

Randolph County School System Procedures for International Exchange Programs and Students

Exchange Program Requirements

To be considered for approval by the Randolph County School System (RCSS), international student exchange programs must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The program must be designated by the United States Department of State as a secondary student exchange visitor program, also called the high school exchange program and must currently be in good standing with the United States Department of State.
2. The program must be approved by and in good standing with the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET).
3. The program must have a local representative who resides within the Randolph County area and who will meet with school personnel, the student and the host family on a regular basis. The local address and phone number of this representative must be on file with the RCSS Director of Administrative Services for Students.
4. Orientation, both pre-departure and upon arrival in the United States, must be provided to help international exchange students adjust to a new culture and, perhaps, language. Ongoing contact and support from the local representative of the exchange organization must also be provided.
5. Orientation must be provided to the host family in advance of the international exchange student's arrival. The family should be acquainted with the needs and requirements of housing a visitor for a long period of time, advised of potential problems in hosting an exchange student, and provided with suggestions for coping with these problems. Ongoing contact and support from the local representative of the exchange organization must also be provided, including a school visit to talk with the student in that setting.
6. The program annually must submit an application for approval to the RCSS Director of Administrative Services for Students. Applications are due by January 31 for consideration for the following school year. Applications will be reviewed and agencies will be informed of the decision by March 31.

International Exchange Student Admission Requirements

International exchange organizations designated by the United States Department of State may register the student with SEVIS after he or she is granted permission to attend a RCSS school by the program coordinator. The exchange organization is responsible for ensuring that this process is completed. International exchange students must demonstrate and/or provide evidence regarding the following:

1. The student must be at least 16 years of age upon enrollment in the district and must not turn 19 years of age before August 31 of the year of enrollment in the RCSS.

2. The student must not have graduated from high school or its equivalent.
3. The student must reside with a legal adult who is domiciled in the RCSS district. Every effort should be made to place international exchange students with host families where one or more students from that family attend the same school the exchange student will attend.
4. The student must have sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable effective oral and written communication, to use instructional materials and textbooks printed in English and to function in the regular educational program without special professional assistance.
5. The student must have average or above-average grades in the student's home school and must not be receiving special professional assistance to function in the regular academic program.
6. To request admission, the international exchange organization or privately sponsored international exchange student must submit the following:
 - a. A completed International Exchange Student Admission Request Form.
 - b. A copy of the face page of the host family agency application.
 - c. Three years of official transcripts and/or records of prior education from the student's home school and an English translation of the same documents. The records should reflect courses taken and grades/credits earned.
 - d. Evidence that the student has successfully completed a minimum of three years of instruction in the English language, which includes speaking and listening as well as reading and writing, or proof of English language proficiency: or evidence the student has a test of English language proficiency, such as the SLEP, TOEFL or FSI, at a level of *proficient* or higher. For the SLEP test, that is a rating of 50 or higher. The test must be taken in the home country before the application is submitted; the scores must be submitted with the application.
 - e. Evidence of required immunizations. Per North Carolina law, all students who are enrolling in North Carolina Public Schools for the first time, will need to submit a completed Health Assessment Transmittal Form within 30 calendar days of their first day of attendance or they are to be excluded from school.
 - f. A written application or a letter of application from the potential international exchange student to the district or school. This application/letter should provide pertinent information about the student (e.g., name, age, birth date, home country, level of education), the student's reasons for wanting to attend a school in RCSS and the projected duration of enrollment. The name, address and phone number(s) of the international exchange student's own parents/guardians, the host family and the local international exchange program representative should also be included.
 - g. Two character references, one must be from the student's English language teacher documenting the type of instruction the student has had and the student's level of proficiency and one from someone who has been acquainted with the student for at least one year.

Placement of International Exchange Students in the Schools

Only international exchange students who are sponsored by district-approved international exchange organizations may seek admission to RCSS.

