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CHRISTOPHER B. PAGE,

Executive Director

January 31, 2023

Dear High School Administrator,

The past few years have challenged us to think about how we educate our students in new and different ways. As you look to the 2023-2024 school year, we hope you will continue your important partnership with the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) and its [certified international student exchange organizations](#) to prioritize global understanding in your school and local community.

Through their initiative [BridgeUSA](#), the U.S. Department of State has reiterated its support of high school exchange programs. While the speed of visa processing has been impeded by the challenges that the pandemic wrought on U.S. embassies and consulates, the Department has tasked its consulates around the world to prioritize these young Exchange Visitors as they seek to resume normal operations. We appreciate your understanding and we ask for maximum flexibility in accepting these exchange students in the coming year.

International students are keenly interested in an exchange year to the USA. At CSIET, we take the health and safety of all our stakeholders to heart. Schools may set appropriate vaccination standards and our members will comply with those guidelines as we do with all other vaccination requirements. Per the CDC's January 5, 2023 guidance, "Students from China, Hong Kong, or Macau will [have] a COVID-19 viral test no more than 2 days before their flight and show their negative result, or show proof documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days, to the airline before boarding."

In 2023, CSIET-certified organizations continue to welcome and integrate thousands of students into school communities like yours. If you have specific questions about the operational plans and best practices of the organization you work with, we encourage you to reach out to them directly.

What has remained clear in recent years is that the mission to foster global understanding through international student exchange is more important than ever. **Citizen diplomacy is one of the most powerful mechanisms we have for engendering peaceful relationships.** Your commitment to this mission is vital. Not only do these students return home with positive views of the United States, but by studying and participating in school activities alongside your students, they help broaden the world view of your entire community.

Thank you for welcoming international exchange students into your community. We appreciate all that you do to educate our youth and make the world a better place.

Sincerely,

Christopher Page
CSIET Executive Director