community forums*

**8) Country prejudice**

*Assess and know "culture" of schools and match students accordingly  
Bring students for short term exchanges within chapter to different schools  
Expose schools to cultures on a short term basis  
Address the type of prejudice and dissolve through "cultural education" by AFS*

**How, where, and when can we carry out the mission of AFS in schools?**

- School visits are themselves a way to carry out the mission
- Returnee involvement
- Offer to help schools with tasks
- Offer to speak at Faculty meetings
- Foster AFS clubs
- Address country prejudice/ education
- Name dropping, know you're education people and know about AFS returnee success stories
- Maximize the international education week opportunities
- AFS can participate in lots of School activities (ie...Homecoming)