

FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Recognizing the educational and cultural value of the international exchange program, the Board authorizes the admission of such students on a limited basis. International exchange students are educated at the expense of the school district. To protect the interest of the district, its schools and its students, the only international exchange students to be admitted are students from district-approved exchange programs.

International exchange programs are approved by the district on an annual basis. District approval must be obtained prior to seeking the admission of any international exchange student to a public school in Terrebonne Parish. For the year of admittance, the sponsoring agency of any exchange student must be included in the list published by the Council for Standards on International Educational Travel and be approved by the United States Information Agency to qualify for J-1 visas.

This policy shall apply to international exchange program students from countries outside the United States who are temporarily in Terrebonne Parish without their parents/legal guardians for the purpose of attending school in the district for cultural exchange purposes.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures and regulations for the administration of this program to ensure that the acceptance and placement of international exchange students will be beneficial experience for all involved.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for approval by the Terrebonne Parish School Board, international student exchange programs must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The sponsoring agency must have been approved by and be in good standing for the current school year with the Council on International Educational Travel (CSIET) and be a United States Information Agency (USIA) designated organization.
2. The sponsoring agency must have a local representative who is available to meet with the school personnel, the student, and the host family.
3. The sponsoring agency shall submit an annual application for approval. The

application format shall be prescribed by the District. Applications shall be due by May 1 for consideration for the following school year.

4. As part of the application process, the local representative, as the agent for the sponsoring agency shall sign a written agreement to abide by all policies and procedures of the School Board.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

1. The student must reside with a legal adult resident of Terrebonne Parish.
2. The student must possess a valid J-1 visa.
3. As of September 30 of the program year, the student must be between 15 and 18 years old.
4. The student must not have spent previous time in the United States as part of a foreign exchange program.
5. The student must have average or above average grades in his/her home school and must not be receiving special professional assistance to function in the regular academic program.
6. The student must have sufficient knowledge of the English language to produce effective oral and written communication, to use instructional materials and textbooks printed in English, and to function in the regular educational program without special professional assistance.
7. The student must submit the following documents to request admission:
 - a. Proof of English language proficiency. Evidence he/she has successfully completed a minimum of 3 years of English language instruction which includes speaking and listening as well as reading and writing.
 - b. Evidence of English proficiency as documented by either the Secondary Language (TOEFL). A letter of recommendation from an English language teacher documenting the nature of the course and the student's level of proficiency.
 - c. Official transcript and/or record of prior education from the student's home school and an English translation of the same documents. The records should reflect the number of hours per week the student spent in class, the courses taken and the grades/credits earned. The transcript must be received no later than August 1 of the year the student is applying for acceptance.
 - d. A written application from the prospective student must be submitted to the

Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance, Terrebonne Parish School Board. The application/letter should provide pertinent information about the student and his/her reasons for wanting to attend school in Terrebonne Parish for the academic year.

- e. A copy of his/her health immunization records, translated into English.
- f. Evidence of health and accident insurance covering the duration of his/her student visa.
- g. The name, address, and phone number(s) of the student's own parents/guardians, the host family, and the local international exchange program representative.
- h. Two character references, one of which must be from a professional staff member in the student's home school.
- i. A notarized temporary custody agreement between the international exchange student's parents/guardians and the host family and/or exchange organization.

PLACEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Since International Exchange Students are educated tuition free, the following guidelines shall be enforced:

1. So that all high schools may have the opportunity to share in the experience of hosting International Exchange Students, exchange organizations are asked to disperse students they are sponsoring throughout the parish's high schools. The Board shall have the authority to designate the school of attendance of each exchange student, when necessary.
2. A maximum of five (5) International Exchange Students per high school may be enrolled in a school year.
3. No International Exchange Students shall be accepted for half a school year.
4. Prior to the start of school, the host family shall accompany the exchange student to the Census and Attendance Office to obtain a permit to register at the prospective school.
5. Upon obtaining a permit to register, the host family shall accompany the exchange student to the assigned school to begin the registration process.
6. Exchange students shall designate whether they are in school for cultural

improvement or high school credit. Student records shall be forwarded to the assigned school by the Supervisor of Guidance to facilitate academic placement.

EXCHANGE STUDENT STATUS

1. Students shall be responsible for complying with parish policies and regulations regarding attendance, all academic standards, responsibilities, rights and discipline.
2. Students shall be enrolled in one English class, United States History and/or a Civics class.
3. Students must meet all LHSAA requirements to be eligible for athletics.
4. Students shall have spent four (4) consecutive semesters in the schools of Terrebonne Parish and met all district and state academic requirements in order to participate in graduation ceremonies. Exchange students are not eligible for honors awards.
5. Students shall be required to pay all fees and school incurred expenses that are required of other students enrolled in Terrebonne Parish public schools.
6. The School Board shall not provide students with admission into such programs as Special Education for Handicapped Pupils, English as a Second Language, nor shall it pay for students to attend other schools or institutions of higher education.
7. At the time of registration the exchange student and his/her host family shall be required to sign a form indicating compliance with all the conditions heretofore outlined.

ADMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Only exchange students who have met the criteria outlined in the previous section may seek admission to the public schools of Terrebonne Parish.

1. All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted to the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance by August 1.
2. All applications shall be screened before they are forwarded by the principal of the school where admission is being requested. The Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance shall inform the applicant's sponsoring agency, in writing, of acceptance or rejection by August 15 of the program year. Copies of this notification shall be sent to the principal of the receiving school.
3. International Exchange Students must arrive in time for attendance on the first day of school.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXCHANGE ORGANIZATIONS AND HOST FAMILIES

Exchange organizations and host families are in loco parentis with respect to adult supervision of International Exchange Students. The following are specific responsibilities which the School Board expects these adults to assume.

1. Host family and local coordinator for the exchange organization must maintain personal contact with the school and must be available and willing to meet with school personnel when problems or situations require it.
2. If an International Exchange Student's English proficiency is found to be insufficient to function in the regular instructional program without special professional assistance, the exchange organization and the host family shall be required to provide a tutor or make other educational arrangements for the student at their expense.
3. The exchange organization and the host family shall assume the final responsibility for resolving problems including, if necessary, the early return home of the International Exchange Student because of personal, family or school difficulties which cannot be resolved.

SUSPENSION, REVOCATION OR DISMISSAL

Exchange organizations, host families, and/or international exchange students found to be in violation of any of the School Board policies shall be subject to having their relationship with the District terminated.

Ref: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:81; Council on Standards for International Education Travel.