

Coventry Public Schools

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PRESS RELEASE

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Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School will be offering Mandarin Chinese in 2016-2017, one of only twenty-four schools nationwide selected by the U.S. Department of State's Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP) to receive a grant to host a teacher from either China or Egypt.

Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School Principal Dena DeJulius, world language teacher Deborah Page, Coventry Public Schools Director of Teaching and Learning Michele Mullaly, and Coventry parent Susan Frarie, collaborated on this grant which is designed to increase the study and acquisition of important world languages in U.S. schools and enables Coventry's middle school to host a TCLP teacher from China for a full academic year.

Wenming Gu from China has been awarded the Teachers of Critical Languages Program fellowship to teach Chinese in Grades 6-8 at Capt. Nathan Hale during the 2016-2017 school year. Mr. Gu holds a B.A. in English from Hebei Normal University and a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Methodology from Tianjin Normal University. He has been a teacher of English at Handan No. 2 Senior High School, Hebei Province, since 2005. He is also a Vice-Principal responsible for international affairs and school security. Coventry Public Schools is hosting a reception and welcome for Mr. Gu on Thursday, September 1, 2016.

Deborah Page will serve as the mentor teacher for Wenming Gu supporting his transition to providing instruction for Capt. Nathan Hale students. Susan Frarie, a parent of Coventry students who has been affiliated with the American Councils of International Education, will serve as a community mentor to Wenming Gu, introducing him to other community members and assisting in his social and cultural transition to living in the United States.



Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School has a long history of interest and involvement with Chinese culture and language and international exchanges with Chinese educators and students. Coventry Public Schools established a sister school partnership with Qingdao No. 57 Middle School in Shandong in 2005, a year that began many exchanges between the two schools allowing for Qingdao and Coventry to learn about each other's academic programs, instructional approaches, and opportunities for students. Most recently in 2012 and 2016, Capt. Nathan Hale hosted students and teachers from Qingdao. Chinese students attended classes at CNHMS, shared their experiences and perspectives on learning, and became friends with our students. In 2013 Capt. Nathan Hale students, teachers, and a

community member visited Qindoa No. 57 Middle School providing them an opportunity to exchange cultural perspectives and learn more about education in China. CNH middle school students and teachers plan to visit Qindoa again in April of 2017.

Coventry Public Schools hopes to apply for a second year of the Teachers of Critical Languages Program grant to fund a second year of Chinese at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School, with an ultimate goal of adopting Chinese as a permanent area of study at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School and Coventry High School.

The Teachers of Critical Languages Program enables primary and secondary schools to strengthen their teaching of critical languages by bringing Chinese and Egyptian teachers to the U.S. to teach Chinese and Arabic language for an academic year. Launched in 2006, TCLP has provided fellowships to over 200 primary and secondary school teachers of English from China and Egypt to teach in K-12 schools throughout the United States.

In addition to teaching their native languages, TCLP exchange teachers expand the understanding of the world in their U.S. host communities by establishing strong ties with teachers, students, parents, and members of community, and by sharing information about their home countries and cultures. At the same time, the exchange teacher gains first-hand knowledge of the United States to share with students and fellow teachers in their home countries. Upon return, many of them establish lasting bonds between their U.S. host schools and their home schools in China or Egypt.

TCLP is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which promotes international mutual understanding through a wide-range of academic, cultural, private-sector, professional, and sports exchange programs. These exchanges engage youth, students, educators, artists, athletes, and emerging leaders in the United States and in more than 160 countries. Alumni of ECA exchanges comprise over one million people around the world, including more than 50 Nobel Laureates and more than 350 current or former heads of state and government.

TCLP is implemented by American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, an international nonprofit organization that prepares individuals and institutions to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world. Since 1974, American Councils has responded to the needs of the communities where it works with hundreds of robust, international education programs that include academic exchanges, language immersion, testing and assessment, professional training, community development, and scholarly research.

This information was provided by Coventry Public Schools. For further information, please contact Michele Mullaly, Director of Teaching and Learning, at mmullaly@coventryct.org or 860-742-7317, Ext. 1114, or contact Zara Hovhannisyan, Senior Program Manager, American Councils for International Education, Washington, D.C., at zhovhannisyan@americancouncils.org or 1-202-833-7522.