

# Visiting Teacher from Spain Program

## *The Nebraska Department of Education and The Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain*

Interaction with the global marketplace is an aspect of Nebraska's growing economy that demands attention. From agriculture to industry, Nebraska faces the challenge of gaining the knowledge and skills to communicate with and better understand the communities of the world. Foreign language education helps the state meet this challenge by teaching students how to interact and communicate in the target language, and understand and respect other cultures.

Unfortunately, a shortage of foreign language teachers across the nation makes it more difficult to provide Nebraska students with qualified teachers. The Nebraska Department of Education is working with Educational Service Units and local school districts to provide options when a district is unable to find a foreign language teacher. Some of these options are sharing teachers between districts, teaching via distance learning, receiving instruction over satellite, independent study, telelanguage, or online courses offered by colleges and universities. Even with these options, there is still a need for qualified foreign language teachers, especially in Spanish.

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain offers several programs that could help alleviate the shortage of Spanish teachers in Nebraska. The Visiting Teacher Program could provide the greatest impact to Nebraska school districts offering the option of recruiting a qualified visiting Spanish teacher to meet the needs of their district.

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

### Objectives

- To provide the opportunity for Nebraska students to learn Spanish from native speakers
- To increase global awareness on the part of students taught by visiting teachers
- To increase understanding of the language, culture, and history of Spain
- To develop lifelong professional relationships and friendships

### Process

- The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain (MEC) 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 Spain
- The Spanish Ministry of Education selects possible candidates
- NDE Team travels to Madrid to conduct extensive interviews with prospective recruits
- 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 provide a team to interview prospective candidates in Spain
- To select candidates and place them 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 Spain
- 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 Embassy of Spain Programs:**

The Language/Culture Assistant Program provides the opportunity for schools to have a Spanish Teacher Assistant for one year who helps with the teaching of Spanish language and culture. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain pays salaries and medical benefits, while lodging and transportation are arranged by the school district. They are, in effect, student teachers and must work closely with the classroom teacher for guidance and support. Participants work up to 20 hours per week and should be allowed to enroll in university courses, workshops or other development classes.

The Post to Post Teacher Exchange Program permits primary, middle, and high school teachers to exchange their teaching positions with teachers from Spain. The benefits are many: an increased understanding of the host country, language, and culture; a career-enhancing experience to gain new perspectives; exposure to new teaching methods; and becoming a member of the international community of teachers. Teachers remain employed by their school districts with salaries, benefits, and seniority remaining intact.

The Student/School Exchange Program promotes school-based exchanges involving a group of students and one or more teachers. Students live with host families, attend daily classes, and participate in cultural activities, sports and excursions for the two-to-four-week stay. Students are responsible for airfare and transfers, health insurance, and pocket money. Students not only enhance language proficiency, but also increase cultural awareness, promote personal growth and foster a global perspective.

Teacher Summer Seminars allow American teachers of Spanish and teachers in bilingual programs to participate in three-week summer seminars held at various universities in Spain. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain and the Spanish universities subsidize each participant with half of the total cost of the program, with the remaining cost and travel expenses paid for by the participant. Teachers improve Spanish-speaking skills, learn new teaching approaches, and gain a deeper understanding of the culture of Spain today.