

Visiting Teacher from Germany Program

*The Nebraska Department of Education
Senat Von Berlin and Checkpoint Charlie Foundation*

In 2004, the Nebraska Department of Education, working closely with Checkpoint Charlie Foundation administrators, established the Visiting Teacher from Germany Program that matches qualified teachers from Germany with Nebraska schools. The Nebraska Department of Education is working with Educational Service Units and local school districts to provide additional options when a district is unable to find qualified teachers. Under the German Teacher Exchange Program, teachers from Germany go to the U.S. to teach for 1-3 years in any subject area.

For almost five decades, America's commitment to Berlin was central in developing the close bond of friendship between Germans and Americans. With the withdrawal of American troops from the city, Berliners were determined to continue to strengthen their unique ties to the country which had done so much for them. To this end, the Berlin legislature passed an act in 1994 creating a foundation and entrusting it with the responsibility to foster German-American relations. The new foundation was named after the former Berlin border crossing that had become a symbol for the American presence in Berlin during the Cold War, and the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation was born.

The Nebraska Department of Education is committed to the principle of providing quality education for all students. The Visiting Teacher from Germany Program would help NDE meet this goal.

Objectives

- To increase global awareness on the part of students taught by visiting teachers
- To increase understanding of the language, culture, and history of Germany
- To develop lifelong professional relationships and friendships

Process

- The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation in Berlin sign a memorandum of understanding
- NDE surveys the needs of Nebraska school districts and provides an Application of Intent, which does not obligate the school district to hire a teacher from Germany
- The Checkpoint Charlie Foundation pre-screens and interviews possible candidates
- Interviews are sent to NDE on DVD, and interested schools can review video interviews
- Recruited teachers will make a one-to-three year commitment to teach in Nebraska, provided that the local school district chooses to rehire them each year
- Recruited teachers will function as regular members of their respective school faculties and will be paid accordingly

Responsibility of NDE

- To assess the needs of local school districts
- To work with schools in selecting candidates best suited to meet the school's needs and place candidates in districts that request a visiting teacher
- To offer orientation and pre-service training for visiting teachers

Responsibility of Local School District

- To provide a contact person who is available to discuss personnel issues during the interview and selection process
- To provide a building-level administrator who acts as a liaison for the teacher
- To provide a fellow teacher/mentor, preferably in the same building, to offer guidance and support for the visiting teacher from Germany
- To compensate NDE for pre-service training and orientation
- To provide additional support to ensure a successful and positive experience for both the school and the teacher, including assistance in setting up housekeeping, obtaining a drivers license, buying a car, etc.

Additional Checkpoint Charlie Foundation Programs:

The Educational Enrichment Program offers a two-week continuing education visit to Berlin for teachers, administrators and education policy-makers from partner states. Over 635 educators from more than 96 American school districts have participated in this opportunity.

The Foundation strives to constantly respond to ongoing developments in German-American relations by developing new and innovative programs which address upcoming issues.