



CDSBEO International Education Program Continues to Grow

The CDSBEO International Education Program offers global views and perspectives that enhance the education of students who have chosen to explore cultures and languages through education abroad. The International Student Program allows students from around the world to study and learn alongside Canadian students of the same age. The program encourages cultural awareness and international understanding by bringing students together and enabling them to experience similar social and academic opportunities.

Since its inception in the spring of 2015, the program has continued to grow as the Board develops and grows relationships with new partners in existing and new countries. The development of relationships and partnerships are key to developing and supporting the program.

Dave Chaplin, Principal of St. James Catholic Education Centre and Head of International Education, presented information to the Board, along with three international students Urara Mori (Japan), Lorena Requeno (Spain), and Ken Fan (China), and St. Mary CHS Principal JP Elliott.

Mr. Chaplin began, "The program has experienced a lot of growth over the three years, and we are pleased with its overall success. I am happy to be here this evening to share the details of International Education in the CDSBEO, and to provide an opportunity for some of our students to share their experiences."

Staff and students are very excited to welcome international students to their schools and communities. During the 2018-2019 school year, the CDSBEO hosted 134 students from abroad. This number is up from 93 students in 2017-2018.

"When we first started we had some 20 students in 2015-2016. As we moved into 2016-2017 we moved up to almost 75 students, and for this year, we have nearly doubled this number," noted Chaplin.

"One of the things I really moved forward with this year, and this was sort of the next step, was working to form partnerships with different countries. The friendship agreements that have been established, provide opportunities to learn new languages and better understand other cultures, customs and educational practices," continued Chaplin. "These agreements help to build bridges for long term relationships."

Some of the programs born from the partnerships include the hosting of delegations, teacher training and summer cultural programs. In addition, the Board will be hosting 39 elementary students from China, at three schools in Brockville. The students will spend a week with



CDSBEO students, and the principal of the school will also accompany the students, along with six chaperones.

"Our students have already begun the introduction by sending a letter of welcome prior to their arrival, and the students have written back. We hope that this experience will help them to build and continue their friendships, and we hope that someday our students will travel to China to experience education there. The school, which is called Elite Cradle, has a large residence. That really is the next step – to have our students travel the world."

Other programs include a partnership a Chinese Kindergarten school, which would see Kindergarten students travel to Canada with a parent for one month, to attend Kindergarten in a CDSBEO school, and a second intermediate school education and cultural exchange program. Plans are also underway for a French six-week exchange program.

"Developing strong partnerships are truly important in continuing to expand our international program," noted Chaplin.

Several international students who have been attending St. Mary Catholic High School in Brockville, shared their experiences of living and learning in Canada.

"Canada is less stressful than Japan," noted student Urara Mori. "School days are much longer in Japan, up to 12 hours, and in Canada we have more free time. My best memory was Christmas – in our country we don't have religion and I attended a real church at Christmas, and enjoyed everyone getting together."

"I've never studied as much as I have in Canada," explained Lorena Requeno. "I have never been so thankful, this is a whole new experience for me, and I am so happy to graduate here in Ontario. I would absolutely recommend this experience to everyone."

Ken Fan, who has attended St. Mary CHS for two years, discussed the differences between Canadian and Chinese education.

"In China, most of the high schools are boarding schools, and we have to hand in our cell phone at the start of the week, so we are not allowed to have our cell phone during the school week. The day starts at 7 a.m. and ends at 10:30 p.m., and we have 6 days a week. Learning in Canada can be stressful, but mainly because of the language."

"What a gift it is to host these students," noted Principal JP Elliott. "There are always a few key people who take these students under their wings, and I personally take an interest in every one of these students, on an individual basis, as it is of importance to our schools. They bring culture to our small rural communities. These partnerships and the opportunities they provide for our students are essential. We are thankful for the rich experiences that this program provides through the friendships they develop, and all that they learn from each other."



"The excellent results we see in the program is directly connected to the enthusiasm you exude for the program, as well as that of the principals who welcome the students. You can't put a price on that enthusiasm, and that is exactly what you always project whenever you speak to us, whenever you bring students here to share their story," noted Vice-Chair Eamer.

"We would like to thank you, Mr. Chaplin, for all of your work, and for establishing such an amazing program for our students, and in all the work you have done to grow this program to offer so many different facets and varying opportunities," concluded Chair Todd Lalonde.

CDSBEO's FSL Cultural Experience to France

The biennial CDSBEO FSL Cultural Experience to France takes place during the month of March, and provides grade 10 to 12 students with the opportunity to practice classroom learning and broaden their knowledge of the French language and culture.

This year, eighteen students from three CDSBEO secondary schools, three chaperones, and one group leader travelled to Paris, as well as the Canadian Battlefields of northern France, from March 6 through 14. The activities and outings experienced by the students reflected religious education, history, geography, arts, French culture, and language.

Lyne Gratton and Sharon O'Brien, French as a Second Language Curriculum Consultants, along with two students from St. Michael Catholic High School, Rebecca Blais and Brenna Grimes, presented information on the experience.

"The experience reassured me that I am a bilingual student," began student Rebecca Blais. "Going to France and getting to explore the country where the French language was born is definitely the best way to end my experience with French immersion as a grade 12 student. For me it was also a great way to prepare for the DELF in May. It was amazing to be reassured that I am confident in my knowledge of the French language."

"France was such a beautiful country and such an enriching experience for me, and this has been a dream come true. Thank you for giving French immersion students the opportunity to see how far they've come, and how much they've learned through this experience."

"I've been learning French since such a very young age, and when I was complimented on my ability to speak this language, it gave me reassurance in my abilities and allowed me to build confidence. I've never been so proud to be someone who is bilingual," added Brenna Grimes.

Over the eight days, students had the opportunity to tour the Canadian Battlefields in Northern France, as well as visiting the historical highlights of Paris. Highlights of Northern France included Vimy Ridge, the Courcellette Canadian Memorial, the Adanac Military Cemetery, Dieppe, Juno Beach, and Mont St. Michel. The students were moved by the



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historical significance of each site, which helped to strengthen and deepen their understanding of the sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers in both WWI and WWII.

"On Sunday, our group attended French mass at Cathédral Saint-Samson in a town called Dol-de-Bretagne," noted Gratton.

In Paris, the students had dinner in Montmartre, took a boat ride on the Seine, and visited Notre-Dame Cathedral, one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture.

"The tour guide spoke French and immersed the students in the French language experience," noted Gratton. "The group also toured Sorbonne University, and visited the Eiffel Tower. In Versailles the students visited the Château de Versailles, the Louvre, the Arc de Triomphe, and shopped on the Champs Élysées."

"The FSL trip to France was truly an authentic learning experience," concluded Gratton. "The students had so much to say on the trip home, and we are looking forward to the next one in two years."

"We would like to thank you for a great presentation, for sharing this experience with us, and also for the time you spend with our students to allow this trip to take place. The students would not be able to participate in this amazing experience if not for the support of our educators," concluded Chair Todd Lalonde.