



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Category: \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Chesterfield County, VA

International Cooperative for Teacher Exchange  
(Community & Economic Development Category)

**Executive Summary:**

Chesterfield County Schools and Chesterfield County Government, through a partnership with Participate Learning, welcomed 30 experienced, certified, international educators from 9 countries working in 10 elementary, middle, and high schools in a variety of socioeconomic settings. The program aims to provide students knowledge about world cultures, languages, and people, preparing students to lead in a global marketplace. Chesterfield County cultural ambassadors, the Chesterfield County Education Foundation, the YMCA, PTA's, local businesses, and various offices of Chesterfield County Schools and Government worked together to provide a customized welcome experience. Outcomes have included cultural exchange, diversification of teaching staff, securing teachers with experience and content licensure, exchange of teaching strategies, and positive feedback concerning instructional strategies, assessment, and outcomes. Program expansion is planned for next year.

**Problem or need addressed by the program:**

During a national teacher shortage, we were neither able to fill 100% of our teaching positions with certified teachers nor diversify our staff to the extent that our student population was diversifying. Additionally, both socioeconomics and disruptions caused by the pandemic reduced our students' opportunities for cultural exchange and travel.

**Program Description:**

In 2023, Chesterfield County Public Schools and Chesterfield County Government welcomed 30 international exchange teachers from nine countries. Ten of our schools are participating. International exchange teachers assist our students with becoming more knowledgeable about world cultures, languages, and people, preparing them to lead in a global marketplace. Schools volunteered and were selected regardless of socioeconomic status.

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Planning began for the arrival of our first cohort of teachers in fall 2022. The Chesterfield County Public Schools Human Resources Department worked with principals to select volunteer schools committed to international exchange who wanted to host teachers. A wide variety of candidates for community advisors were interviewed and referred to Participate Learning for further training. The Support Services Department was engaged in order to ensure that children of international teachers had what they needed to enroll, and the Human Resources Department provided information on location, enrollment, and requirements in advance. The Chesterfield County Public Schools Community Engagement Office worked to secure cooperating rental companies and connect them with Participate Learning as well as hosted a collection drive for household goods that newly arrived international teachers could use to set up their apartments. Efforts were also coordinated with our financial offices to ensure that pay was deposited into newly opened U.S. bank or credit union accounts as well as tax forms were completed appropriately.

In our cooperative with Participate Learning, diverse community advisors, including retired county and schools personnel as well as former newcomers to our county from a variety of cultures who had engaged in welcome programs hosted by Chesterfield County Government, were assigned to assist newly arrived teachers. A welcome event hosted by Chesterfield County Public Schools Community Relations and Human Resources provided each teacher with lunch, welcome supplies from each school, and a gift card and discounts collected by Chesterfield Education Foundation. One-stop services were provided including onboarding and technology access and distribution. The Employee Medical Center, a shared service between Chesterfield County Public Schools and Government, provided additional service to ensure that all new arrivals met Virginia laws related to TB testing regardless of country of origin. Community hotels donated stays upon arrival as teachers settled into permanent

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housing. Chesterfield County Government hosted a welcome event introducing international teachers to community services as well as connecting them with community ambassadors from their specific cultures. These ambassadors quickly connected international teachers to international communities within Chesterfield County. The YMCA also hosted a welcome event and tour for teachers, donating a membership for their first year to promote wellness and connection while also inviting teachers to an international day celebration.

School-based mentor teachers were also provided for each new international educator to assist with adjusting to the specific curriculum, classroom management expectations, resources, and software programs. Participate Learning provided support by offering online instruction on how to adjust instructional strategies for American students as well as a week of arrival orientation in Washington, D.C. An instructional coach from Participate is also available to visit and assist teachers in Chesterfield County, and a fall weekend conference was also provided for international teachers. Chesterfield County Public Schools provided training and resources at new teacher week.

These experienced teachers quickly adjusted to teaching in a new culture. Early benefits of the program include student achievement, cultural exchange, teaching strategy exchange, diversification of teaching staff in a rapidly diversifying community, new friends and colleagues, and lifelong memories. Each teacher can remain with Chesterfield County Public Schools for up to five years. In some cases, teacher's children and families have accompanied them, adding further opportunities for cultural exchange for our students. Chesterfield County Schools and Chesterfield County Government looks forward to welcoming an additional 25 international teachers next year.

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**Responding to Economic Downturn:**

While the primary objective of the program is cultural exchange, the program allowed for hiring 30 certified teachers of record during a national teacher shortage. The cost of the teachers' salaries is the same as domestic hires. The services and sponsorship provided by Participate Learning can be afforded because benefits are provided through Participate Learning and the teachers are not eligible for state retirement benefits. The program is cost neutral with the exception of staff time and community donations.

**Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:**

Chesterfield County has welcomed students from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, the Philippines, and Trinidad and Tobago. The international teacher exchange program ensures that cultural activities, such as offering a cultural exchange night or a program about how education differs in home countries, are offered during the teachers' stays. Adding these teachers to our staff also ensures that more of our students experience representation among our school staff. Our students will become more knowledgeable about the world, its cultures, languages, and people and be more prepared to lead in a global marketplace.

**Program Cost:**

While the primary objective of the program is cultural exchange, the program allowed for hiring 30 certified teachers of record during a national teacher shortage. The cost of the teachers' salaries is the same as domestic hires. The services and sponsorship provided by Participate Learning can be afforded because benefits are provided through Participate Learning, and the teachers are not eligible for state retirement benefits. The program is cost neutral with the exception of staff time and community donations.

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**Program Results/Success:**

Cultural exchange has been provided in all 10 schools in which teachers have begun serving. Additionally, all teachers have qualified for the Virginia International Teaching License, providing 10 qualified teachers of record. Several school principals of participating schools have asked to expand their program, and additional schools have asked to join for next year based on current schools' positive experiences. School principals have reported positive experiences and observations related to instructional planning, formative assessment, and delivery of instruction.

**Worthiness of an award:**

While international exchange programs with partner organizations exist elsewhere, what is unique about this program is the collaboration among numerous school and county offices, the Chesterfield Education Foundation, local businesses, PTA's, cultural ambassadors who participated in the county's newcomer program in the past, local nonprofits such as the YMCA, and citizens who donated new or gently used household items to provide a comprehensive welcome experience. In providing a program that introduces students to the world's cultures, languages, and people, Chesterfield County also found an avenue for its government offices, nonprofits, and businesses to collaborate for a common purpose after a period of disruption.

**Supplemental Materials:**

- CCPS School Board Memorandum – Recognition of staff success (enclosed)

Supplemental Materials:**Chesterfield County Public Schools welcomes teachers from nine nations**

Chesterfield County Public Schools welcomed teachers from nine nations on July 27. During the 2023-24 school year, 30 educators will work as full-time teachers in 10 different schools.

Greeted by Chesterfield County Public Schools leaders and principals, the teachers arrived from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, the Philippines and Trinidad and Tobago. Hired by the school system through a partnership with Participate Learning, the educators will teach a variety of subjects, including elementary education, English as a Second Language and Spanish.

Each teacher meets Virginia licensure standards, holds a college degree in teacher education, has at least two years teaching experience and is highly proficient in English. They will teach in these schools during the 2023-24 school year, with the expectation that they will stay with Chesterfield County Public Schools for several years:

- Bensley Elementary
- Beulah Elementary
- Curtis Elementary
- Crenshaw Elementary
- Davis Elementary
- Salem Church Elementary

- Elizabeth Davis Middle
- Clover Hill High
- Thomas Dale High
- Manchester High

Meet and Greet Photos:





New Teacher Workweek Photos:

