

## **Clarence Bee Article – October 2018**

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### **Chinese Teacher Visitors**

The Clarence Central School District has been hosting teachers from the Hexi School District in Tianjian, China for the past sixteen years. In 2002, Clarence signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hexi District in China to officially sanction a cooperative relationship between the two school districts. That agreement has formed the basis of interactions and academic exchanges ever since. Over the course of the partnership over a hundred Chinese teachers and administrators from the Hexi District have visited Clarence. Dr. Shu-Ching Chen coordinates the annual event, working through the details with the Education Bureau for the Hexi District, and government leaders in Tianjian, China. The city of Tianjin has over 15 million residents and the Hexi School District is much larger than Clarence.

The program has provided great benefits to both the visiting Chinese teachers and the faculty and students in Clarence. Each fall five to six teachers from China visit us for approximately seven weeks. Our curriculum office schedules the Chinese teachers to visit each of the six school buildings and our Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs. The Chinese teachers are able to observe classes and discuss instructional practices with Clarence teachers. Our teachers are able to have discussions with the Chinese visitors regarding learning how educational elements such as standards, curricular, instructional, and assessment practices, and program offerings differ between the two countries. We immerse the Chinese teachers into every facet of the school day and invite them to participate in staff development opportunities so we can learn from them as much as they learn from us. The Chinese teachers also offer short workshops on Chinese language classes before the school day at the high school and middle school.

In addition, the Chinese teachers attend a number of extracurricular and interscholastic events, including music concerts, Homecoming, and special happenings in order to experience all that Clarence has to offer. This year two retired teachers, Ken Schobrich and Jim Marshall, created a hands-on, interactive learning experience for the Chinese teachers at the Clarence Nature Center

Three times over the past sixteen years groups of high school students from Clarence have visited the Hexi District, living with Chinese families for a week and visiting historical venues along with Chinese schools. We are hopeful to repeat the visits to China at some point in the future.