Secondary School Student Exchanges
Discussion Paper
April 2007

Why We Wrote This Paper

This paper provides an overview of the Secondary School Student Exchange Visitor Program and presents data describing the 2006-2007 academic year.[1] It offers observations of the current state of these programs and their participants. It also identifies pitfalls that may lead to unsuccessful programs and seeks feedback on how best to avoid them. The Department intends that this paper be a first step in an industry-wide dialogue that will encourage best practices and the successful programs we all want.

A Quick Overview

Educational and cultural exchanges are the cornerstone of U.S. public diplomacy and an integral component of foreign policy. To further this policy objective, the Department of State (Department) designates U.S. government, academic, and private sector entities to conduct educational and cultural exchange programs pursuant to a broad grant of authority from the Congress.[2] The Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs administers the Exchange Visitor Program through the Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation.

The Exchange Visitor Program is comprised of 13 different categories of exchange. As with the other Exchange Visitor Program categories, the

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[1] All data are from this period, unless indicated otherwise. SEVIS is a fluid database, so numbers are approximate.

[2] The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended; 22 U.S.C. 2461 et seq.; the Immigration and Naturalization Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(J); the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, Pub. L. 105-277, as well as other statutory enactments, Reorganization Plans, and Executive Orders.

purpose of the secondary school student program is to develop and promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people in other countries of the world. Over the past half century, the Exchange Visitor Program has exposed millions of foreign nationals to the United States, its people, cultures, skills, business techniques, educational institutions, and ways of life.

Secondary school student exchange programs have been a part of U.S. public diplomacy efforts since 1949. These programs promote mutual understanding by providing foreign students the opportunity to study in American high schools while living with an American host family. Not only are the students themselves transformed by these experiences, so, too, are their families, friends, and teachers back home. Americans, such as the host families, students, and sponsor representatives whose lives intersect with these students, benefit as well.

The great majority of exchange students who come to the United States to attend high school become more accepting of the democratic values of American society and its cultural differences, grow in independence and maturity, improve their English language skills, and overall enjoy a life-changing experience.

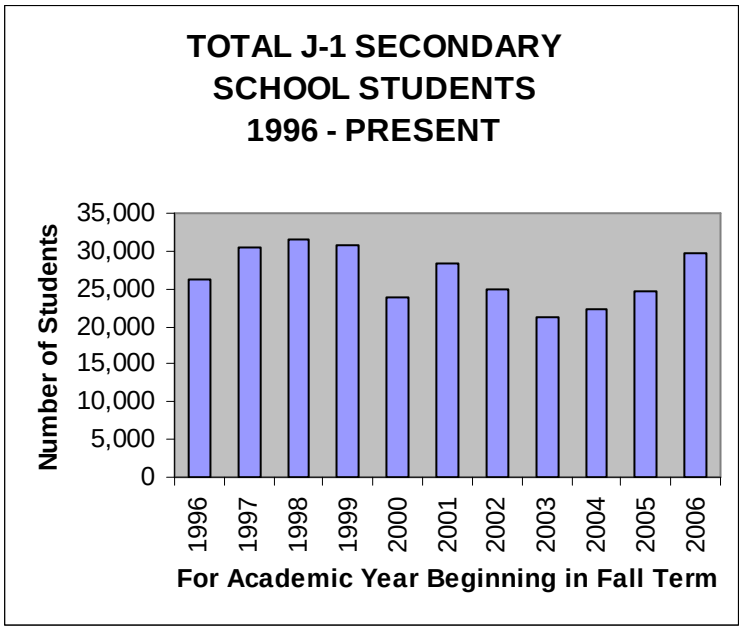
Who Needs More Teenagers? [Answer: We All Do!]

In recent years, Department-designated program sponsors have facilitated the entry of more than 300,000 exchange participants annually under J-1 visas. Of these, approximately ten percent (10%) have been secondary/high school students. Peaking at over 30,000 students per year in the late 1990s, the program experienced a decline in 2000. A welcome reversal in this trend has resulted in approximately 29,688[3] participants for the period coinciding with the most recent academic school year.[4] The chart below illustrates the

[3] This number includes participants who were in "active," "inactive," and "terminated" status on March 20, 2007 and whose programs began after July 1, 2006.

