



# Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

June 24, 2021

Dear School Leader,

The U.S. Department of State is excited to welcome our international students to the United States this fall as we return to in-person programming. After this challenging year for schools and communities, and with our in-person programming paused last year, the new school year brings much hope and excitement. We hope that you will consider enrolling a U.S. Department of State-sponsored international exchange student at your school through one of the following Department programs:

- Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (**CBYX**) for students from Germany
- Future Leaders Exchange (**FLEX**) for students from Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia
- Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (**YES**) for students predominantly from the Middle East, South or Southeast Asia, Africa, and Southeast Europe

Recognizing the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of State and our program partners are committed to safeguarding the health and well-being of our participants prior to and while they are in the United States. We are taking precautions to ensure that students are safe and healthy, including pre-departure testing, ongoing monitoring, and 24/7 participant support. In addition, our partners will facilitate access to vaccines for interested students who have been unable to receive vaccines in their home countries.

Each year, more than 2,000 students from 60 countries around the globe come to American high schools through U.S. Department of State sponsored programs. Hosting one or more of these students is a great way for you to internationalize your school and bring global perspectives into your classroom.

Our exchange participants are selected through a highly competitive, merit-based process: finalists must rise above thousands of other applicants, and those selected as finalists are carefully screened and vetted. Due to this comprehensive selection process, our participants generally have scholastic achievements, possess moderate to advanced English skills, and demonstrate leadership potential. All students participate in orientations before and during the exchange to ensure their success on program. As with all exchange visitors, the students' visa applications go through the U.S. embassies' consular review process.

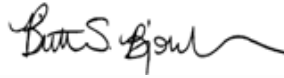
Students live with an American host family, which helps them integrate into a new community. Local representatives support the students throughout the exchange, serve as points of contact for school administrators and teachers, and help students find community service opportunities.

As you consider accepting an exchange participant into your student body, we hope you will also share with your American students information about U.S. Department of State scholarship

programs that offer high school students an opportunity to live and study abroad. Program information can be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov/youth>.

Now more than ever, we are grateful to the schools that play such an important role in public diplomacy by hosting our students. If you have any questions, please contact our placement partner who provided you with this letter. You can also reach out to us directly at YouthPrograms@state.gov. Thank you again for considering this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Britta Bjornlund", enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Britta Bjornlund  
Youth Programs Division Chief

**Implementing Partners:** American Cultural Exchange Service, AFS USA, AIFS/AYA, American Councils, Aspect Foundation, ASSE International, Ayusa, Borderless Friends Forever, Council on International Educational Exchange, Greenheart Exchange, High School in the USA (Global Cultural Exchanges), Iowa Resource for International Service, Northwest Services Inc., Pan Atlantic Foundation, Program of Academic Exchange, States 4-H, STS Foundation, World Link, and Youth for Understanding USA