

# Recruiting and Supporting International Chinese Language Teachers in U.S. K-12 Programs

### AUTHOR

#### Stacy Lyon

Utah Chinese Dual Language Immersion Director

### CELIN BRIEF

#### SERIES EDITORS

#### Shuhan C. Wang, Ph.D.

Project Director, CELIN

#### Joy K. Peyton, Ph.D.

Senior Project Associate, CELIN

### CITATION

Lyon, S. (2018). Recruiting and Supporting International Chinese Language Teachers in U.S. K-12 Programs. In S.C. Wang & J.K. Peyton (Eds.), *CELIN Briefs Series*. New York, NY: Asia Society.

CELIN Briefs are developed by the Chinese Early Language and Immersion Network, under the China Learning Initiatives at Asia Society.

## Introduction

During the past fifteen years, we have seen an unprecedented number of Chinese language programs being established across the United States. A seminal report, *Expanding Chinese Language Capacity in the United States* (Asia Society, 2005), helped mark the beginning of a passionate movement to bring Chinese language programs into U.S. schools. This was simultaneously fueled by the economic rise of China, and interest in learning Mandarin Chinese exploded into grade K-12 language education.

The results of *The National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey Report* (American Councils for International Education, 2017) indicate that Chinese language instruction is widespread within school systems in 50 states (except for South Dakota) and the District of Columbia. The survey identifies approximately 1,144 high schools and school districts offering Chinese classes, with a reported enrollment of over 46,727 students. The Chinese Early Language and Immersion Network at Asia Society (CELIN) also reports that there were more than 330 Chinese dual language immersion programs operating in U.S. public and private K-8 schools in 2018, up

from 61 programs in 2011, with a small number of secondary schools offering immersion programs (CELIN, Asia Society, 2018).

The growing numbers translate to tens of thousands of students. Where there are students, there must be teachers!

More reports have called for increased efforts to build Chinese language programs, prepare teachers, and create digital resources to serve them (Asia Society, 2008, 2012; Ingold & Wang, 2010). Several notable efforts have been made to increase the supply of Chinese language teachers who already live in the United States and are highly educated. For example, a number of U.S. universities have implemented graduate programs in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (e.g., University of Maryland, 2017) as well as undergraduate courses to prepare teachers for Chinese language and immersion classroom teaching (Xie, 2016). STARTALK (<https://startalk.umd.edu/public>), a major federal initiative that has helped contribute to the nationwide teacher pool over the past ten years, provides funding for teacher education programs, school districts, and schools to offer meaningful teacher training in the summer. For a number of reasons,

however, preparation, certification, and recruiting of domestic Chinese language teachers continues to be the biggest bottleneck in the Chinese teacher supply to meet the urgent demand of the K-12 education system. The employment of international Chinese language teachers, therefore, has become a viable solution to the ongoing shortage of qualified and effective Chinese teachers in the United States.

The decisions and processes for recruiting, selecting, hiring, and supporting international Chinese language teachers have not been transparent, and the information that is available is not easily accessible. This Brief describes specific considerations that are crucial to this process and provides guidelines for supporting these teachers to ensure their success.

## Organization of the Brief

The decisions made to recruit, hire, and support international Chinese language teachers are multi-leveled and multi-dimensional. To address these issues, this Brief is divided into four parts:

- Part I describes efforts that have been and are being made to bring international Chinese teachers to the United States.
- Part II discusses considerations for bringing international teachers to a program. It addresses issues at the institutional (including program, school, district, or state), hosting community, and individual levels (those who are directly responsible for supporting international teachers).
- Part III describes support that needs to be provided at the program and local community levels.
- Part IV is written for policy makers and administrators who are in a position to recruit, hire, and support international Chinese language teachers, and describes infrastructure and tools that must be in place for these teachers to live and teach successfully in U.S. schools.

Resources in the Appendices provide step-by-step guidelines and practical suggestions for recruiting, hiring, and supporting international Chinese language teachers.

## Part I. Efforts to Bring International Chinese Teachers to the United States

In the mid 2000's, two U.S. non-profit organizations responded to the demand for Chinese language teachers by creating a channel for teachers from China to work in the United States as "guest teachers" for a period of one to three years. The College Board, in partnership with the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL), collaborated with Hanban, the executive body of the Chinese Language Council International, a non-governmental and non-profit organization affiliated with the Ministry of Education of China. Together they developed a system to recruit, vet, and select a corps of teachers to be placed in grade K-12 language programs across the country. (For information about the College Board, NCSSFL, and Hanban collaboration, see

<https://professionals.collegeboard.org/k-12/awards/chinese/guest>).

In addition, the U.S. Department of State offers a Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP), administered by the American Councils, which is a multi-layered cross-cultural program that recruits and places English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from China, Egypt, and Morocco within U.S. schools

(<https://www.americancouncils.org/programs/teachers-critical-languages-program>). Many other organizations also actively partner with schools to bring international Chinese teachers from China, Taiwan, and other areas to U.S. schools. Appendix A lists organizations and programs that help sponsor international Chinese language teachers in U.S. schools.

In addition to these entities, many U.S. schools have initiated sister/partner school relationships with primary and secondary schools in China. This has been accomplished through the assistance of local Confucius Institutes, the Asia Society, and multiple other private and public organizations. These relationships have led to cultural exchanges between students and teachers and, in some cases, have also been a source for recruiting short-term teachers for local U.S. programs.

Although many of these organizations and initiatives provide clear instructions and guidelines regarding how to bring in international Chinese teachers, a comprehensive and standardized guide is needed that explains the benefits and challenges of bringing international teachers to U.S. schools. Furthermore, working with international teachers involves dynamics that go beyond rules and regulations and requires an immense cultural investment. The numerous interpersonal factors that emerge when people of different languages, sociocultural reference, perspectives, practices, and political and educational systems act, react, and interact make this a crucial element to prepare for.

This Brief analyzes these issues and provides guidance regarding bringing international teachers to the United States and supporting them while they are here. Because teachers may come from different Chinese-speaking regions and employment circumstances, “international (Chinese) teachers” is the term used in this Brief, although other terms such as guest teachers, visiting teachers, volunteer teachers, exchange teachers, and interns are commonly used as well.

## Part II. Considerations for Recruiting and Employing an International Chinese Teacher

Regardless of the channel through which an international Chinese language teacher is brought to this country and hired by a school or school district, there are basic commonalities in the process of determining

the desirability, feasibility, and suitability of launching a program that employs an international teacher. The considerations, processes, and logistics have not been easily accessible, which has cost tremendous amounts of time and resources for program administrators, who end up learning how to do this through trial and error, often with little or no support. The following considerations seek to steer this process more intentionally.

### 1. Identify how the international teacher(s) will contribute to the mission and long-term goals of the Chinese language program.

Just as one carefully prepares for an overseas trip to another country, the decision about whether to recruit and employ an international teacher is best reached after careful consideration of a program’s long-term objectives and available local resources to support the objectives and strategic plan. Whether the program seeks to primarily promote culture through exploratory language classes, offer a Chinese-English dual language or immersion program, or focus on language learning and developing language proficiency in another type of program, it is essential to be cognizant of basic issues and perspectives that will affect how enjoyable and successful the journey will be. It is important to ask questions such as these:

- What are the goals of our program, and what teachers do we need to accomplish those goals?
- Are there teachers living locally who can meet this need?
- How many teachers do we need to bring in from Chinese-speaking countries?
- What classes will they teach?
- What funding do we have for bringing them in? How long does the funding last?
- Who will manage this effort and ensure that it is successful?

While sustainable funding can sometimes be nebulous, the ability of program leaders to effectively navigate the waters of hosting international teachers can build confidence among stakeholders that a program will be sustainable.

## 2. Assess the current state of the Chinese language programs in your organization and recruit international teachers to match your purposes.

In some areas, international teachers are needed to start new programs, while in other areas, they are needed to sustain or expand existing Chinese language programs. The considerations for both purposes are described here.

**Establishing a new program with international teachers.** When beginning a new program, the quality of the teachers and the level of administrative and community support are directly connected to the program's success. The personal, professional, and financial investment that goes into initiating a Chinese language program underscores the importance of having a clear and well-defined long-term vision and selecting the right teachers. Poor teacher selection can dismantle a program before it has time to get off the ground.

