Kansas state department of Education

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Date: January 08, 2008
To: Superintendents and/or Directors of Human Resources
From: Melanie Manares and Phyllis Farrar, Co-Coordinators
Visiting International Teacher (VIT) Program
Re: Recruiting teachers from Spain and China to fill vacancies for school year 2008-2009

You and your school district are invited to participate in the Visiting International Teacher (VIT) program for the upcoming school year. The VIT program is one way to fill the need for highly qualified teachers; we select teachers from Spain and China to provide instruction (Spanish, Chinese, ESL, etc.) and bring a rich cultural element to your school and community.

The program is based on two Memoranda of Understanding, the first with the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture (2001), and the second with the Ministry of Education of China, known as Hanban (2006). These bilateral cultural agreements, sanctioned under Fulbright-Hayes legislation, allow certified teachers from Spain and China to teach in Kansas schools for a period of up to three years with a J-1 Visa. Currently, there are in Kansas 21 teachers from Spain teaching in 21 school districts (seven through distance learning) and six teachers from China teaching in 16 districts (13 served by distance learning.)

A more complete explanation of the program in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, a timeline, and a handbook are provided for your convenience at our website: http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1751. If you choose to participate, please return the enclosed Letter of Intent to KSDE **no later than February 29, 2008.**

The Letter of Intent does not require a district to participate in the program nor does it guarantee that a person will be found for any open position. However, should a district decide not to participate after submitting a Letter of Intent, you are kindly asked to inform Melanie Manares or Phyllis Farrar of your decision **prior to March 14th, 2008.** Interviews are tentatively scheduled for March in China and early April in Spain.

THE PROCESS:

- Based on the Letters of Intent, KSDE informs the Spanish Ministry of Education and Hanban of the teaching positions available in Kansas. The Spanish Ministry of Education then selects possible candidates. In China, candidates are prescreened by the Office of International Education at Huazhong Normal University, then approved by Hanban.

- A KSDE representative travels to Madrid / Wuhan (in collaboration with the KU Confucius Institute) to conduct interviews with teacher candidates.

- Each school district is informed of the candidate selected for them as early in the selection process as possible. This may require the hiring authority in the district receiving a phone call from Spain or China at odd hours and being asked to call a candidate overseas to interview and make a hiring decision. Districts may want to give KSDE interviewers hiring authority in order to secure the best candidates.

- Districts then inform KSDE of their decision to hire. Upon receiving a participation fee of $2000 from the school district, KSDE initiates the process of obtaining the J-1 visa.

- The selected teachers meet in Madrid / Beijing for a pre-departure (early July) orientation.

- Teachers travel to Wichita in mid-July to attend the week-long Visiting International Teacher orientation, conducted by KSDE.

- District representatives meet in Wichita the last day of the orientation to meet their newly hired teachers and escort them to their respective cities.

RESPONSIBILITY OF KSDE:

- To assess the needs of local school districts.

- To interview prospective teaching candidates and make recommendations to districts requesting a visiting teacher.

- To provide appropriate documentation for obtaining J-1 visas.

- To meet new teachers at the airport and to provide arrival orientation, periodic professional development, and retreats for visiting teachers.

- To ensure the teacher receives his/her Kansas Teaching License.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT:

- To provide a contact person who is available to discuss personnel issues during the interview and selection process.

- To compensate KSDE $2,000 per teacher for recruitment, orientation, professional development, certification, fingerprinting, and other administrative costs.

- To accompany the teacher to obtain his/her Social Security number shortly after their arrival.

- To provide a fellow teacher/mentor, preferably in the same building, to provide guidance and support for the visiting international teacher.

- To provide a building-level administrator who will coach and support the teacher with their classroom management and instructional practices.

- To provide a community host to assist the teacher in securing a place to live, obtaining a driver's license and car, knowing where community resources are located, etc.

- To provide additional support to ensure a successful and positive experience for both the school and the teacher.

CONTRACTS AND PAY SCALE:

All Visiting International Teachers coming to Kansas will be extended a standard district contract with salary based on the teacher's level of education and years of experience. Visiting International Teachers will be required to apply for a Foreign Credential Evaluation issued by an independent U.S. company, which will be forwarded to district and KSDE offices. This evaluation will serve as the official transcript needed to obtain a license.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Additional information about the VIT program can be found at:
http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1751
If you have questions concerning participation in the VIT program, please contact Melanie Manares or Phyllis Farrar. Thank you very much for your attention and consideration!!

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