



United States Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20522

January 30, 2026

Dear School and District Administrators:

Welcome to the U.S. Department of State's BridgeUSA Exchange Visitor Program. Your school and community are about to embark on an exciting journey through the employment of an exchange teacher from abroad. Not only will your school experience the culture and traditions of another country through the eyes of your exchange teacher, but the exchange teacher will gain an American education and cultural experience of their own. The exchange teacher will also learn first-hand about the United States through your school and local community.

Now, more than ever, it is important to globalize our classrooms. As a school that supports an exchange teacher, you are part of a larger mission and vision of a program that supports U.S. public diplomacy efforts since 1949. In 2022, approximately 6,000 exchange teachers were welcomed and integrated into school communities like yours. Exchange teachers will not only experience the culture and diversity of the United States, but it allows U.S. students and teachers to expand their horizons, as well. Your school and community will share language, culture, and customs with your exchange teachers and will foster a deeper understanding between countries throughout the world.

The primary purpose of the BridgeUSA Exchange Visitor Program is to foster mutual understanding through educational and cultural exchanges. The program is not intended to serve as a pathway to permanent employment in the United States. Exchange teachers are expected to return to their home countries after their program to share their experiences and newly acquired skills. While there is a waiver process available under certain circumstances, as detailed in the Immigration and Nationality Act Section 212(e), we encourage schools to support the spirit of the exchange by promoting the teachers' return to their home countries upon completion of their program. This ensures that the valuable cultural and educational benefits of the exchange are shared globally.

I hope this will be a rewarding experience for you, your school, and the exchange teacher. It is critical that you notify the exchange teacher's program sponsor if you

have any concerns or if the exchange teacher's personal health, safety, and/or well-being is put at risk in any way. If the sponsor is not responsive to your concerns, please contact the Department of State directly at our 24-hour toll-free Emergency Hotline (1-866-283-9090) that has been established for this purpose. In addition, the program sponsor provides each exchange teacher with information regarding telephone numbers for immediate contact with the sponsor organization and the Department of State's toll-free Emergency Hotline and email address (jvisas@state.gov). Your exchange teacher may contact us if they have any concerns about their health, safety, and/or well-being.

BridgeUSA strengthens the State Department's ties with U.S. cities and states. Engaging educators, administrators, and students brings the benefits of foreign policy to the local level and encourages communities to increasingly participate on the international stage. Thank you for joining with us in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Pasini". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "P".

Rebecca A. Pasini
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Private Sector Exchange