[4] Although some programs begin in January and last either a single semester or the entire calendar year, participation in the program is generally measured over a period beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

number of foreign nationals participating in the secondary school student program since 1996:[5]



As with other Exchange Visitor Programs, the underlying purpose of the Secondary School Student Exchange Program is to further U.S. diplomatic and foreign policy goals by encouraging positive academic and social experiences. Upon return to their homelands, experience has shown that these students will share the knowledge and goodwill derived from this experience with their countrymen. As part of this public diplomacy initiative, sponsors have both the obligation and the opportunity to influence positively these students' attitudes and perceptions about the United States and its people.

While the benefit of a well-run exchange program is incremental, the damage ensuing from a poorly run exchange, regrettably, is geometric. Simply put, bad news travels fast. Unfortunately, there will be little or no media coverage regarding the thousands of students who thrive with their American families and schools and return home to share positive accounts of their time in the United States. Coverage of negative incidents, however, does reverberate in the community and with the media. As ambassadors of the Exchange Visitor Program, sponsors – and all their employees and

[5] Data for 2005-2006 are approximate due to a shift from collecting program data on a calendar year basis to an academic year basis.

volunteers, including host families – are well aware, it is much easier to destroy good will than it is to build it.

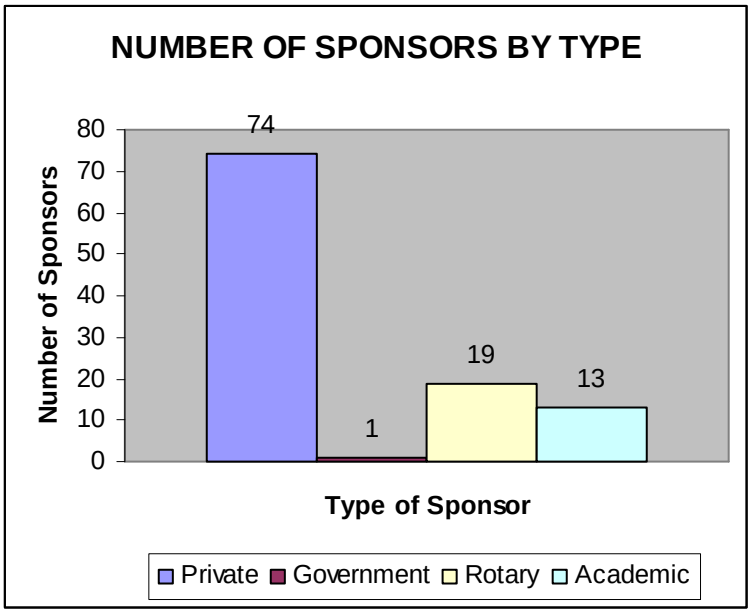
Who Are Those Guys?

The Exchange Visitor Program is facilitated – indeed, largely conducted – by Department-designated program sponsors who are responsible for the screening and selection, placement, and supervision of exchange participants. The Congress clearly intended that the private sector was to assume a major role in educational exchange activities, noting in 1988 that it wished to "encourage private institutions in the United States to develop their own exchange activities which are in the broadest national interests."[6]

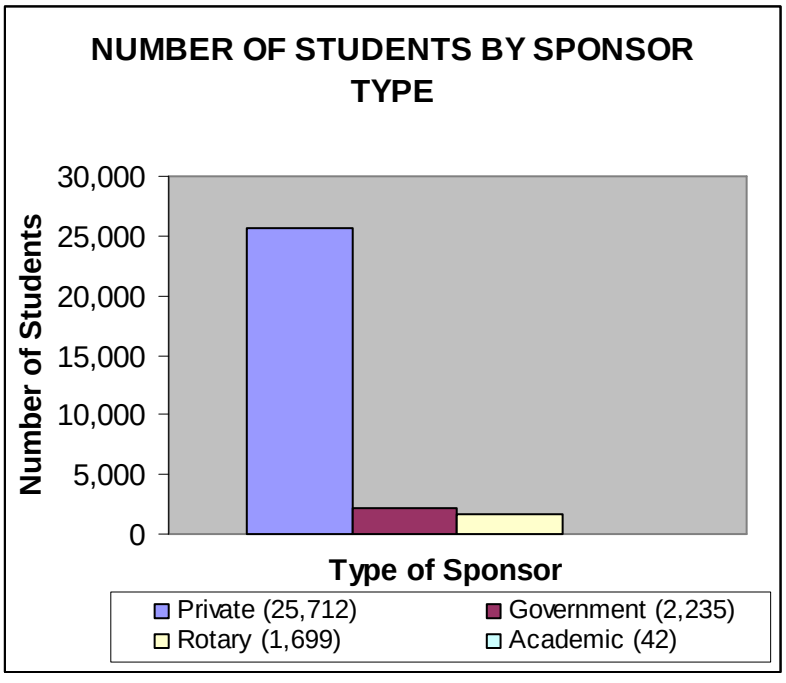
There are currently 108 non-government, government, and academic sponsors that are actively facilitating secondary school student exchanges. Of these designated sponsors, 12 are schools or school districts, 19 are Rotary International clubs, and 76 are private sector, 501(c)(3) organizations. The Department of State, acting through grantee organizations, is also a sponsor. Programs range in size between two and just over 3,000 students per year.