Generally speaking, staff in a new program should exhaust all means to identify and hire experienced Chinese language teachers who live in this country. The risks and appropriateness of hiring an international teacher to start a new program should be carefully evaluated and balanced with other alternatives. It is critical that there be a good match between the teacher's skill set and the conditions in and needs of the hosting community.

While it may seem appealing and deceptively simple to apply for an international teacher, the potential challenges need to be weighed against the perceived benefits. New schools in particular will want to find a teacher with strong communication skills, who can build rapport with parents and colleagues and work harmoniously with administrators. Equally important is that the teacher demonstrates a *high level of coachability*, as coaching will be a given for new teachers regardless of where they are from or their level of skills. The following points need to be considered in the teacher qualification and selection process. Specific guiding questions can be found in Appendix B.

*Social Skills.* Adjusting to new cultures and communication styles poses a major challenge for most new international teachers. The stronger the social skills the teacher has in developing rapport with students, parents, and the wider school community, the greater confidence can be had that the teacher and the program will thrive.

*Overseas Experience.* A growing number of teacher candidates have had teaching experiences in other countries, such as Thailand, Korea, Nepal, Africa, and the Philippines. Additionally, there are teachers who have studied overseas or done internships or short-term trainings in the United States. These teachers offer a higher chance for success in starting a program, because they have already experienced many of the transitions associated with culture shock and have worked in educational systems that are different from those of their native country. In many cases, these teachers have also had the opportunity to work with Westerners and have been exposed to some of the differences found in interpersonal communication specific to the school setting. A preference for this type of candidate can often be noted on applications to teacher-sponsoring organizations.

*English Proficiency.* The importance that the teacher has a high level of English proficiency cannot be overstated. International teachers will need to socially integrate into the school culture and all of the attendant relationships. Inadequate English language proficiency will present a severe hardship for all parties and compound an already difficult transition. While most international teacher programs do not involve local administrators in the interview and selection process, it is important to include the preference for high English proficiency on the teacher application form for the specific program.

*Meeting or Close to Fulfilling Licensure or Certification Requirements.* Some states may have strict requirements related to evidence of pedagogical preparation or language proficiency level (for both English and Chinese) for licensing international

teachers, so checking with the state licensing office is important prior to applying. If administrators are unable to directly interview the teacher to assess English ability or pedagogical competency, it may be possible to request a video conference or a video sample of the teacher doing a class demonstration or other type of scenario.

*Length of Stay in the Program.* The sustainability of any Chinese language program is directly affected by the ability to retain and develop a strong teaching staff. Many new programs flounder because of the inherent challenges associated with teacher turnover. This is a critical risk factor to consider if relying on an international teacher sponsor to supply the first teacher in a new program, and every effort should be made to find a teacher who is willing and able to stay in the program at least two years, and preferably three.

**Sustaining or expanding an existing program with international teachers.** While all of the qualifications described above also apply to a potential international teacher candidate for an existing program, finding the right fit for this teacher to collaborate with current Chinese teachers should be a top priority. Where appropriate, team leaders may also be invited to participate in the process and give input on program needs, which can then be included as preferences on the application. Specific guiding questions for use by staff in existing programs can be found in Appendix C.

### 3. Identify and collaborate with a sponsoring organization for international teachers.

One of the keys to identifying a sponsoring organization is to determine the services that they provide for international teachers *before* they come to the United States and during their stay. High-quality teacher sponsoring organizations prepare their candidates with pre-departure orientation and training specific to U.S. culture and educational systems. This contributes to a smooth transition. When reviewing information from the sponsoring organizations, it is recommended that program staff inquire about the level and content of

training that the teachers will receive prior to coming. There will be a marked difference between teachers who have had pre-service training and those with little or no orientation. The burden of this disparity will fall on the school community and can be detrimental to a program that is unprepared to provide it.

Many sponsoring organizations also offer regular support to teachers through webinars and other gatherings after the teacher has arrived and is working in the United States. It is wise to clarify with the sponsoring organization what ongoing support they offer and plan accordingly. Some of these trainings will be required and necessitate travel, which is typically communicated by the organization and often subsidized. It is also recommended that administrators check in with international teachers to ensure that they are regularly attending online webinars and other trainings offered by their program sponsor. Most organizations have point people or advisors who support the international teacher once they are in the United States. It is important to find out who these individuals are. The more connected this network is, the better the chance that “sticky” or “messy” cultural situations can be addressed effectively. Information about organizations and the services they provide is given in Appendix A.

Another key to identifying a sponsoring organization is to ask what type of visa the teacher holds and the length of time that the teacher can stay. Most international teachers come with a J-1 visa, which allows them to stay up to three years, and as of 2016, extend two years beyond that by special application. Other visa avenues may include an OPT (Optional Practical Training), granted to students following their graduation at a U.S. university; or a Q-1, which is for a short-term cultural exchange. An H-1B visa, awarded to foreign professionals with a high degree of education in a specialized field, is more involved and expensive to apply for. All of these visas have separate requirements, processes, and attendant fees. For the purposes of this

Brief, we focus on the J-1 visa with a short explanation of the H-1B work visa. Appendix D lists basic visa types.

The majority of international Chinese teachers coming through non-profit organizations on a J-1 visa are employed by a local school in their home country, and a minority may be completing graduate studies. The annual renewal of the J-1 visa requires permission from the teacher's original school at home. Many times the local administrators in the home country, as well as the international teacher, are only interested in a short-term, one-year experience. To the degree that it is possible, it is ideal that teachers are willing and able to stay at least two years. Every effort should be made to encourage this as a minimum time frame, in order to give a program the best chance for success and a stable beginning.

A longer-term visa that may be a pathway to permanent residency is the H-1B visa. This is a non-immigrant, temporary visa for highly specialized occupations. There are a limited number of these visas available each U.S. federal fiscal year, which begins on October 1, and selection is done by lottery in early April. However, exemption from the lottery process can be obtained if the sponsoring district or school can provide evidence that the "nonprofit entity has entered into a formal written affiliation agreement with an institution of higher education that establishes an active working relationship between the nonprofit entity and the institution of higher education for the purposes of research or education, and a fundamental activity of the nonprofit entity is to directly contribute to the research or education mission of the institution of higher education." (<https://www.uscis.gov/archive/archive-news/h-1b-cap-exemptions-based-relation-or-affiliation>) (All of this information may drastically change with proposed immigration reforms.)

#### 4. Garner support for and build ownership of the international teacher program among key stakeholder groups.

Bringing an international teacher into a program involves more than simply applying for a teacher,

getting a host family, and purchasing a curriculum. In tandem with reviewing the potential support systems needed, it is vital to conduct an honest and thorough examination of the dynamics within the various communities in which the teacher will operate and interact on a daily basis. Taking this community-focused approach will go far in cultivating the type of environment that is most favorable for the success of the teacher and can help to avert and expose elements that could be potentially challenging. The three categories of groups are local community, school community, and district community. A general description of each of these is given here, and guiding questions for each community can be found in Appendices B and C.

**Local community.** This category refers to the general openness of the geographic community, the accessibility of cultural connections and resources for teachers, the distance from other language programs and teachers, and the ability of the teacher to have autonomy in terms of transportation and medical care.

**School community.** The three groups of stakeholders included in this community are the principal, faculty and staff, and parents. Essential issues in this group relate to levels of commitment and buy-in to the vision of the program.

**District community.** The logistics of hiring an international teacher are many and require support from multiple divisions in a district. These include human resources, payroll, curriculum, and other administrators connected to the program. These entities and individuals all need to be provided with practical and cultural information that informs the induction process and builds a positive and supportive atmosphere.

When sufficient time has been given to exploring the sensibilities of these communities, their leading players, and whether the conditions are favorable for an international teacher to come in, the next step will involve finding the right match for the community, as explained in Point 2 above.

