



InET Consortium

Binational Teacher Exchange Program: An Overview

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A key component of the Binational Migrant Education Initiative (BMEI) is the Binational Teacher Exchange Program (BTE). This is underscored through a Memorandum of Understanding between the US and Mexico focused on programs to improve the educational continuity for binational students.

The BTE program is based on reciprocity in that the US states agree to host teachers from Mexico during their Summer School Migrant Programs. The US states agree to reimburse for room and board, local transportation, Visa fees, health insurance, a stipend, and provide any supplies and materials the teacher might need. The MX states agree to cover transportation to/from MX and the US.

The teachers provide services to students in a variety of topics and in turn have an opportunity to learn first-hand about the aspects of education in the collaborating country. The BTE objectives are to:

- reinforce **knowledge** about the **history, culture, values** and **national traditions** of Mexican origin students who live in the US;
- strengthen the binational students' **identity** and improve their education;
- encourage **ongoing communication** between US and Mexican teachers in order to **share educational experiences** that promote **continuity of educational practices**; and
- **improve the educational services** offered to the Mexican and Mexican descendent school population living in the US through the binational teacher exchange.

Implementing a successful BTE program encompasses several components that include:

- Providing an awareness of the process and timelines beginning in November with the invitation followed in December with applications and moving to assignments in February and arrival in mid-May;
- Designing a plan to cover all the essential details to include the required documents, room and board, transportation, financial considerations and the work place expectations;
- Providing professional development in Mexico and in the US for the selected teachers;
- Conducting a parent and community outreach effort to invite and engage the parents and the community in the summer program; and
- Evaluating the level of success of the program

The BTE is an excellent avenue that brings instructional experts from Mexico and the US in a joint, binational effort to enrich the academic, language, and cultural skills of the binational student

The Nebraska Binational Program: Creating Partnerships since 1999

Susan Mayberger, Nebraska Binational Coordinator

Nebraska has participated in the Binational Program since 1999. During that time approximately 160 Mexican teachers have spent part of their summer working with migrant students in the different projects in Nebraska. Teachers from Nebraska have also visited Mexico, toured schools and provided training in English as a Second Language to Mexican teachers. In June, 2013, four Nebraskan teachers went to Cuernavaca, Mexico to provide a week long in-service to Mexican teachers on best practices in language instruction. The Binational teacher exchange program is seen as a tremendously positive experience because it provides bilingual teachers to work in Nebraska school districts that have difficulty hiring bilingual teachers. This is especially true for districts that have the Dual Language (or Two-Way Immersion) program. Because of the success of the Binational Teacher Exchange program, the partnership between Nebraska and Mexico was enhanced in December, 2011, when the governor of Nebraska signed the Memorandum of Understanding between Nebraska and Mexico. This Memorandum allows Mexican teachers to work in Nebraska school districts during the school year. This past year, six teachers from Mexico taught in the Nebraska schools.

Nebraska received 11 teachers from Mexico for the summer of 2013. The teachers worked in Alliance Public Schools, Educational Service Unit 7 (around the Columbus area), Educational Service Unit 13 (Scottsbluff area) and the Omaha Public Schools. The Mexican teachers supported the projects' summer programs, made home visits and provided training on Mexican culture and education. Because of the nature of the migrant population in the Omaha program, the Mexican teachers not only worked with Spanish-speaking students but also with migrant students who came from Thailand and Nepal. The migrant program in Omaha has approximately 50% of the students coming from Asia. The Mexican teachers were part of the 2013 World Refugee celebration in Omaha on June 22nd. They provided cultural presentations to share the rich Mexican culture with Omaha's newest communities. Last summer, the World Refugee Day celebration in Omaha had over 1,400 participants making it one of the largest celebrations of World Refugee Day in the country.

The Binational program has enhanced partnerships between Nebraska and Mexico. The result is that educators in both countries have enhanced skill sets that will enable them to better serve the Binational student. The end result will support the Migrant Education Program goals of high student achievement and increased graduation rates. The final testimony of the success of this partnership is the positive feedback of the parents and students who have worked with the Mexican teachers. Nebraska looks forward to continuing with the Binational Program for the foreseeable future.

If you have any questions on Nebraska's Migrant Education Binational Program, please contact Susan Mayberger at susan.mayberger@ops.org. For additional information, please review Module 3 on the InET Website, www.inet-migrant.org.