The composition of the sponsor community is illustrated in the following chart:

[6] *Federal Register*, Vol. 58, No. 52, March 19, 1993, 15180.



The distribution of exchange visitor program participants among these sponsor types is illustrated by the following chart:



Rotary International

Rotary International (Rotary) is a global organization that, among other things, defines its mission as building goodwill and peace in the world. Recognizing that "the most powerful force in the promotion of international understanding and peace is exposure to different cultures,"[7] Rotary initiated an international exchange program in 1927. The model of a Rotary-based exchange is different from other secondary school student exchanges. Individual Rotary clubs pay a portion of the expenses of J-1 exchange visitors and place them with three different families during the academic year they are in the United States. The members of the local Rotary clubs that sponsor these students take an active role in ensuring that their participants enjoy a culturally rich experience.

Schools and School Districts

Schools and school districts participate in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program to broaden the diversity of their student bodies. In this model, programs generally operate under a Memorandum of Understanding between U.S. schools and foreign schools. In most instances, the exchange is reciprocal. The Department encourages this model and authorizes sponsors to conduct programs with less than the minimum five participants per year the regulations generally require. Although there are not many schools that sponsor J-1 students and the total number of the students they sponsor is small, the school-sponsored exchange program is an established model that produces successful exchange experiences.

The Department of State

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs sponsors a number of Youth Exchange Programs. These programs all share the goal of promoting mutual understanding, leadership development, a broadening educational experience, and exposure to democratic ideas. The Department established each of these exchange programs following specific historic events that spurred a diplomatic interest in recruiting participants from specific regions in the world.

The Department established the oldest of these programs, the Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX), in 1983 when the U.S. Congress and

[7] http://www.rotary.org/programs/youth_ex/index.html.

the German Bundestag adopted specific legislation to further enhance the diplomatic engagement between the German and American people that began with the Marshall Plan initiatives. Funding for this reciprocal exchange is $3.26 million for the current fiscal year. CBYX will have facilitated exchange programs for over 17,000 participants since the program's inception.

In 1992, in response to the fall of the Soviet Union, the Department developed the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program. The FLEX Program provides an opportunity for high school age students from the countries of the former Soviet Union to experience life in an open society in an effort to expose them to democratic values and institutions. Nearly 17,000 students from these countries have participated in this program since its inception. Fiscal year funding for 2006 was over $15 million for the FLEX Program.

The Department established the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program in 2003 for students from countries with significant Muslim populations. This program makes a vital contribution to people-to-people exchanges that promote mutual understanding between the United States and these partner countries.[8] It has sponsored nearly two thousand students since 2003, and its 2006 fiscal budget was $19 million.

The newest of the programs, the American Serbia and Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange (A-SMYLE) began in 2005. A-SMYLE provides scholarships for secondary school students from Serbia and Montenegro. During their academic semester or year in the United States, these participants focus on the topics of civil society and leadership. A total of 110 students are have participated to date. Funding for fiscal year 2006 for the program was $1.2 million.