## 5. Understand and be prepared for the surprises and benefits brought by international teachers.

**Prepare for personal investment of social and emotional energy.** Any program administrator who commits to hosting a Chinese international teacher will quickly discover that the situation demands a heavy *personal investment* to ensure that the initial social and emotional needs of the teacher are met. Particularly in the early stages of the teacher's transition to life in the United States, it is key that the administrator be prepared to spend extra personal time providing the teacher with needed support; e.g., coordinating transportation, shopping for a car, house hunting, house furnishing, and the list goes on and on. Responses to Utah's Dual Language Immersion 2017 New Teacher Survey (shown in Appendix F) provide helpful information for employing and hosting international teachers. Without a high level of trust and support, it is less likely that the teacher will make a successful transition, and the program may suffer. While it is anticipated that host families, mentors, community liaisons, and colleagues all play a role in this, it is the responsibility of the administrator to ensure that there is coordination and communication among all parties and then relentlessly follow through in meeting the teacher's needs.

**Expect the unexpected: Be ready for cultural differences and gaps.** One truth that manifests itself almost immediately and continues throughout the time that the international teacher is with a program is that *language and culture are inseparable*. In bringing a Chinese teacher to the United States, everyone who interacts with the teacher will experience Chinese culture along with the language at the most granular, interpersonal levels. While teachers may communicate in English and try to acculturate into the American way of teaching, learning, and behaving, they will continue to operate in their cultural mode and Chinese ways of being a teacher. School leaders will want to provide an environment with an academic mentor, as well as a separate personal/cultural mentor,

who fits the requirements of the sponsoring organization. These individuals can help the teacher understand expectations in the context and allow them the time and space, with guidance, to determine where adjustments need to be made in their own behavior. Such communication, however, should be two-way, in which U.S. hosts and stakeholders also understand more about Chinese culture and these teachers.

**Be flexible and create channels for resolution.** There are some obvious outward cultural differences between education in Chinese-speaking countries and in the United States. International teachers may arrive with generalized perceptions of classroom management practices and American students, perhaps viewing them as more "active" or "naughty" than Chinese students. However, awareness does not translate to understanding what Westerners would regard as appropriate responses to students, colleagues, supervisors, host families, and countless other social situations that the teachers may have not encountered previously.

It is necessary for the program administrator, and all support people in the network, to not only provide post-arrival training that addresses this need, but also to maintain a flexible attitude when unexpected incidents occur. Because of the vast cultural tapestry woven into an international teacher's individual history and perspectives, it is wise to operate with the expectation that at any given moment, there may be threads or images in that tapestry that will not blend in with the local status quo, and a snag occurs. Sometimes it is hardly noticeable and easily remedied by pulling the "thread" back into place (e.g., the teacher will not allow students to drink water from personal water bottles or use the bathroom during class, and another teacher or mentor explains that there can be a specified manner and time where this can take place). At other times, more delicate skills may be required to undo and re-work the thread back to where it needs to be for the teacher to continue to be effective (e.g., when a teacher

dissolves into tears of frustration and asks the students why they are being mean).

It is impossible to predict all of the intercultural encounters that might occur as a new teacher makes the transition to the United States. Along with cultural orientation for those who will be in the teacher's most immediate circle, the most effective approach is to have a clear and understood channel for resolution when conflicts or cultural surprises occur, and to deal with them in as compassionate and straightforward a way as possible. All stakeholders, and especially the teacher, should be aware of these channels and the protocol for responding when the unexpected happens from either direction.

#### **Anticipate personal transitions.**

Classroom management, lesson planning, pedagogy, communication with parents and colleagues, online student management systems, and extra professional duties are all areas in which most international teachers struggle to adjust. However, in the 2017 end-of-year survey of 47 new international teachers employed in the Utah Chinese Dual Language Immersion Program (Appendix F), "Communication styles" was listed as the biggest social/emotional adjustment that the teachers believed they needed to make in their first year of teaching. Second to this was "Being without family," which illustrates the depth of the issue and the sharp learning curve that all involved should expect to engage in. The fact that "Communication styles" *superseded* the difficulty of being without family shows how truly difficult this transition can be for some teachers and their colleagues. This also has a direct connection to professional challenges in the classroom.

In the same teacher survey, "Classroom management" was selected as the greatest professional challenge by the highest percentage of new teachers. A clear relationship can be seen between the struggle to adapt to differing communication styles and the ability of teachers to notice, interpret, and respond to communication and behavior of the students as they manage their classes. Interestingly, classroom management was the area in

which the teachers who completed the survey believed they had made the most improvement by the end of the year. Credit for this progress was largely given to the involvement of a mentor or partner teacher. This should encourage administrators that if the proper supports are in place, and the teachers are given an appropriate amount of time, this transition can happen with minimal trauma to all involved.

**Appreciate the teacher's work ethic and instructional practice norms.** One quickly finds out that one aspect of working with Chinese international teachers is that they have a strong work ethic and are devoted to their work, school, colleagues, and especially, students. This is most obvious in the fact that it is common for the majority of teachers to spend long hours at the school preparing lessons and to be very dedicated to delivering the curriculum. Chinese culture promotes loyalty to one's employer, and one's value as an employee is seen as commensurate with time spent at work. Very often teachers may end up remaining after school in the building until custodial staff leave for the evening. It is recommended that international teachers receive guidance and support concerning how to efficiently use their time in preparation activities that will truly benefit their instruction and students. Owing to different pedagogical practices, they may not be aware that what they are spending so much time preparing is perhaps not the most effective way to engage the students. In most cases they will not ask for help, so it takes a mentor, a colleague, or an administrator to be proactive in supporting them in their instructional design and practice. They can also benefit from learning the U.S. emphasis on life balance and being encouraged to join in other social experiences rather than spending inordinate amounts of time at school "preparing."

Another element related to the strong work ethic in Chinese culture is that loyalty and respect for the group are more important than individuality. In this regard, international teachers are often sensitive to how their actions might reflect on the larger entity of the school and the quality of teachers they perceive are within that



group. Not wanting to bring “disrespect” to the school through their actions, it is uncomfortable for the international teacher to seek help, ask questions, or indicate that they don’t understand what might have just been explained. All of these actions might indicate that they are not bringing “honor” to the school. Instead of asking for clarification, there may be a smile, a nod, or another verbal indication that leads administrators and colleagues to believe that all is understood, only to discover shortly thereafter that it isn’t. This scenario is played out regularly in classrooms across the country. It requires persistence in developing trust with international teachers, to the point that they can genuinely share their questions and concerns without fearing that it will reflect poorly on them or the school.

### Summary

The process of recruiting and employing international teachers requires careful consideration of several preliminary factors in the local context that influence a successful outcome. These include 1) identifying long-term program mission and goals, 2) assessing program needs in terms of teacher characteristics, 3) doing due diligence in identifying and collaborating with suitable sponsoring organizations, 4) building ownership and support among key stakeholder groups, and 5) recognizing that there will be unanticipated challenges and benefits as the teacher integrates into the local community. Being aware of and engaging with these issues early in the process will allow administrators to move forward with confidence that the hosting experience has begun building a strong foundation for success.

## Part III. Providing a Local Support System for Teachers Working in the Community

Having established the foundation for an appropriate mindset about what to expect, it is critical to understand the multi-faceted support that must be provided for international teachers and the focus and time that this support will require. There can never be too much support! In the previous section, the importance of pre-

arrival and post-arrival preparations provided by sponsoring organizations was discussed.

This section describes the types of local support that are needed and that may be obtained from or provided by various stakeholders. It is not an overstatement to say that the quality of local support will either make or break the chances for success. It is not unusual for international teachers to have a very limited amount of time between arrival in the United States and entering the classroom. The overarching concepts discussed here are useful in anticipating where support will be needed, the key people to provide it, and ways to prepare for and approach the process. More details can be found in Appendix E.

**Identify a host family.** If there is any secret to helping international teachers make a smooth transition into U.S. life and schools, it lies in having a carefully vetted and enthusiastic host family. The impact of a supportive host family, as opposed to placing a teacher in a hotel or dormitory upon arrival, cannot be overstated. As noted in the discussion of the Utah 2017 Survey, the second biggest challenge for new guest teachers coming to the United States was “Being without family.” Further, the host family was cited as having the single most impact on a teacher’s positive adjustment to life in the United States. This speaks to the fundamental need of having a close network of support people to rely on for personal matters in everyday life, along with a welcoming place to live. If this intrinsic need is not met, the teacher’s ability to make adjustments in the professional workplace will be significantly affected.

