

# AIFS FOUNDATION SURVEY RESULTS

## High School INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

### INTRODUCTION

In an effort to better understand the policies and practices governing international education in U.S. American secondary schools, the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) Foundation in the spring of 2006, sent out an exploratory survey to public and private high schools nationwide. We were thrilled to receive responses from 3,321 institutions. Knowing how overburdened our school administrators are, we want to take a moment to thank all those who contributed to the survey's results.

Although we received this large number of responses, the results of the survey should not be taken as representative of the policies of all U.S. American secondary schools. Rather, the results of the survey are representative of the institutions that responded to the AIFS Foundation study. What follows in this report are the tentative conclusions from this survey.

Now, more than ever, it is important to find some metrics by which we can measure opportunities in and outcomes from international education at all levels of our educational system. Through this inaugural AIFS Foundation school survey, we are pleased to take these initial steps to gaining a better understanding of the breadth and depth of international education in our secondary schools.



MELANIE FRENCH  
AIFS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AND AYA DIRECTOR



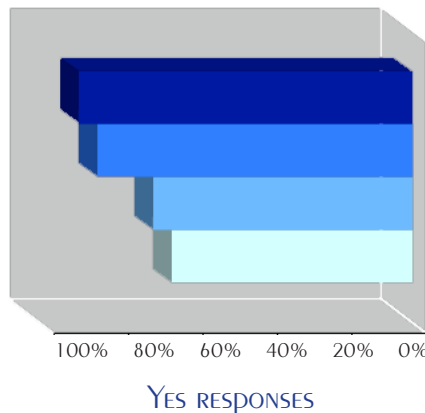
### INBOUND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMMING

International exchange has been a policy used by the United States government to promote better relations with countries since the 1950s. Student exchange is nearly topping the list as one of our country's most important forms of public diplomacy. This survey reveals that today, international exchange is still held in the highest regard by our American high schools. The J-1 visa program brings students age 15-18 from countries around the globe to the U.S.A. to learn about our customs, culture and language. These students also teach their own customs, culture and language to American high school students, thus bringing text books to life.

The AIFS Foundation is heartened to learn that the vast majority, over 90%, of American secondary schools who responded do open their doors to international exchange students. We are also pleased to discover that most institutions are flexible in their policies governing international student exchange. The large majority, 85%, of respondents report that their institutions accept exchange students in both the fall and the spring semesters. Finally, a majority, nearly 60% of our respondents, report that their institutions accept exchange students who have graduated in their own country, provided these students are still under the age of 18. (The U.S. Department of State accepts and includes these graduated students under the J-1 visa program guidelines.)

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### INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENT ACCEPTANCE



Does your school accept international exchange students?

Do you accept fall semester exchange students (Aug-Dec)?

Do you accept spring semester exchange students (Jan-June)?

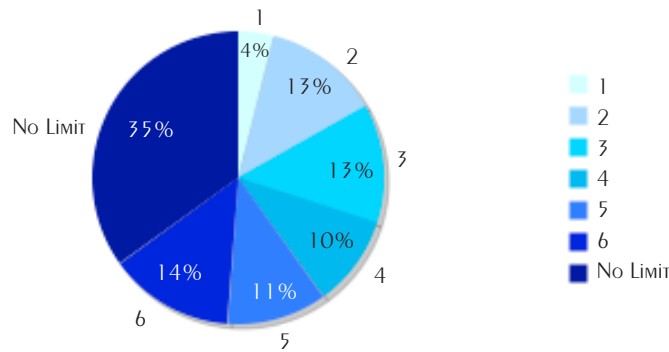
Do you accept exchange students who have graduated in their home country if they are under the age of 18?

The pie graph below indicates the total number of international exchange students that our high school respondents accept each year. Although most schools mention that these numbers are subject to change, they indicate the average size of their inbound programs. Perhaps the most surprising and encouraging result lies in the fact that over one third of all high schools who responded were open to international exchange students without capping the total number.

It should be noted, however, that these survey results do not include information as it applies to the total student body population. The Council on Standards for International Exchange and Travel (CSIET) has issued a sample guideline for policies on international exchange programming in high schools and in this guideline, CSIET suggests that international students make up at least 1% of the total student body population.

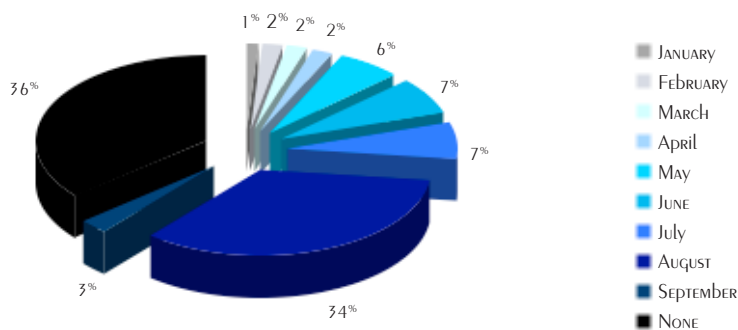
***“ Perhaps the most surprising and encouraging result lies in the fact that over one third of all high schools who responded were open to international exchange students without capping the total number. ”***

## TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS ACCEPTED ANNUALLY



Finally, the inbound portion of our survey reveals interesting trends regarding international exchange student acceptance deadlines (those attending for the fall or full year programs). As international exchange organizations and high schools administrators know all too well, many American families tend to wait on the decision to take an exchange student into their home until summer. This has led to a challenge for both organizations and high schools. However, this challenge has been helped by many schools. Survey results show that although some schools do have strict early enrollment deadlines, the majority do not. Most high schools responding either have a deadline of August (many indicating the start of the school year) or do not institute a deadline at all within their policy guidelines. The U.S. State Department requires all inbound exchange students be placed in pre-screened, American host families and to have written high school acceptance prior to the student's flight with a full inbound student roster being sent by August 31 each year by participating J-1 exchange organizations.