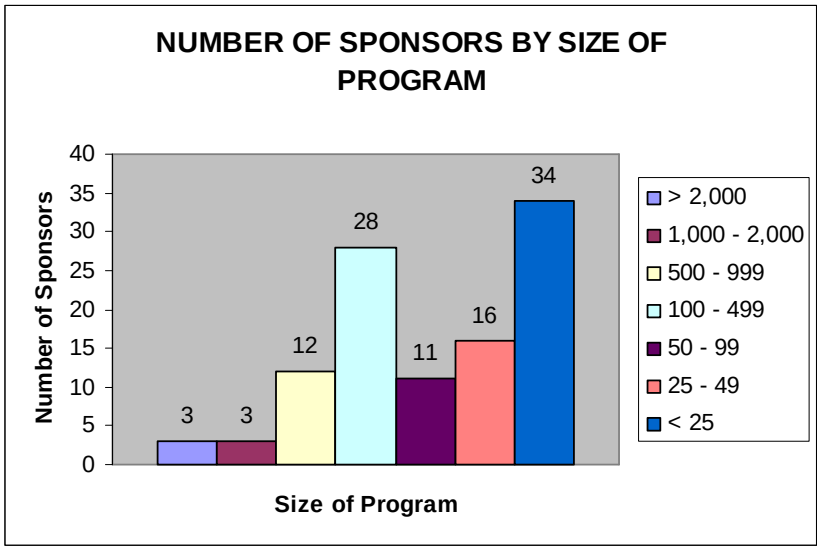
Non-Profit Organizations

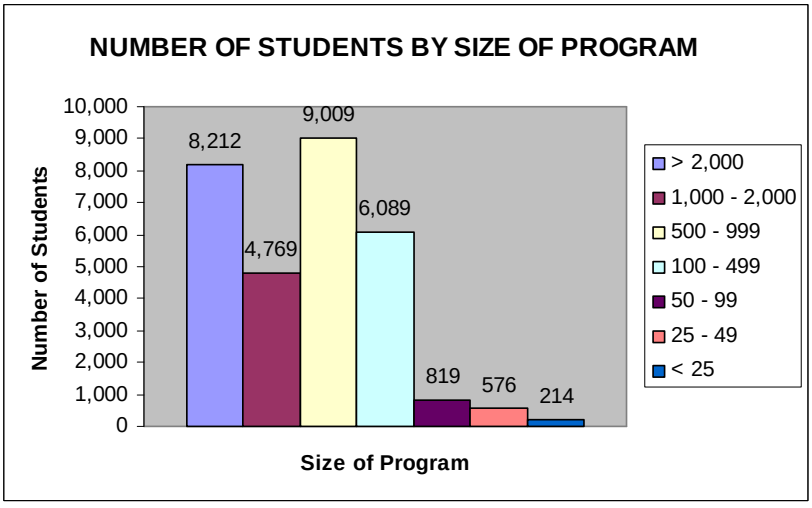
The majority of designated sponsors are private non-profit Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) organizations. These sponsors represent a select group that

[8] The partner countries include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Egypt, Gaza, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel (Arab community), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

must meet rigorous initial requirements to become designated sponsors and follow stringent regulations to maintain their designated status. Otherwise, the sponsor community is characterized by significant variation in organizational size. That is, there are small, medium, and large sponsors – all of which must comply with established regulatory requirements to ensure successful exchange program experiences.

The following charts illustrate the relative program sizes of sponsors and the number of students whose entry into the United States they have facilitated:[9]





[9] For purposes of this paper, a sponsor's size is determined by the number of its exchange visitors whose SEVIS records were "active," "inactive," and "terminated."

The resources and infrastructure necessary to support different sized programs vary significantly. With small programs, a core group of individuals is able to provide a more "hands on" approach selecting and monitoring individual students, their host families, and their schools. Contact is more direct, and there are fewer layers of field representatives who must be trained. Administration of a small program, by its very nature, is not overly complex, and there are many small programs that thrive and are known for highly successful exchange experiences.