1. All completed applications with supporting documentation are to be submitted to the Director of the Administrative Services for Students by **July 1** for consideration for the fall semester or the full year of the following school year. Enrollment commencing the second semester in high schools which follow block schedules will be permitted only by special approval, and there will be no second semester enrollment in high schools which follow traditional schedules. Any applications for second semester should be made by **November 1** and finalized by **December 1**.
2. An international exchange student may not be enrolled in a RCSS school without prior written approval from the Director of Administrative Services for Students.
3. Upon the international exchange student's arrival in Randolph County, the adult sponsor (host family and/or local representative of the exchange organization) and student must go to the school the student has been authorized to attend to complete the enrollment process.

International exchange students must arrive in sufficient time for attendance on the first day of school.

International Exchange Student Placement Limitations

Only a limited number of students can be afforded this opportunity each year. Therefore:

1. Enrollment of international exchange students in each RCSS school is limited to one international exchange student per each 400 students. At the principal's discretion, this recommended limit may be increased, but the number of international exchange students may not exceed 1% of the school's enrollment. Enrollment will be on a first come, first serve basis.
2. So that all high schools may have the opportunity to share in the experience of hosting international exchange students, exchange organizations are asked to disperse the students they are sponsoring throughout the District's high schools. A maximum of four students sponsored by any exchange organization may be placed in a single school and no more than two of these students may be of the same nationality.
3. If there is greater demand by international exchange organizations for admission of students than can be accommodated by the district's schools, specific limits may be given to organizations. Limitations may also be placed on new organizations and organizations approved on a conditional basis.
4. For RCSS to consider a double placement, i.e. international exchange students with the same family, the following people and agencies need to agree, in writing, prior to the students' placements:

- a. The exchange agency(s) involved
- b. The parents of both exchange students
- c. The American host family
- d. RCSS

Written agreements must be included in the students' application when they are submitted to the program coordinator. In addition, the U.S. State Department must be notified by the exchange agency(s) of the agreement of all parties to the double placement.

Status/Academic/Graduation Standards for International Exchange Students

1. International exchange students will be treated as regular students. They are responsible for complying with district policies and regulations regarding attendance, academic standards, responsibilities and rights, discipline and graduation requirements.
2. International exchange students are expected to take four classes per term at a block school, including one language arts/English class and one American history and/or government class, and are expected to maintain passing grades in all classes.
3. If a student's grades, attendance and/or behavior are deemed unsatisfactory by school officials, RCSS reserves the right to require the withdrawal of the international exchange student and the United States Department of State will be advised immediately.
4. International exchange students will be enrolled as a visiting student (per NCDPI) and classified as juniors. They will earn grades and receive credit for courses successfully completed but will not be included on the cumulative academic class ranking.
5. International exchange students are not eligible to receive a RCSS diploma.
6. The eligibility requirements of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association will be followed.
7. International exchange students are expected to pay for all lunch, book, athletic, student activity and other fees, yearbook costs, and all other school-incurred expenses that are expected of other students in the RCSS. District or group activity funds will not be allowed for these expenses, and there will be no fee waivers or reduced prices.
8. International exchange students are not domiciled in Randolph County and are not entitled to the benefits of a free and appropriate public education. The District will not provide international exchange students with admission to such programs as special education for students with disabilities or English as a Second Language classes. Under no circumstances will the district pay tuition for international exchange students to attend other schools or institutions of higher education.

Responsibilities of Exchange Organizations and Host Families

Exchange organizations and host families are in loco parentis with respect to adult supervision of international exchange students. The following are specific responsibilities, which the district expects these adults to assume:

1. The host family and local coordinator for the exchange organization must maintain personal contact with the school and must be available and willing to meet with school personnel when problems or situations require it.
2. If an international exchange student's English proficiency is found to be insufficient to function in the regular instructional program without special professional assistance, the exchange organization must provide a tutor or make other educational arrangements for the student at their expense according to the student's need.
3. The exchange organization must assume the final responsibility for resolving problems including, if necessary, the early return home of the international exchange student because of personal, family or school difficulties which cannot be resolved.
4. If a student's grades, attendance and/or behavior are deemed unsatisfactory by school officials, RCSS reserves the right to require the withdrawal of the international exchange student and the United States Department of State will be advised immediately.

Suspension, Revocation or Dismissal

Exchange organizations, host families and/or international exchange students found to be in violation of any of the RCSS policies and regulations are subject to having their relationship with the district terminated.