

Exchange Visiting Teachers from Spain Program Agreement

Introduction

The Exchange Visiting Teachers from Spain (EVTS) Program is an exciting venture between the Iowa Department of Education (Department) and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain (MECS). The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the two educational organizations in April 2008.

The EVTS program was created to mitigate a shortage of qualified Spanish teachers in the state. The program provides local school districts and accredited nonpublic schools with the opportunity to fill vacant Spanish positions. With this program, Iowa school systems have the option of recruiting highly qualified Spanish educators for a period of up to three years, with the possibility of extending for an additional two years. Visiting teachers from Spain are certified Spanish language educators with at least two years of experience. Local school districts and accredited nonpublic schools must hire visiting teachers in accordance with all other local policies in terms of salary scale, licensure, and local system requirements.

The EVTS program in Iowa is overseen by the Department and adheres to the conditions and regulations of the U.S. Department of State's J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program. This program provides foreign teachers with the opportunity to teach in accredited U.S. elementary and secondary schools, learn and practice U.S. teaching methods, engage in rich cross-cultural experiences and bring an international perspective to U.S. classrooms. The purpose of the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program is to promote cultural and educational exchange between citizens of the United States and those of other countries. The program provides foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States and then return home to share their experiences.

Conditions and Requirements for Districts and/or Accredited Schools Participating in the Exchange Visiting Teachers in Iowa Program

Participating accredited district and/or nonpublic school administrators **should carefully read the following program requirements and sign to indicate their understanding of each requirement** and assured compliance with them at all times. These agreement obligations protect exchange visiting teachers (EVTs) and participating districts/accredited nonpublic schools and satisfy U.S. Department of State and Homeland Security regulations.

- A. EVT's will be placed under contract in guaranteed, year-long, full-time positions and be paid the same salary that districts and/or accredited nonpublic schools would pay any other teacher, based on the local salary scale, commensurate with their level of educational attainment and years of documented prior service in both the United States (if any) and abroad. EVT's should also receive the same amount of sick/personal leave commensurate with other teachers in the district or accredited nonpublic school. In districts or accredited nonpublic schools where collective bargaining agreements (unions) are in place for all teachers, compensation and benefits for EVT's must comply with the terms of those agreements.
- B. Contracts offered to EVT's must ensure adequate due process and intervention safeguards if their performance falls into an unsatisfactory status or if there is an allegation of misconduct.
- C. If there is a positive annual teacher evaluation, an initial one-year contract can be followed by contract renewals if all parties agree.
- D. The district/accredited nonpublic school guarantees that the position will not be eliminated within a school year due to budgetary cuts, reduction in force, tax levy failure or other factors which result in adverse changes in district/school finances and staffing levels.

- E. The district/accredited nonpublic school will not make any attempts to change the EVT's visa status from a J-1 status to another status. Doing so, will result in immediate removal from being able to participate in the Exchange Visiting Teachers from Spain program. The district/accredited nonpublic school will also notify the Department Responsible Officer (RO) if they believe the teacher is making any attempt to change their visa status.
- F. To ensure compliance with federal J-1 visa regulations, districts and accredited nonpublic schools will not request an EVT to teach any subject beyond their licensure area. In most cases, this is in an elementary dual immersion program or a secondary Spanish classroom.
- G. Districts and accredited nonpublic schools will ensure safe and sanitary working conditions for EVTs that are conducive to teaching and learning at all times. The Sponsor will visit the school and EVT to confirm that the working conditions are as specified.
- H. Districts and accredited nonpublic schools will ensure that EVT's teaching load is appropriate and manageable and that adequate time for planning and preparation is built into the EVT's daily schedule.
- I. Districts and accredited nonpublic schools will support the EVT by assigning mentor support and help with tasks associated with settling in, such as applying for a social security number, opening bank accounts, locating and furnishing an apartment, buying and insuring a car, etc. Support for these tasks is not a financial obligation.
- J. EVTs will receive scheduled mentoring provided by the district or school, with trained mentors who will regularly observe and work with the EVT over the course of the entire school year. The mentoring program should emulate the mentoring that is received by other first-year teachers in the district or accredited nonpublic school.
- K. Districts and schools will deduct applicable federal, state, and local income taxes, union dues, etc., from EVT's pay just as they would for any other teacher. However, per the U.S. IRS Publication titled Alien Liability for Social Security and Medicare Taxes of Foreign Teachers, Foreign Researchers, and Other Foreign Professionals, which details an exemption for nonresident aliens who are temporarily living and working in the United States under authority of a J-1 visa, districts and schools will not deduct FICA (i.e., Medicare and Social Security) taxes during the EVT's first two calendar years in the U.S.
- L. If a new teacher orientation is held or professional development is provided prior to the start of school, the EVT should be included. If a stipend for these events is paid to the regular teaching staff, the EVT must also be given the same compensation.
- M. Districts and accredited nonpublic schools will support the EVT's attendance at the Iowa World Language Association (IWLA) conference each year, if requested.
- N. Districts and/or accredited nonpublic school administrators will immediately report to the Iowa Department of Education any infraction of the law or educator code of conduct that is allegedly committed by an EVT. District and/or accredited nonpublic schools, and the Sponsor (the Department) will ensure that EVTs receive due process in the event an alleged violation of the law or educator code of conduct occurs.

Iowa District and Accredited Nonpublic School Administrator Acknowledgment

As the Administrator for the district/accredited nonpublic school listed below, I certify that I acknowledge and accept the conditions and requirements for my district/accredited nonpublic school to participate in Iowa's Exchange Visiting Teachers from Spain Program and will ensure compliance at all times. I have carefully read this Agreement and understand that failure to comply with any of the conditions or requirements necessary for meeting the purpose of the program may result in immediate removal from the program. This document serves as acknowledgement of the Administrator's commitment to meet the purpose of the program.

District or Accredited Nonpublic School Name: _____

District or Accredited Nonpublic School Address: _____

Administrator Printed Name: _____

Administrator Email: _____

Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

A signed copy of this agreement must be emailed to EVTS Program Responsible Officer, Stefanie Wager, (stefanie.wager@iowa.gov) no later than May 30.

Conditions and Requirements for Exchange Visiting Teachers from Spain Participating in the Exchange Visiting Teachers in Iowa Program

All Exchange Visiting Teachers (EVTs) **should carefully read the following program requirements and sign to indicate their understanding of each requirement** and assured compliance with them at all times. These agreement obligations protect EVT's, ensure the well-being of EVT's (J-1 visa holders), and satisfy U.S. Department of State and Homeland Security regulations.

- A. EVT's acknowledge that Iowa's Spanish Exchange Visiting Teacher Program is, first and foremost, a cross-cultural program designed to increase cultural understanding on the part of all local and foreign program participants. Additionally, EVT's will participate in the required, two-way cross-cultural exchange activities with a school in their country of origin and cultural sharing activities with the greater district or school community as required by the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program. Each EVT must submit an end-of-year report to the Responsible Officer (RO) detailing their high-quality, cross-cultural exchange activities and experiences. Failure to comply with all required cross-cultural exchange activities may result in immediate removal of the program and revocation of the associated teaching license.
- B. EVT's are required to attend the Iowa Department of Education's orientation as required by the U.S. Department of State's J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program.
- C. EVT's are committed to meeting the purpose of the program for up to 3 years (with the possibility of extending for 2 more years), and will then return to their home country. Failure to comply will result in immediate removal from the program, suspension, and being reported to the federal program at the U.S. Department of State.
- D. Each EVT must have the following types and minimum amounts of insurance coverage required by the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Homeland Security, and the Iowa Department of Education at all times, beginning on the day the EVT arrives in the United States, through their last day in the country:
 - a. Employee health insurance
 - b. Medical evacuation insurance (minimum of \$50,000 coverage)
 - c. Repatriation of remains insurance (minimum of \$25,000 coverage)
 - d. A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness
- E. EVT's will receive mentoring provided by the district or accredited nonpublic school, with trained mentors who will regularly observe and work with the EVT over the course of the entire school year.
- F. EVT's commit to depart the United States at the conclusion of their program. Failure to comply may result in immediate removal from the program, suspension, and being reported to the U.S. Department of State.
- G. Any attempt by the EVT to change visa status may result in immediate removal from the program and revocation of the associated teaching license.
- H. EVT's will not make inquiries about changing teaching licenses during their participation in the program. Until the teacher fulfills the purpose of the program, which includes completion in the program and returning to their home country, attempting to change visa statuses will be considered a change of the intention to meet the purpose of the program. Failure to comply may result in immediate removal from the program, suspension and being reported to the U.S. Department of State. Any change of status will also result in revocation of the teaching license.
- I. EVT's may not apply for other teaching positions in Iowa as they are assigned a specific district/school based on those participating in the Exchange Visiting Teachers from Spain program. Transfers to other districts are only done when there are extensive extenuating circumstances.

- J. EVT's will immediately report to the Responsible Officer any issue or incident relevant to their teaching position and/or position as an exchange visiting teacher. Examples may include life events such as moving and change of addresses, needing to return to Spain during the school year, serious health events, getting married, pregnancy or childbirth, etc.
- K. When leaving and entering the country, EVT's must have updated DS-2019 forms. These forms must be signed every year for all EVT's and J-2 family members. EVT's commit to ensuring the forms are up to date prior to leaving the country.

Iowa Exchange Visiting Teacher Program Acceptance and Acknowledgement

By signing this document, I certify that I acknowledge and accept the conditions and requirements for participating in Iowa's Exchange Visiting Teachers Program and will ensure compliance at all times. I have carefully read this Agreement and understand that failure to comply with any of the conditions or requirements necessary for meeting the purpose of the program may result in immediate removal from the program. This document serves as acknowledgment of the Exchange Visiting Teacher's commitment to meet the purpose of the program.

EVT Printed Name: _____

EVT Email: _____

EVT Signature: _____ Date: _____

A signed copy of this agreement must be emailed to EVTS Program Responsible Officer, Stefanie Wager, (stefanie.wager@iowa.gov) no later than May 30.