Unfortunately, securing a host family is an often overlooked and typically neglected step in the preparation process. Very often it takes the form of an administrator or other stakeholder calling parents, friends, and acquaintances and asking them to help; sometimes without much notice, and very often with little information. Larger sponsoring organizations may have guidelines or requirements for selecting host families, but more often than not it is an informal

process. Specific considerations for securing and preparing a host family and other logistical arrangements are described in Appendix E.

It is recommended that host families be treated as key players in the teacher transition process, be given opportunities to communicate regularly with administrators, and attend cultural preparation events along with other stakeholders.

**Provide professional mentoring.** China’s 5,000-year history, embedded in the lives of international teachers, carries with it deeply ingrained educational philosophies, attitudes, and practices. Many of these may not be compatible with those seen in U.S. schools and classrooms, and understandably they are not easily or willingly set aside. In most situations, it will take time for the teachers to adapt to new strategies without feeling that they are compromising their belief systems. A designated mentor from the professional community is indispensable in facilitating this process and providing simple and straightforward feedback.

Administrators and other support personnel will be wise to recognize that within a reasonable time period, adjustments can be made and will be ongoing for international teachers as they reflect on and try to integrate Chinese and U.S. belief systems. It is also necessary to recognize when specific time constraints need to be employed in expecting progress to be demonstrated. This is particularly important if a situation is having a detrimental effect on student learning and the program as a whole. For this reason, it is recommended that international teachers receive similar mentoring and progress documentation as would be found with a locally hired teacher. Additionally, it is important to know the parameters of an “exit strategy” through the sponsoring organization.

## Part IV. Stepping into the Shoes of International Chinese Teachers: Providing the Resources and Tools for Living and Teaching Successfully in the United States

For any teacher, including international teachers, it is critical that the necessary infrastructure in the system is complete and tools are provided for them to be effective. The following guiding questions will help stakeholders to consider whether adequate resources are in place for these teachers and administrators in the program:

### *Availability of Curriculum and Classroom Resources in English and Mandarin*

- What grade levels and instructional models will the teachers be expected to follow, and how will the curriculum be determined?
- Is the budget sufficient to support the necessary curriculum?
- Who is responsible for determining and ordering the curriculum and other classroom resources?
- If the program is immersion, does the budget include necessary items for both the English and Chinese teachers?

### *Availability of Resource People (Coaches and Mentors)*

- Have individuals been identified in the district or school who are willing to be personal/cultural or academic/professional mentors for the international teacher? (In an immersion program, it is recommended that the partner teacher *not* be assigned as the official mentor.)
- Are these individuals willing to participate in cultural orientation prior to working with the international teacher?
- What support will district and state personnel offer to the international teacher?

### *Partner Teacher (in immersion programs)*

- Is the partner teacher for the international teacher self-selected or assigned? If assigned, does the teacher have a positive attitude about working with an international teacher?
- Is the partner teacher willing to attend cultural orientation prior to assuming the position?
- Is the partner teacher flexible and willing to adapt to the instructional changes that will be required in an immersion classroom?
- Have the expectations of the partner teacher been clearly defined and discussed?
- Have any personal or professional concerns of the partner teacher been resolved?
- Has the partner teacher received training on the immersion model to be used?
- Is the partner teacher fully committed to the instructional model?

### *Professional Development Opportunities*

- What professional development opportunities will be available to the international teacher at the school, district, and state levels?
- Will the international teacher need assistance with transportation or registration for professional development events?
- Is there an additional budget for the international teacher to participate in Chinese-specific professional development?
- Are there other Chinese teachers within the district or community who can be part of a support network for the international teacher? How often would these teachers be able to gather?

Upon completion of a comprehensive analysis of the long-term program vision, administrator commitment, hosting community dynamics, and the feasibility of local resources as they relate to the unique needs of an international teacher, program leaders can move forward with confidence that a sufficient degree of preparation has occurred to make a decision. While it may not be realistic to expect all answers to be in place prior to submitting an application for an international teacher, the very act of raising questions and beginning discussions among stakeholders will provide perspective

and direction in setting the stage for a positive and supportive environment, where both the teacher and the program can flourish.

## Conclusion

The rapid expansion of Chinese language programs across the United States in the past 10 to 15 years has created a demand for qualified teachers. As programs mature and more education leaders select Chinese as a mainstream language offering in U.S. schools, the demand for teachers will continue to expand, and the presence of international teachers in Chinese language programs across the country is likely to increase, not diminish.

This Brief describes essential elements that need to be included in any support system for international Chinese teachers. It provides readers with considerations from multiple perspectives on the *why* and *how* of engaging and supporting international Chinese teachers.

As international Chinese teachers bring another language and culture to our students and communities, they also provide real-person, real-time intercultural communication experiences that can have an indelible impact on all parties. Keeping the larger perspective at the forefront, with a healthy dose of flexibility and humor, the returns on this investment are immeasurable on all sides. The life-changing nature of successfully teaching in a foreign country and classroom furnishes international Chinese teachers with a multitude of experiences that they can share in their home countries, with an even wider audience. This is a gift for communities in all countries involved.

## References

- American Councils for International Education. (2017). *The national K-12 foreign language enrollment survey report*. Washington, DC: Author. <https://www.americancouncils.org/sites/default/files/FLE-report-June17.pdf>
- Asia Society. (2005). *Expanding Chinese language capacity in the United States: What would it take to have 5 percent of high school students learning Chinese by 2015?* New York, NY: Author. <http://asiasociety.org/files/expandingchinese.pdf>
- Asia Society. (2012). *Chinese language learning in the early grades: A handbook of resources and best practices for Mandarin immersion*. New York, NY: Author. <http://asiasociety.org/files/chinese-earlylanguage.pdf>
- Asia Society. (2008). *Chinese in 2008: An expanding field*. New York, NY: Author. <http://asiasociety.org/education/chinese-expanding-field>
- CELIN, Asia Society. (2017, June 15). *Chinese Language Matters Newsletter: CELIN Connection*. <http://mailchi.mp/asiasociety/summer-enrichment-2572005>
- Ingold, C. W., & Wang, S. C. (2010). *The teachers we need: Transforming world language education in the United States*. College Park, MD: National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland. [http://www.nflc.org/publications/the\\_teachers\\_we\\_need.pdf](http://www.nflc.org/publications/the_teachers_we_need.pdf)
- University of Maryland. (2017). *World language programs with Chinese language teacher certification*. College Park, MD: Author. <https://education.umd.edu/academics/departments/tlpl/lisi/world-language-programs-chinese-language-teacher-certification>
- Xie, T. (2016, July 28). *The universities and colleges offering M.A. or PhD. degrees leading to teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL)*. <https://web.csulb.edu/~txie/tcfl.htm>

## Appendices

The Appendices provide pertinent information, guiding questions, and steps to take to consider, hire, and support international Chinese language teachers.