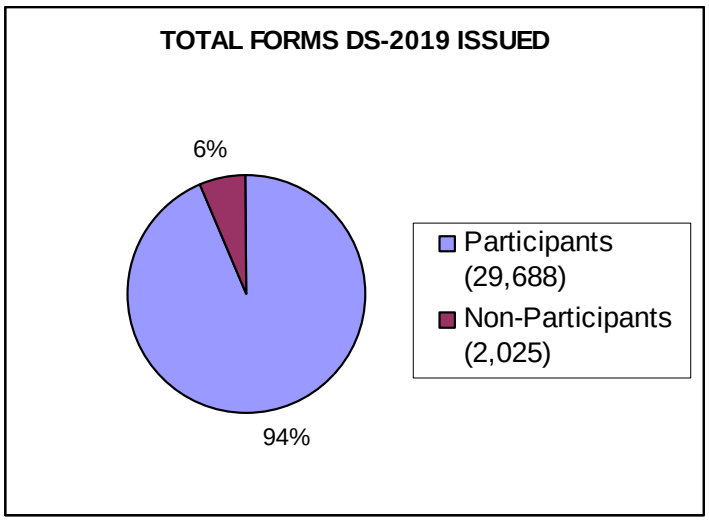
Large- and medium- sized programs are equally successful. Though more complex due to their larger size, these sponsors have access to commensurate resources that allow them to staff and train the people necessary to support their varying program participant populations. In fact, these greater resources allow additional benefits not always available to small programs. They may have more comprehensive training materials and training programs. There may be specialists in the sponsor headquarters who directly manage and report to the Department serious incidents or emergency situations. Utilization of information technology is often very sophisticated. Since the largest 20 sponsors are responsible for nearly 75% of all exchanges, it is essential that these sponsors administer successful exchange programs.

Warning: This Section is Rated "D" for Data

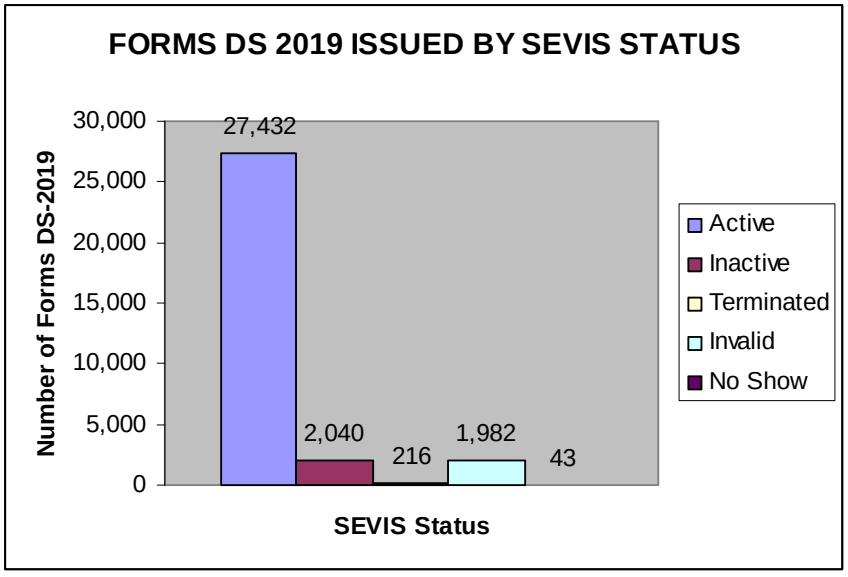
This section presents statistics that describe an overview of the 2006-2007 participants in the Secondary School Student Exchange Visitor Program. Sponsors track participants using a Department of Homeland Security database: the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). The creation of a new SEVIS record generates a Form DS-2019 for each prospective participant. This form is the document foreign nationals must present at U.S. Embassies or Consulates when applying for J-1 visas. Sponsors keep track of their exchange visitors by updating their SEVIS records to indicate program status and current addresses of their schools and host family residences while they are in the United States.

Total Participants

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the industry issued 31,713 Forms DS-2019 that facilitated the entry of 29,688 participants into the United States. Thus, as an industry, sponsors succeeded in providing international exchange opportunities to 94% of the potential participants whom the sponsors determined met program eligibility requirements, as the following chart illustrates:



At the time of this report, the SEVIS records of secondary school student participants were distributed across all SEVIS status categories as illustrated in the following chart:



Active Participants

Of the 29,688 individuals who participated in an exchange program during the relevant period, 27,432 are enrolled in U.S. high schools at the time of this report. Other participants have completed or withdrawn from their programs (inactive) or have been terminated for cause (terminated).

Inactive Participants

Over six percent (6%) of all active participants successfully completed or otherwise ended their programs on "good terms." Of these 2,040 students, some completed programs in December 2006, after a single semester. Others returned home for personal reasons and did not complete their programs.

Terminated Participants

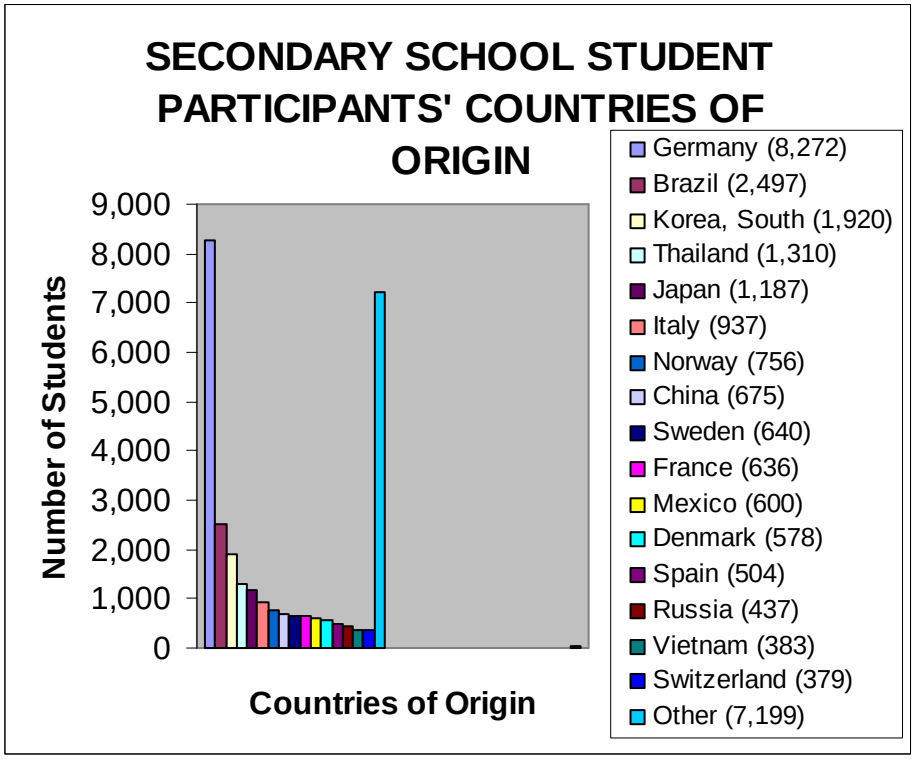
There are 216 participants (0.74%) whose SEVIS records are in terminated status. Sponsors must differentiate between participants who end their programs for personal reasons (and whose status is changed to "inactive") and those who are involved in behavior-related incidents that result in the sponsors terminating their programs for cause.

Invalid Participants

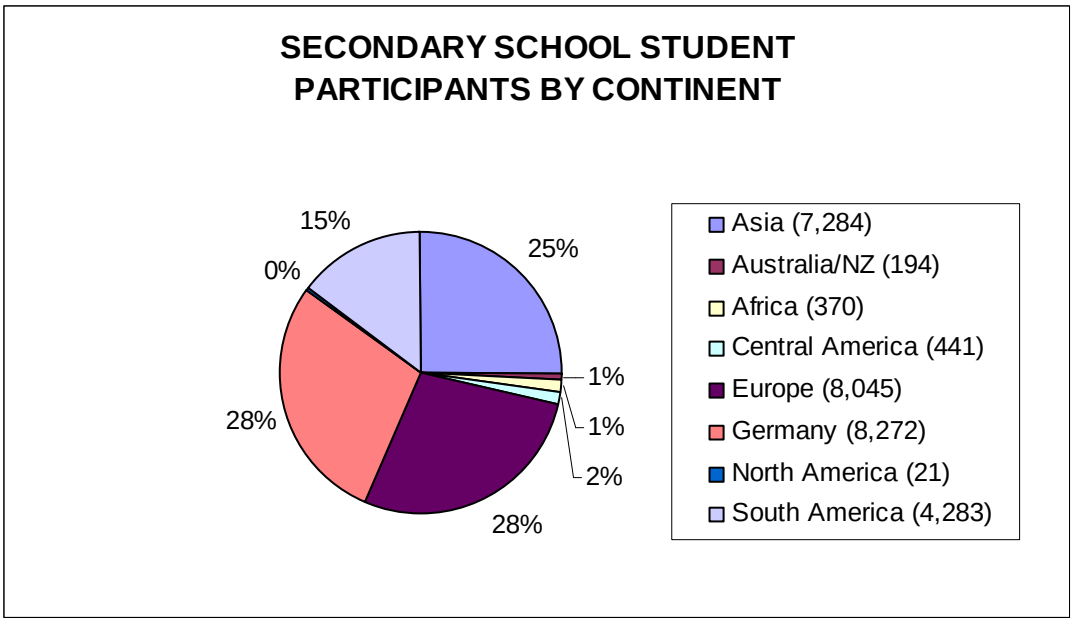
Of the total 31,713 Forms DS-2019 that the industry issued, 1,982 (6.25 %) are in "invalid" status. The SEVIS records of individuals who applied for exchange visitor programs, but never obtained visas are "invalid." So are the records of those who obtained J-1 visas, but decided not to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program. The records of exchange visitors who are currently participating in exchange programs may be in "invalid" status in two situations: (1) sponsors failed to change their status from "initial" to "active" (*i.e.*, validate their records) within the allotted time, or (2) sponsors cancelled the records.

Where in the World Did They Come From?

Foreign nationals from 109 different countries participated in the Secondary School Student Exchange Visitor Program during the 2006-2007 academic year. Of these countries, 74 sent less than 100 students, and five sent over one thousand students. Nearly 8,300 students came from Germany. Seventy five percent (75%) of all students hail from 16 countries, with the "other" 93 countries contributing the remaining one-forth of the participants, as illustrated by the following chart:



The large contingent from Germany is essentially equal to the participants from the rest of Europe, clearly making Europe, at 56 percent (56 %), the source of most program participants. Asia, with 25 percent (25%) of participants, is another major contributor to the program, and it is likely as the Asian economies continue to expand, there will be a commensurate increase in Asian exchange participants. Participants during the 2006-2007 academic year entered from all regions of the world as the following chart demonstrates (with Germany being reported separately from Europe to show the size of other European programs):



The Terrible Truth about Teens

Teenagers around the world face many of the same issues regardless of their nationality. Participants in the Secondary School Student Exchange Visitor Program – who range in age from 15 to 18 ½ – are not really children any more, but neither are they adults.

At this stage in life, adolescents are introduced to the risks that Rotary International summarizes as the "Four D's" – drinking, drugs, dating, and driving. These often vulnerable and impressionable young people are undergoing physical and emotional changes and experiencing new freedoms and responsibilities. They are egocentric, believe they are invincible, and are starting to make their own decisions on matters such as how to spend their money or who they want as friends. It can be a rebellious time, and teenagers often try to distance themselves from their parents or resist traditional rules and restrictions.

The combination of the characteristics of typical teenagers with the challenges of international living and schooling often produces additional pressure and stress for teenage exchange participants. This may be the first time that an individual has been so far away from home for so long. Even though one purpose of an exchange is to experience personal development, it is not always easy to experience so many changes at once. Exchange

students may encounter fundamentally different religious beliefs and cultural mores. They may not react well to new foods or living in homes with different routines, rules, and levels of affluence than the ones they left. The levels of discipline their host families impose may be significantly different – either stricter or more lax – than what they are accustomed to in their own families. They may also struggle academically or find it difficult to make friends in their new schools. Such challenges and changes may result in conflict and tension between students and host families that sponsors must resolve.

It's Not Your Father's High School Exchange Program

The typical American family that existed when the Fulbright-Hays Act created the Exchange Visitor Program is no longer the norm. "Stay-at-home" mothers and two-parent households used to provide a family structure that could potentially better integrate – and nurture – international exchange students into households despite cross-cultural challenges. Through the 1960s, mothers dominated the home-front and fathers dominated the market-place. The term "latch-key child" had not entered the vernacular.

Because of divorce, cohabitation, and single parenthood, the composition of the American family has changed dramatically in a single generation. For all Americans, aged 15 or older, the divorce rate increased from 1.8% in 1960 to 8.3% in 2000. [10] In 1970, 40.3% of all households were made up of married couples with children. By 2000, that figure had declined to 24.1%. Single person households increased 16.2% to 25.5% during this same period.[11]

Not only are there fewer "nuclear" families, but those that do exist have been dramatically affected by the increasing number of working mothers. In 1972, in only one third of two parent families did both parents work outside

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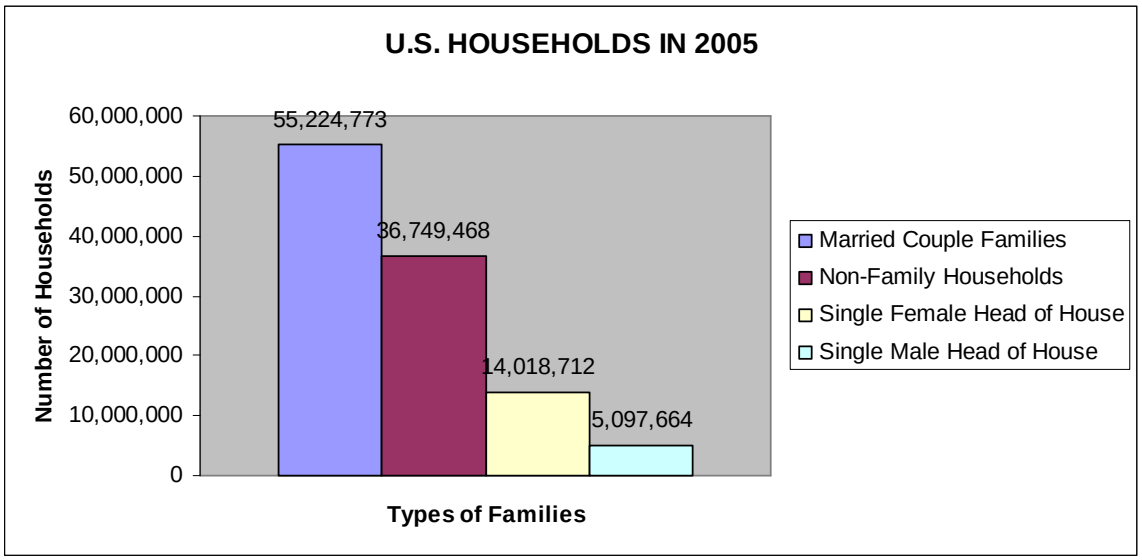
[10] David Blankenhorn, "The Marriage Problem." *American Experiment Quarterly* (Spring 2003), 69.

[11] Jason Fields and Lynne M. Casper, *America's Families and Living Arrangements – Population Characteristics* (U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census), 3.

the home. By 1998, that percentage had doubled.[12] A similar increase occurred in the number of women – and not just mothers – joining the workforce. In 1960, 42% of women ages 25-64 worked outside the home. This percentage rose to 49% in 1970, 59% in 1980, 69% in 1990, and 71% in 1995.[13]

American couples are marrying at older ages and having fewer children later in life. The percent of women aged 20 to 24 who had ever been married fell from 63% to 38% between 1950 and 2004. During the same period, it dropped from 87% to 69% for women aged 25-29.[14] The birth rate in the United States has fallen from a peak of 3.65 children per woman at the height of the Baby Boom to only 1.75 children in 1995.[15]

As a result of these demographic changes, there are significantly fewer traditional nuclear families in the United States. Many families are "blended" through divorce and remarriage or are headed by a single parent. There are childless couples and same-sex couples. People also are living longer, resulting in an increased number of "empty-nest" homes. The following chart illustrates the prevalence of family types in 2005:



[12] *Id.*

[13] Bob Allen and Sarah Griffith, *Research Finds Ozzie & Harriett Are Fading Fast*, http://www.baptiststandard.com/2000/2_2_2/pages/ozzie.html, p. 2.

[14] U.S. Census Bureau, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the 1990's*: 2000, Washington, DC, p. 5.

[15] Allen and Griffith, pp. 2-3.

Within the context of changing demographics in the United States, sponsors of secondary school student exchange programs find it increasingly challenging to find host families willing or able to welcome exchange students into their homes. Households with only a single parent or in which both parents work may already be stressed by the need to juggle their schedules as well as their children's. Single income, two parent families may self-determine they lack the resources to accommodate another child.

Check Them Out and Stay in Touch

Given the nature of today's international high school exchange paradigm, careful screening of both students and host families, followed by deliberate and thoughtful matching of the students and families, are the first steps toward insuring a successful exchange experience. Sponsors must also have properly trained staff or volunteers to monitor the exchanges and prevent or properly manage "issues" on an on-going basis.

Screening Students

There are only a few eligibility requirements for prospective exchange participants – but they are critical. First, the students must have adequate English language proficiency. