

Governor Announces China Study Abroad Program for DE High School Students

Partnership with leading Chinese company is part of expansion of world language education opportunities

Wilmington, DE – Having made it a priority to offer Delaware students the best opportunities to learn a second language, Governor Markell today announced a China summer abroad program for high school students studying Mandarin. The Governor signed an agreement with representatives of Wanxiang Group, China's largest auto parts manufacturer, for students to study at the company's facility in Hangzhou, China, where they will take daily language classes, visit local schools, participate in cultural activities, and tour sites of science and technology companies.

"To prepare students for good-paying jobs in our global economy, the value of learning a second language is clear," said Governor Markell. "And there is no better way to become immersed in another language and culture than to live it.

"This partnership provides an amazing chance for our young people to not only dramatically improve their fluency in a second language, but also become more familiar with a different culture in the world's second-largest economy. I strongly encourage students taking Chinese and their families to consider this opportunity."

Joined by students and teachers from Mandarin Chinese classes at Conrad Schools of Science, Markell signed an agreement with Wanxiang Project Manager Daniel Li, who represented Executive Vice President of Wanxiang Group Pin Ni. The document provides a grant from Wanxiang for about \$450,000 to fund study abroad sessions in 2015 and 2016, with up to 24 students and four

teachers participating each year.

“Governor Markell’s vision to bring World Language Chinese to Delaware has not only given Conrad students a leg up in the international science industry going forward, but has afforded our students the opportunity to see and experience another culture from an increasingly interconnected world,” said Mark Pruitt, principal of Conrad Schools of Science.

In outlining the mission of the initiative, the Memorandum of Understanding states: “All programs created as a result of this agreement will help students see language proficiency as a workplace skill that will allow them to compete in the global marketplace of the 21st century. This partnership will also promote the study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in the field of environmental protection and clean energy solutions and provide opportunities for students to develop international leadership experience.”

Wanxiang, which has participated in [President Obama’s 100,000 Strong Initiative](#) to send more American students to study in China, will fund all travel, living, and educational expenses. The partnership with Delaware, known as the *Delaware Summer Chinese LInCS (Language Initiative for Communicating STEM) program*, is geared toward students interested in real-world opportunities to apply their Chinese language proficiency and cultural knowledge in a STEM context.

“Delaware has made an impressive commitment to world language education and specifically to Chinese language opportunities for its students,” said Pin Ni. “We are proud to partner with Governor Markell and the Department of Education to make available more educational resources for the state as we continue to support President Obama’s 100,000 Strong Initiative.”

Applications are due in March, and students will be chosen in April. Participants will depart in late June.

World Language Expansion in Delaware Today's signing ceremony builds on Governor Markell's push to make Delaware the most bilingual state. At the event, he also announced growth of his World Language Expansion initiative, which gives students the chance to learn half of their subjects in either Spanish or Chinese from kindergarten through eighth grade. Participants aim to become proficient by fourth grade and pass the Advanced Placement language exam by ninth grade. Six new programs will open at schools next fall, bringing the statewide total to 17 programs with more than 2,300 students taking part in what will be the initiative's fourth year. More details are available at news.delaware.gov.

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