- Appendix A. Organizations That Connect Programs with Chinese International Teachers
- Appendix B. Guiding Questions for New Programs Considering International Teachers
- Appendix C. Guiding Questions for Existing Programs Considering International Teachers
- Appendix D. Types of Visas for International Teachers
- Appendix E. Logistical Guide to Recruiting, Hiring, and Supporting International Teachers
- Appendix F. Feedback From 2017 Survey of Guest Teachers

Appendix A. Organizations That Connect Programs with Chinese International Teachers

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	APPLICATION DEADLINE	VISA SPONSOR	LENGTH OF STAY	STIPEND/SALARY ASSISTANCE via ORGANIZATION	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES	ARRIVAL DATE
<b>American Chinese Educational Exchange Group (ACEE)</b>	Shawn Shen <a href="mailto:shawns@aceegroup.com">shawns@aceegroup.com</a>	Rolling; Recommend end of January	Varies:  Local LEA, state agencies, or private	Varies 1-3 years (can extend for 2 years)	No; but pre-service, in-service, and other logistical support	Initial room, board, and transportation (1 month)	Flexible
<b>Amity Institute International</b>	<a href="http://amity.org">http://amity.org</a>	January	Private via Amity	Up to 2 years (can extend for 2 years)	No	Initial room, board, and transportation (1 month)  <a href="http://amity.org/hosts-a-teacher">http://amity.org/hosts-a-teacher</a>	August
<b>College Board/Hanban Teachers</b>	Guestteacher <a href="mailto:@collegeboard.org">@collegeboard.org</a>	End of January	Institute of International Education (IIE)	Varies 1-3 years (can extend for 2 years)	\$13,00 to school district (can be applied to salary)	Initial room, board, and transportation. Visa fee, insurance	Late July
<b>EduSunrising Group</b>	Ella Wang <a href="mailto:Eac1@edusunrising.com">Eac1@edusunrising.com</a>  Overseas Project Center  Headquarters: Block A,	Ongoing; Recommend February	Private through the agency	Varies 1-3 years (can extend for 2 years)	No	Negotiable	Negotiable

	Suite 6A03, Peking Times Square, Anli Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing, 100101, P.R.China  Tel : +86-10-56149119  Mobile: +86-18514617206						
<b>EPI</b>  Educational Partners International, LLC	Placement @teachwithepi.com  Tel: (828) 239-9930 Fax: (828)686-3600  Education Partners International, LLC 105 Whitson Ave. Swannanoa, NC 28778	Varies	EPI	Varies 1-3 years (can extend for 2 years)	No; but other logistical support and continued training	Varies	August
<b>ITES</b>  International Teacher Exchange Service	<a href="http://www.itesonline.com/Default.aspx">http://www.itesonline.com/Default.aspx</a>  Tel: (704) 817-9742  P.O. Box 471312 Charlotte, NC 28247	Contact directly	ITES	Varies 1-3 years (can extend for 2 years)	No	Contact directly for information	Varies
<b>Participate</b> (Formerly named <b>VIF</b> )	<a href="https://www.participate.com/">https://www.participate.com/</a>	Varies	Participate	Varies 1-3 years (can extend for 2 years )	No	Contact directly for information	Contact directly for information

<b>Taiwan Ministry of Education (MOE) *</b>	Director Hsu Huie-Wen <a href="mailto:hueiwen@tweducation.org">hueiwen@tweducation.org</a>  Education Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office 555 Montgomery Street, Suite 503 San Francisco, CA 94111, U.S.A. Tel: <a href="tel:(415)364-5605">(415) 364-5605</a>	End of January	Local state educational agency	Varies 1-3 years (can extend for 2 years )	Yes	Airfare, monthly living stipend, teacher materials, book donations	Negotiable
<b>TCLP</b> (Teachers of Critical Languages Program)	<a href="http://www.tclprogram.org/">http://www.tclprogram.org/</a>  <a href="mailto:tclp@americancouncils.org">tclp@americancouncils.org</a>	Early January	American Councils	1 year	Fully funded	Host family, food, transportation	Early August



## Appendix B. Guiding Questions for New Programs Considering International Teachers

The following are guiding questions that stakeholders in a *new program* can use to engage in thoughtful consideration of the issues that affect an international teacher's experience and the community's ability to provide positive support.

### Local Community

#### 1. *Community Openness* (including host families)

- How open is the general community to people from other cultures? Are there cultural festivals? Population diversity? Exchange students at the high school or college level?
- Is there general community support for learning languages other than English?
- What program model for learning languages is the community most willing to stand behind?
- Have members of the community previously participated as host families for teachers or students in any type of program?

#### 2. *Cultural Connections/Resources for Teachers*

- To what extent is there a local Chinese or Asian population living in the community?
- If there is a local Chinese population, are there community organizations and leadership that have an interest in collaborating with the school or offering support?
- Is there a local university or school district with a Confucius Institute?
- If so, in what ways is the Confucius Institute interested in and prepared to support the program and the teacher(s) (through such activities as professional development, providing teaching resources, or providing teachers)?
- How far away is an Asian market or grocery store where teachers can purchase familiar food items? Is there a local farmer's market?

#### 3. *Opportunities to Collaborate with Other Chinese Teachers or Language Teachers*

- Are there other schools or organizations that have Chinese programs? If so, are there other native Chinese teachers within a reasonable distance?
- What opportunities are there to collaborate with other language teachers?
- Is there a state language association with opportunities for professional development?

#### 4. *Ability to have Autonomy in the New Community*

- What public transportation options are available to assist the teacher in traveling for school, medical, or shopping purposes?
- Is it possible to walk to these places?
- What resources are available for purchasing used cars or bicycles?
- Are there local businesses that are willing to offer discounts to international teachers?

### School Community

#### 1. *The Principal's Commitment*

- Is the school principal 100% committed to the Chinese language program and its benefits?
- Is the principal fully invested in being *personally* available to ensure that teachers receive the necessary support at all levels?

- Has the principal put in place a mentor and other support mechanisms for the teachers?

## 2. *Faculty and Staff*

- Have the faculty and staff been provided with information about the long-term vision for the Chinese language program?
- Has there been the opportunity to resolve any concerns that faculty and staff have regarding implementation of the language program and the hiring of teachers from Chinese-speaking countries?
- Has there been a cultural orientation for those who will be working most closely with the teachers?
- Have resources such as videos, articles, or presentations been made available for the staff to access that will provide them with further cultural background knowledge?

## 3. *Parents*

- Were parents involved in designing the program? What is the general level of parent support for the program?
- Are there key parents leading in support of the program? If so, in what areas are they willing to lend support?
- What expectations do parents have in terms of the mission of the program? Is it cultural exploration and exposure or language focused? If language focused, have proficiency targets been set? What will be the tools for measuring this?
- Who will be the established leaders or “voices” for the program?
- What will be the channels for communicating with parents about the program needs and progress?
- Are the parents aware of the need for international teachers and in support of the ways that teachers are hired and sustained?
- What will be the channel for parents to resolve any concerns that arise with regard to the program, teachers, or classroom instruction?
- Are there members of the parent community who have business or other travel experience in China and would be interested in some type of collaborative support?

## **District Community**

- Are there district personnel overseeing the world language programs? If so, are they supportive of bringing on international teachers and willing to assist with the paperwork and help to resolve any issues that may arise in the hiring process?
- Has contact been made with the Human Resources (HR) Department regarding the potential hiring of an international teacher/teachers?
- Are the individuals in the HR office willing to work with what will be a new type of hiring situation, which requires flexibility and patience?
- Has the HR office been provided with information related to how the teacher’s pay and benefits are calculated, particularly with reference to China and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is in place with regard to withholding taxes, etc.?
- Are there any collective bargaining agreements from the teacher's union that would prohibit or interfere with hiring of international teachers in the school or district?

## Appendix C. Guiding Questions for Existing Programs Considering International Teachers

Before embarking on hosting an international teacher, staff of an *existing Chinese language program* will want to review what is in place and what is still needed, by considering the following questions.

### 1. *History of the Program and Teachers*

- How long has the program been in existence?
- Did the program originate with strong community and administrator support? If not, what were the reasons for the lack of support? Do these reasons still exist, or have they been effectively addressed?
- How many grade levels and teachers are part of the program?
- How long have the teachers been in their current positions?
- Where were the current teachers recruited from? Has this recruitment process produced the desired results?
- Have the teachers communicated that they feel supported by the program administration? If so, what has that support included? If not, what measures have been taken to remedy the situation?

### 2. *School Climate (Colleagues and Parents)*

- Have the current Chinese teachers integrated well with faculty and staff?
- If so, what strategies have assisted the building of positive relationships? If not, what have been obstacles to that occurring, and what steps are being taken to overcome these?
- If the program is immersion, has there been designated time for the English partner to collaborate with the Chinese teacher? Has there been guidance for that collaboration?
- If an immersion program, have the English and Chinese partner relationships worked well? If so, what has worked well? If not, why, and what steps are being taken to promote more successful collaboration?
- Are there other faculty or staff who are culturally or linguistically connected to China or Asia and who have provided support? How important has this support been to the success of the program?
- Have parents been supportive and pleased with the results of the Chinese program and their children's participation in it?
- Have parents been accepting of the Chinese teachers, and have any concerns that may have arisen been solved appropriately?

