

Minutes for both 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Info. Sessions
Summer Student Ambassador Trip to China
Friday April 20, 2018
KMS Middle School Library

BEST CANDIDATES FOR THE TRIP

This is an academic trip, so students do need to be academically-inclined. However, grades are only one factor in selection. The best candidates for this trip possess a degree of emotional maturity, and will be mostly comfortable being away from home and in a foreign country for 16 days. Students should show an interest in getting outside of themselves, are willing to take some degree of risk to get out of their comfort zone, have a sense of humor, are not rigid, have a positive outlook and can adapt to change. If you are not comfortable at this time, it is OK. This is a program we expect to grow and offer again. Other opportunities will be available.

AMBASSADORSHIP

You are an ambassador for your school, the District and the USA. Students are expected to be culturally-sensitive and show respectful behavior. You may find yourself on a museum tour being show items that have profound significance to your host, but none to you. It is expected that students will pay respectful attention, not be in conversation with friends, and not be on electronics.

ACADEMICS

This is an academic trip. This is not a vacation. Middle and high students will earn 3 college credits through Contra Costa College. Expect long days. Days may begin before 7:00 a.m., and end late at 9:00 - 10:00 p.m. There are academic assignments including, but not limited to, journaling and power points. Students will give presentations to classes of about 80 students.

CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE INFO SESSION

There will be an info session at Contra Costa College about the college credits. Dates TBD.

TRIP SELECTION

The principal, or their designee, will make the selections. Preference may lean to upper grades, who might not get a chance to go in the future, although making this a preference is at the discretion of the principal.

TRIP LENGTH

All middle schoolers will go for 16 days. The 21 day option is only open to the high schools.

TRIP GROUPS

The middle schoolers will be kept together; the high schoolers will be kept together, although both groups may be combined or present together during certain activities.

TRIP DATES

Trip departure dates are a little flexible. Trips may depart on July 7, 8 or 9. Departure and return dates may flex based upon the number of students going and the blocks of air tickets available. All trips for middle school students will last 16 days. Leave some flex time in your summer scheduling to accommodate for these changes.

WHY IS THE COST SO LOW?

A unique partnership! The WCCUSD, PCC Education, the Chinese high schools and the Chinese Education Bureau are working together to encourage and pay for this trip. They are working to make it as affordable and open to as many students as possible regardless of income.

AIR TRAVEL

United and China Eastern (or other more price competitive airlines). We won't be using higher cost airlines such as Cathay Pacific or Singapore Air.

PASSPORTS

Passports are required, but you do not need a US passport to travel. A passport from another country is fine as long as you can obtain a Chinese visa and can return to the USA. If there are questions, **please seek professional legal advice**. The WCCUSD does not possess the legal acumen to answer these potentially sensitive and sophisticated questions.

VISA

See hand out. **You are highly discouraged** from going through the Chinese consulate to get your visa as it is a time consuming process and if you make any errors in your application it can be even more time consuming and frustrating. Most people have found that using a visa processing service is well worth the relatively small extra fee. The visa processing services are experts in applying for the visa, they go to the consulate for you, and can assist if there are any complications. Cost for visa processing = about \$40 plus the cost of the visa itself (\$140). The visa processing service used by all the De Anza students on the Spring Break trip was J&V Travel in Richmond. However, there are other services that you can choose from. Apply for the visa **after** acceptance to the trip. Visa processing takes 2-3 weeks.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is provided for catastrophic emergencies, but is not provided for homesickness and the like. Flights home for minor emergencies or for a student that is not able to behave appropriately will incur significant additional costs, and parents will need to pay.

HOTELS

Hotels are clean and basic. Do not expect high end hotels (i.e. the Hilton). We may also stay in school dorms. There can be a luxury accommodation thrown in, but overall, expect very basic accommodations. You will have a roommate that is same gender and similar age. We will do our best to match with a friend.

WATER

Do not drink the water from the tap or sink anywhere in the country. Only consume bottled water or filtered water. Filtered water taps are available throughout the country, and they are labeled. Bottled water is available in the hotels for drinking and teeth brushing. Bottle water will also be available throughout the day for students. No one will be thirsty.

NO HOMESTAYS

There are a few sentences in the packet referring to HOMESTAYS. **Please disregard.** This was not edited out from a previous trip. We will **NOT** have any homestays on this trip.

LUGGAGE

There are no porters. You will carry what you bring. Therefore, please ensure you pack efficiently.

PACKING

Pack for a variety of climates. It could be very cold to 90's. Pack/dress in layers.

GIFTS

Be prepared to bring some small ziplock bags with American candy or some small souvenirs that represent the U.S. or the SF Bay Area to give to Chinese students.

AIR CONDITIONING

There is air conditioning in some of the accommodations, but do not expect it to be used as often or be as cold as you will find in the USA.

CHOPSTICKS

Be prepared to use chopsticks. It is likely that someone will be able to get you a fork, but this might not always be the case.

TOILETS AND TOILET PAPER

There will be some American-style toilets, but there will be many squat toilets on this trip. Ensure you will be comfortable using one. See Youtube Videos on how to use.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV-ieJ7F0SU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7KBbjtan9Q>

Bring toilet paper or tissue packs from the USA, and bring these with you when you are out for the day. Do not expect to find toilet paper in the restrooms. Bring hand sanitizer. You will not always find sinks with soap.

STUDENTS WITH ALLERGIES

Please check in with Dr. Peterson directly so that he can understand the type of allergy and provide advice.

CHAPERONES

Chaperones are WCCUSD teachers and principals. Ratio 1:7.5. One male and one female teacher will come from each school. This is also a teacher/principal ambassadorship/exchange program. WCCUSD teachers/principals will work with/meet Chinese counterparts on the trip. Additional Chinese chaperones also ensured the safety of students on the previous DeAnza trip.

EMERGENCY CARDS

All students will receive, and are expected to carry, emergency cards with important phone numbers printed in both English and Chinese.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

WCCUSD Students should be prepared to converse with Chinese students that are practicing English. Therefore, they should come prepared with open-ended questions that Chinese students can address. Examples:

“Tell me about your school.” “Tell me about your family.” “Tell me about your town.”

COMMUNICATIONS

There is no Facebook or Google in China. Download the WeChat app. A parent group will be set up to push out daily updates and pictures. Please refrain from using the REPLY ALL over this app. If you have questions or concerns, please send a WeChat message to your group’s chaperones directly.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are allowed for communication purposes only. Students are expected to pay attention, and for the most part, keep them away, while on the trip. Do not expect them to work all of the time. Check with your carrier for the best international plan.

ADAPTERS/CONVERTERS FOR ELECTRONICS

In most places, the outlets in China will be two-prong, just like here in the USA. You can bring an adapter. Students reported no issues charging phones. Curling irons and hair dryers - recommend adapters.

MONEY

Yes, you can bring some money for the trip. Somewhere between \$50 and \$200 should be plenty. You will be expected to bargain for goods in many stores/markets. You should bring crisp U.S. bills to exchange for Chinese currency (Yuan). You can exchange U.S. dollars for Chinese Yuan at the airport, and some banks here in the U.S. will exchange as well. Currency

exchange outlets prefer amounts of \$20 or above. Smaller bills aren't always accepted for exchange.

VACCINATIONS

Check with your physician to ensure your student is properly vaccinated for this trip.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

Both are available through Korematsu and ECHS parent groups.

There is significant, urgent financial need at **Kennedy High School**. Please contact korematsuptsa@gmail.com if you wish to help, and we will find out the best way to do it.