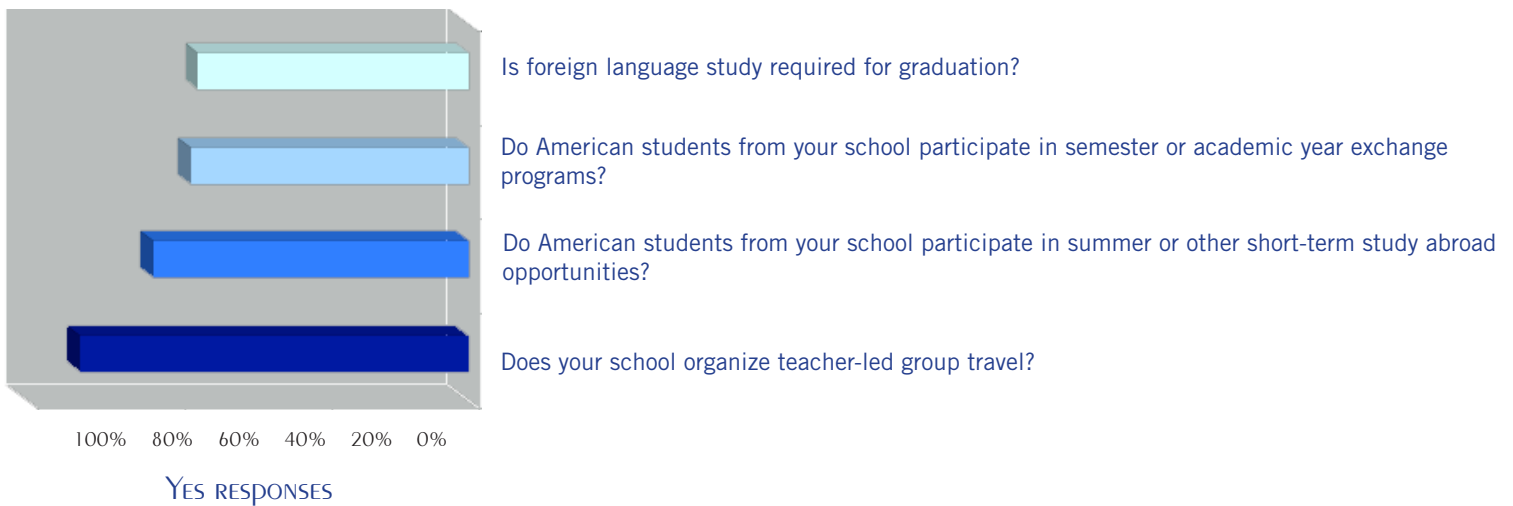
## ACCEPTANCE DEADLINE FOR INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS



# FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS AND OUTBOUND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMMING

Few educators today would dispute the importance of international education. With the recent publication of the Lincoln Commission Report supported by the United States government, it is clear that international education is increasingly important to our national security and our country's global competitiveness. Policy analysts observe that the U.S. is lagging behind other industrial countries in foreign language skills and cross-cultural competencies. Indeed, only 20% of Americans hold a passport and the vast majority will never travel outside the U.S. during their lifetime.

Through data reported in the AIFS Foundation school survey, we have identified similar deficits in our nation's secondary schools. According to our data, it appears that most U.S. schools continue to under-prioritize both foreign language study and international education. Only 37% of our survey respondents report that foreign language study is a graduation requirement at their institution. Likewise, only 38% of survey respondents report that American students at their institution participate in semester or academic year exchange program. On a more positive note, it appears that many high school students are participating in other kinds of international education. Forty-three percent of our survey respondents report that American students at their institution participate in short-term or summer study abroad opportunities. Similarly, 53% of survey respondents report that their institution provides American students with teacher-led international travel opportunities.



## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION ASSISTANCE & INFORMATION

As mentioned, from the Lincoln Commission report and the U.S. Department of Education, we know that Americans need to increase their foreign language skills and cross-cultural competencies if our country is to remain competitive in the decades to come. The AIFS Foundation survey, however, reveals a strong desire from our public and private high schools for more information on outbound exchange programs for American students. This fact alone is extremely promising. The more information that is shared by international exchange organizations regarding the numerous opportunities available for global education, the more the U.S.A. can regain the competitive edge in the global market.

The United States government through the U.S. Department of State has, and continues, to fund many international education programs. The AIFS Foundation is proud to administer several of these government-sponsored programs and since 1967, has provided hundred of thousands of students with international education opportunities.

### INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INFORMATION REQUEST

YES RESPONSES

Would you like to receive more information on international exchange programs and scholarships available to Americans attending your school?



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY, INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE SCHOLARSHIPS, OR ABOUT THE AIFS FOUNDATION PLEASE CONTACT US AT

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