### 3. *Other Chinese Team Members (Support Network)*

- How many Chinese teachers are there on the existing language team?
- Is the current team supportive of having an international teacher?
- Is there a designated leader of the Chinese team?
- Is there a designated time for the Chinese team to meet?
- Has the Chinese team operated cohesively? If so, what has contributed to that success? If not, what adjustments might be made?

### 4. *Curriculum and Classroom Resources*

- Who has made the curriculum decisions for the program, and what criteria were the decisions based on?
- Is there sufficient curriculum purchased and in the classrooms?
- Does the budget support plans to purchase any additional curriculum or resources?
- What classroom resources will be available to the teachers?
- What additional materials might be useful for the international teacher to bring, if a new international teacher is coming?
- Has the school library begun to build a Chinese section, particularly if it is an immersion school?

### *5. Professional Development Opportunities*

- What professional development opportunities are provided to the current Chinese teachers from the school, the district, and the state?
- Who conducts the professional development for the Chinese teachers? Has professional development been conducted in the Chinese language?
- How have decisions about topics for professional development been made?
- What types of follow-up to professional development has there been? Are there individual(s) who are responsible for conducting follow-up?
- Are there funds to support international teacher attendance at district, regional, or national training events?

## Appendix D. Types of Visas for International Teachers

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	COST TO DISTRICT/SCHOOL	PROS & CONS	MORE INFORMATION
J-1	<p><b>Cultural and Educational Exchange Visitor Program:</b></p> <p>Most commonly used by sponsoring organizations for international teachers</p>	1-3 years with the option to apply for a 2-year extension	<p>Approximately \$1,500</p> <p>The sponsoring organization guides the process and handles most of the paperwork</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewed annually</li> <li>Required connection with schools in China</li> </ul> <p>Teachers must return home annually</p>	<a href="https://j1visa.state.gov">https://j1visa.state.gov</a>
OPT	<p><b>Optional Practical Training:</b></p> <p>International students on an F-1 visa who conclude their studies in the U.S. with a bachelor's or graduate degree qualify for an OPT to work full-time in the U.S.</p>	1 year	No cost unless a substitute is needed until the OPT is issued	<p>Students are responsible for their own application process and fees.</p> <p>Must be directly related to the student's area of study.</p>	<a href="https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/optional-practical-training">https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/optional-practical-training</a>
Q-1	<p><b>Cultural Exchange Visa:</b></p> <p>A less common visa for people with expertise in their field to work in the United States and share their culture with U.S. citizens</p>	15 months	<p>\$460 Application fee</p> <p>\$1,225 Premium Processing fee</p>	<p>Can serve as a bridge for teachers when a district or school is not ready to apply for an H-1B visa</p> <p>Unlike the H-1B: There is no cap to the number of people receiving it. It can start sooner than an H-1B but lasts a shorter time.</p>	<a href="https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/q-cultural-exchange">https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/q-cultural-exchange</a>

<p><b>H-1B</b></p>	<p><b>Work Visa:</b> Allows U.S. companies to temporarily employ foreign workers in occupations that require the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge and a bachelor's degree or higher in the specific specialty, or its equivalent</p>	<p>1-3 years</p> <p>Renewable one time for an additional three years</p>	<p>1) Cost of sub-teacher until visa is granted.</p> <p>2) Current interpretation of the law states that employers must pay the filing fees of \$325 and \$500 as well as the attorney fees (which range from \$2,500 to \$5,000 depending on the attorney). The deadline for submitting applications for an H-1B visa is March 1. Paperwork should be started in January.</p>	<p><i>Pro:</i> Provides the pathway to a permanent visa; allows retention of good employees.</p> <p><i>Con:</i> Teachers who are granted an H-1B visa typically will not have a valid visa until late September or October, so a substitute will be needed.</p> <p><i>Con:</i> Selection for granting a visa is done by lottery.</p> <p><i>Con:</i> The petitioner must show affiliation with a university.</p> <p><i>Con:</i> Regulations may drastically change due to immigration reforms.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-and-fashion-models/h-1b-fiscal-year-fy-2018-cap-season">https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-and-fashion-models/h-1b-fiscal-year-fy-2018-cap-season</a></p>
<p><b>Green Card</b></p>	<p><b>Permanent Residency:</b> Once a teacher has secured an H-1B visa, a district or school may begin the process of applying for permanent residency, which would allow the teacher to stay indefinitely in the United States.</p>	<p>Indefinite</p>	<p>Approximately double the cost of the H-1B. It is recommended that an attorney handle the legal paperwork for this visa.</p>	<p>Permanent status to work in the U.S. but need to first have been issued an H-1B visa.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.uscis.gov/greencard">https://www.uscis.gov/greencard</a></p>

## Appendix E. Logistical Guide to Recruiting, Hiring, and Supporting International Teachers

The logistical side of bringing an international teacher to a program can be daunting. Part I of this Appendix describes preliminaries of connecting with an organization, preparing HR personnel for the hiring process, and collecting the information needed for making applications. Part II describes pre-arrival and Part III about post-arrival support and the central issues involved in making a smooth transition for the teacher and the community. Additional cultural issues, unique to each teacher, require responsiveness and sensitivity.

### *Part I. Considerations and Applications for Recruiting and Hiring International Teachers*

#### **A. Research International Teacher Organization Options**

The first step in securing an international teacher is to examine and compare the general process and procedures of the various organizations that sponsor them. If the local district or school is the sponsor, the issues described below will still remain pertinent to the planning.

1. Program application timeline
2. Cost to institution (application fees, insurance, salary, etc.)
3. Terms of agreement
4. Limits on teacher's hours taught per week
5. Stipend to teacher or district/school
6. Teacher arrival timeline
7. Teacher pre-arrival training
8. Teacher post-arrival support system
9. Mechanism for problem resolution
10. Limits on length of program participation

#### **B. Collaborate with the HR Department of the Local District or Institution** (they need to be an advocate!)

The process for hiring an international teacher will present many new procedures that frequently are unfamiliar to a Human Resources team. It is highly recommended that time be spent acquainting the team or specified individuals with the plan for bringing international teachers on board, and the extra work that will be entailed. In addition, team members need to be prepared for the fact that often there are new procedures that may not fit into the usual protocol or hiring template. A commitment to being flexible and finding solutions will reduce the level of frustration or confusion that may be encountered in working with foreign documentation and visa parameters. What follows is a brief general outline of important steps in cultivating that relationship.

1. Introduce and review the selected international teacher sponsoring organization's information with HR personnel.
2. Determine what district specific procedures will be required for hiring.
3. Review state teacher licensing requirements for international teachers.
  - a. **Teacher experience** as it relates to compensation and required documentation.

International teachers should have copies of their transcripts and degrees, which are usually provided by the sponsoring organization to the hiring district or school.

- b. **Teacher education** (degrees) as relates to assignment
  - c. Required evidence of **English proficiency** level
  - d. Ethics or other **required state exams**
4. Review state policies regarding payroll deductions for international teachers
    - a. State MOU parameters (e.g. no withholding for Social Security, Medicare, etc.)
    - b. Federal tax law
    - c. State tax law
  5. Obtain approvals from appropriate administration channels for Terms of Agreement with sponsoring organizations and an initial offer letter from the school principal, the school district, or whoever provides this letter.

### C. Prepare and Submit the Application

Every organization will have its own application form, which should be read very carefully. Listed below are the general categories in which to prepare information for recruiting the teacher.

1. Job posting description: Make sure to be *very specific* in terms of subjects taught, preparation time, extra duties, teaching schedule, and contract time.
2. Information about local community (geography, recreation, etc.)
3. Solicit specific support people (community liaisons, mentors, etc.)
4. Professional development opportunities (teachers are eager for this)
5. Housing and transportation information
6. Wait for acceptance and teacher selection notification

### D. Finalize Hiring

1. Work with HR to complete paperwork for acceptance of the teacher and provide an official salary offer.
2. Follow the protocol of the sponsoring organization in communicating directly with the teacher for hiring and a welcome letter.
3. Follow the timeline and protocol of sponsoring organization in arranging for arrival and pick up of the teacher.



## *Part II. Pre-Arrival Training*

Pre-arrival training involves issues similar to those involved in post-arrival support but includes cultural *preparation as* a fundamental piece in each of the areas shown below. The sponsoring organization should have in-depth and extended cultural orientation for international teachers prior to their arrival, and the host institution should invest similar time in preparing the community with appropriate cultural information to guide the transition.

### **1. Cultural Orientation for Stakeholders**

Along with the logistics of preparing for the international teacher's arrival, appropriate time should be spent ensuring that all stakeholders have a general orientation to Chinese culture and some of the expectations in supporting the international teacher. This will be especially true for those working most closely with the teacher. These include but are not limited to: a partner teacher, mentor teacher, office secretary, principal, department head, district leadership, and host family. Ideally, at least one of these individuals has participated in an educator delegation to China, or some other type of experience that has provided the opportunity to become acquainted with education in the context of Chinese culture.

### **2. Beginning Communication with the International Teacher**

It is ideal if information introducing the teacher can be made available to the school community, whether by printed communication or video introduction. This will help personalize the teacher in the minds of those in the host community and reduce uncertainty and anxiety about the unknown. Conversely, it is highly recommended that the international teacher also be provided with information about the school, principal, partner teacher, and host family, where it applies. Communication prior to the arrival of the teacher is strongly encouraged to begin building a relationship of trust and understanding.

### **3. Communication with the Host Family**

The host family should be clearly informed by program leaders and the sponsoring organization concerning their expected responsibilities, including any compensation that they will receive. It should also be ensured that the location and accommodations for the teacher are suitable, safe, with appropriate people, and follow the criteria provided by the sponsor. Topics that require *specific attention* and clarification include the following:

#### a. General Items

- Length of stay with the host family: Is the host family temporary or permanent?
- If the host family is temporary, what is the expectation as to who will assist with locating permanent housing?
- How would members of the host family like to be addressed by the teacher? What 'House Rules' are important to the host family?

b. Food:

- What are suggested foods/meals that will appeal to the teacher?
- Will the teacher be expected to contribute to the weekly cost of groceries?
- Will the teacher be expected to help prepare meals?

c. Transportation:

- Where possible, it is recommended that the host families be available to welcome the teachers at the airport or other pick-up location.
- How will the teacher get to and from the school, shopping, etc.?
- Will the teacher be expected to contribute to transportation costs?
- Should the host family be prepared to assist the teacher in finding a vehicle to purchase?

d. Activities/Recreation:

- What activities will the host family invite the teacher to join them for?
- Should the teacher be prepared to cover the cost of recreational activities?

e. Small Gifts:

It is the Chinese custom to bring small gifts for host family members as a gesture of appreciation for their hospitality. It is appropriate for the host family to also have small practical gifts to welcome the teacher as well. These could be toiletry items such as lip balm, hand or body lotion, deodorant, mouthwash, toothpaste, soap, and maybe some local treats.

#### 4. Organization at the School

Setting up a classroom in the United States is a daunting task for most new teachers, and international teachers have the added challenge of not having personal background experience with expectations regarding decorating and preparing the classroom environment. While the suggestions below may seem basic, it can make the transition a lot smoother for the teacher when she/he does not have to deal with the following issues:

a. Classroom:

- If a self-contained classroom, is it supplied with all standard equipment?
- Is a name plaque or nametag prepared for the teacher outside the classroom?
- Are the textbooks and other resources in the classroom?
- Are computers, smart boards, projectors, intercoms, telephones, and any other such equipment in working order? If not, make sure they know who to go to for help.

b. General School:

- Is the international teacher aware of the school's new teacher orientation schedule and expected participation?
- Is a daily schedule sheet prepared so the teacher can get a picture of their teaching day?
- Is there a mailbox in the office or other teacher area, ready for the teacher to access?
- If the program is immersion, has a time been scheduled to meet the partner teacher?

## 5. District On-Boarding/Induction

Planning ahead can make the district on-boarding process much smoother for both teachers and the HR team. It is recommended, where possible, to have assistance from a local native Chinese speaker to help communicate during the many steps involved in officially employing the teacher.

a. Social Security Card:

This is the first step to preparing teachers to be employed in the United States, and teachers need to be in the country for several days before their information will show up in the system. It is generally recommended to wait 7-10 days.

- Call ahead or communicate directly with officials at the Social Security Office to confirm hours of operation and schedule an appointment where possible.
- Obtain applications for a Social Security card ahead of time and arrange for assistance for teachers in filling them out prior to going to the office.
- Verify documents needed for the application.

b. Bank Account:

Check with local banks and credit unions as to the procedures required in setting up a checking account and any incentives that would apply to international teachers as new account holders. Some of them may not require a social security number to open an account, which means this step can be done early-on.

c. Payroll Orientation:

Anticipate providing an orientation related to paycheck timeline, process, accessing paycheck information, and interpreting the paystub.

### *Part III. Post-Arrival Support*

If pre-arrival support has been properly addressed, the post-arrival process will have a greater chance of starting smoothly. Post-arrival support focuses on responding to cultural issues that may manifest themselves during the transitions in any of the contexts and relationships noted below.

The principal's close engagement with the teacher for the first few weeks post-arrival will have a critical impact on setting a positive course for the school year. This does not imply that the principal needs to bear the burden of personally resolving all questions and issues, but instead, have daily communication with the teacher and pre-established channels as to which individuals in the network will be responsible for what type of support. It will greatly aid the teacher in learning to independently solve problems if he or she has been introduced to and provided contact information for those people that might be needed to offer assistance.

#### **1. International Teacher Personal Adjustment**

- Does the teacher seem to be making a positive emotional adjustment?
- Is the relationship with the teacher and host family going smoothly?
- What seem to be the issues the teacher is most concerned with?

#### **2. Hiring Procedures**

- Coordinate a schedule with HR personnel for completing hiring and knowing who will assist.
- Confirm that the teacher's passport was stamped to show entry into the United States. If it has not been, contact the sponsoring organization for instructions.
- Designate someone to assist the teacher in completing the Social Security application and verify that needed documents are in the teacher's possession.
- Confirm possession of all documentation prior to visiting the Social Security office.
- Provide an orientation related to the paycheck timeline, process, accessing paycheck information, and interpreting the pay stub.

#### **3. Classroom**

- Check in with the teacher related to classroom assignment(s) and observed equipment needs or where the designated preparation area is if the teacher is a 'traveling' teacher without a regular classroom.
- Confirm that the teacher has received keys and ID badges to allow access to the building and classroom.

#### **4. Training**

- Confirm that the teacher has the schedule with information about all trainings he or she is expected to attend.
- Confirm that the teacher will have transportation to all pre-school year trainings.
- Provide the teacher with a general schedule of trainings for the school year and instructions for arranging a sub if needed.
- Arrange for the teacher to have opportunities to observe in English classes of the same grade level. This can help

build understanding of classroom management and behavior boundaries. Where possible, arrange observations of other veteran Chinese teachers.

## 5. Community

- Follow up with a community liaison, or other individuals from the community who have agreed to support the teacher, and facilitate an introduction and plans for moving forward.

## 6. Host Family

### a. Accommodations (temporary)

- Confirm with the host family that they have all of the necessary information for the teacher's schedule and pre-school year trainings.
- Check in with the teacher related to the living situation and whether there are any concerns or questions.
- Follow up with the host family related to the general adjustment of the teacher and any issues that may have arisen that need further support.
- Maintain communication with the temporary host family related to steps being taken to assist the teacher in finding permanent accommodations.

### b. Accommodations (long-term)

- Follow up with the teacher and supporting parties as to the status of securing permanent housing.
- Where appropriate, solicit donations of furniture from the community to assist in furnishing an apartment or house.
- Be prepared to support teachers in dealing with issues related to signing housing contracts, such as credit checks, personal references, etc.

### c. Transportation

- Provide information on public transportation passes or bus routes that are viable options for the teacher.
- Follow up with the teacher to ensure that transportation to all trainings and other school meetings has been arranged.
- Confirm that support people are assisting the teacher with securing permanent transportation.

## 7. School and Community Support People -- Mentors & Coaches

### a. Social/Emotional Support

- Introduce the previously selected cultural/personal mentor to the teacher.
- With both individuals present, clarify the expectations between the cultural mentor and the teacher as to meeting times and responsibilities.
- Introduce the teacher to the faculty and staff, and ensure that they are clear on how the teacher prefers to be

addressed. Many teachers have selected an English name they like to use with their colleagues.

- Is the teacher having positive and successful interactions with faculty and staff? If not, what issues may need to be straightforwardly communicated to address the problem?

b. Academic Support

- Introduce the teacher to the teacher or coach who has been selected as an academic mentor. Clarify the expectations for the relationship and any specific schedules or other guidelines.
- Do a brief but daily ‘Drop-by’ or ‘Walk-By’ to the teacher’s classroom during the first two weeks to stay abreast of any challenges the teacher may be facing and offer support. Alert the teacher to the ‘Drop-by’ protocol, so she/he is aware of any expectations to respond or have students respond.

c. Professional Support

- Conduct a school tour for the teacher that include the building lay-out, lunchroom, library, playground (for elementary school teachers), and other areas that may be used for gathering. An essential item to explain is where the copy machines and other related equipment are and instructions for using them.
- Include the teacher in any site-based new teacher orientation and follow up personally to ensure understanding of policies related to teacher and student dress code, use of social media related to or about students, inappropriateness of posting of or announcing student scores, and appropriate video selection and viewing. These are all areas in which Chinese culture has a different set of ‘lines’, so it is very likely that teachers will need continued coaching in this area.
- Provide necessary training and support for the teacher to be confident using the designated online student management system for recording assignments and grades.
- As appropriate, conduct a parent meeting related to the Chinese program, where the teacher can have an opportunity to meet and greet parents.

## **8. Partner Teacher (where applicable)**

In immersion programs, a harmonious relationship between the target language teacher and the international teacher is essential for the success and well-being of all involved. Along with having received some cultural orientation, it is imperative that the selected partner teacher has demonstrated a flexible and open personality so as to confidently approach working with the new international teacher. It is not uncommon for partner teachers to become overwhelmed and feel personally responsible for the complete well-being of the international teacher. It is recommended that the cultural and academic mentors be someone other than the partner teacher, simply because there is already a large amount of collaboration in lesson planning and student management that will naturally occur. Partner teachers will need and appreciate support as suggested below.

a. Social/Emotional Connections

- Facilitate a positive introduction between the partner and international teacher.
- Ensure that the partner teacher is clear about personal expectations within the partnership and has received a basic cultural orientation.

- Check in with the partner teacher related to the general status of communication between the partners and any issues that may need addressing.

b. Academic Connections

- Provide regular time for the partners to collaborate.
- Ensure that the partner teacher is clear about the division of content delivery and reinforcement of the target language teacher's content.

c. Professional Connections

- Ensure that there is clear understanding of teacher evaluation criteria and evidence of progress for both members of the partnership.
- Provide an agreed-upon channel for resolving professional concerns with the target language teacher.
- Check in regularly with the partner teacher and the international teacher concerning how the relationship is working.

## Appendix F. Feedback From 2017 Survey of Guest Teachers

Utah Chinese Dual Language Immersion Program  
Excerpts from Spring 2017 New Teacher Survey (46 respondents)

**What was the biggest social/emotional adjustment you had to make when you came to the U.S.? 你觉得你来到美国之后在社交和心理建设方面哪些地方是最需要做调整?**

25.53% = Communication styles

21.28% = Being without family

14.89% = Living arrangements

*Teacher Comment:*

心态第一，谦逊，不懂多问

**What people or resources do you feel have had the most positive impact on your social/emotional (cultural) adjustment? 你觉得什么人或资源对你的社交/心态（文化）调整产生有最大的影响?**

27.66% = Homestay family

17.02% = Partner teacher

12.77% = State DLI team members

**Can you share any specific examples of support from other people that has especially helped you during your transition to life in the U.S.?**

**您可以分享您在美国生活的过渡时期接受其他人帮助，支持您的具体实例吗?**

- 我的住家帮助我买车，考驾照 My host family helped me buy a car, get a driver's license
- My partner teacher gave me a lot of suggestions
- My host family helped me buy second-hand car and deal with all the problems of it. My partner teacher helped me get supports like buying books and communicating with the principal/secretary. And she (even the third grade team) support me with dealing with students' behavior problem and teaching. I really appreciate it!
- 住家尽量让我感到有家的感觉 My host family tried to make me feel at home.
- I got help from my school staffs when I just arrived in America and need to buy a car
- My mentor teacher, my partners help me a lot. They help me know my students and my school.
- My host family and other guests teacher helped and supported.
- When the first month ended, I couldn't find a place to move to. My host family helped me to persuade her sister to host me at a low price. Whenever I have any questions she would answer me as soon as possible.
- 我的住家帮助我买车带过我去买冬的衣服带我融入当地人的生活 My host family helped me buy a car, took me to buy winter clothing, and helped me fit into the local lifestyle.
- 参加住家活动 Join in host family activities
- The first two months are the most difficult time. When I had no car, I could not go anywhere. So I could not go to the supermarket to buy food. So I starved a lot. The third grade Chinese teacher who teaches here for the second year, drove me to the supermarket, helped me buy a car, bought car insurance, got a driver license. She helped me a lot to adjust to my life in America.
- My host family offered me transportation.



## What advice would you give to those who are trying to support new Chinese teachers?

对于那些试图去支持新来中国老师的人你会提供给他们什么样的建议? 请在下面解释.

- 经常去听一听他们讲课, 能够多给一些意见 Visit their classrooms frequently and give them suggestions.
- 多去一些好的课堂教学学习是最快进步的方式 Give them the chance to visit good classroom models is the fastest way to learn.
- 给自己时间去慢慢提升和进步 Encourage them to be patient with themselves as they make progress bit by bit.
- Be patient and try to help when they are not really good at expressing in English. Try to speak to them each day to see how they deal with all the problems, then give them supports.
- 对于需要教授科学的老师, 应给予一些基础的科学知识培训, 及如何开展一个单元的课程. For teachers who need to teach science, some basic science knowledge training should be given and how to develop a unit.
- Give new teachers more opportunities to listen to other teachers' lessons.
- 从生活到工作方面都可以给予指导和帮助, 任何方面的帮助对新老师来说都极其珍贵. Guidance and assistance in all aspects of life including personal and work. This is extremely valuable to new teachers.
- As a first year Chinese teacher, I really need others' support in many ways. In the first two months, everything is new to me. I need someone who can help me buy a car, took me to the supermarket, got a driver liscence, get a social security number etc. I need support in my life adjustment. In terms of teaching, although we have received many training before we came here. I think I am equipped with enough theoretical things, but I am still a little lost concerning how to apply what I have learned to teaching. If there could be more real class observation, it is really very helpful. Teaching material share is also very helpful for a new teacher.
- 最好先试讲再培训, 如果老师们没有接触课堂, 他对培训内容的理解肯定不会那么深. It's better to give teachers some experience in the classroom, then do training. If they haven't been in the classroom, the understanding of the training will not be too deep.
- More feedback will benefit them.
- 多给她们一些自己思考消化, 实践反思的时间。Give them more time to think and digest ideas with time for reflection.
- 正面积极的鼓励。Give them positive encouragement.
- 帮助别人时徵得被帮助人的同意, 并站在对方的立场上想问题. Get the consent of the teacher before helping, and try to put yourself in their shoes.
- I should know the differences about two cultures teaching models.
- 让老师先了解学校规章制度, 然后和前任以及上任老师, 搭档老师了解学情, 然后制定班规。Allow the teacher to first understand the school rules and regulations/procedures, and then that of the former teachers, and the partner teacher, then develop class rules.
- 倾听, 帮助但也要让新来的老师发挥主观能动性, 尽早适应。  
Be willing to listen and help, but allow new teachers to adapt in their own way and time.