



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Wisconsin Education Officials Meet With Exchange Students**

*Nineteen PAX Students Visit Madison to Share and Compare Experiences*

Nineteen high school exchange students from twelve countries met with Wisconsin education officials this month to discuss both differences between education systems and curriculum in their home countries and their experiences as Wisconsin high school students this year as part of their experience in the U.S. through [PAX – Program of Academic Exchange](#).

PAX students from India, Turkey, Albania, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, the Philippines, and the West Bank met with Dr. Sheila J. Briggs, Assistant State Superintendent of the Division for Academic Excellence and Dr. Gerhard Fischer of the International and World Languages Education team.

“Meeting those wonderful young people is a highlight on our schedules,” said Dr. Fischer. “Invariably the students are confident, curious, thoughtful, and well-spoken. They are excellent representatives of their various countries and their experience and outlook on a good education enrich conversations in our schools. We hope these international students benefit from their year in Wisconsin schools. We know that we benefit from them.”

The students live with host families and attend schools throughout the Appleton area. PAX community coordinator Marie Lackore organized the trip to Madison as part of the PAX educational experience outside the classroom. In addition to meeting with state officials, the group toured the University of Wisconsin, visited the Henry Vilas Zoo, and attended the Dane County Farmer’s Market—the largest producer-only farmer’s market in the United States. Four of the students also recently returned from a national conference about multiculturalism and community service.

“Students are able to share their experiences with Wisconsin educators,” said Lackore. “(At home) many of the students attend a core program without electives and with the same group of students for years. They don’t move from room to room, and teachers come to them for different subjects.”

The students also enjoy cultural touchstones while in Madison. “We have a large scavenger hunt around State Street to teach about the local area, and we have the opportunity to visit many of the diverse restaurants. This year, one of our stops included an Albanian restaurant to give an Albanian student traveling with us a taste of home.”

The PAX students leave Wisconsin for home soon but never forget this very special time in their lives in which they were able to discover the real America—as opposed to what they see on television. While Marie and other PAX community coordinators throughout the country are making sure their students and host families get the most out of their final weeks, they’re also interviewing families for next year’s cohort of impressive international teens arriving in August.

**About PAX**

Founded in 1990, PAX is a not-for-profit educational organization and one of a select few U.S. Department of State-designated Exchange Visitor Programs chosen to participate in the prestigious U.S. government sponsored Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) programs. Each year, more than 1,100 teenagers visit the U.S. as PAX exchange students. For information on how you can host an exchange student from another country, please visit [www.pax.org/families](http://www.pax.org/families) or call 800.555.6211.

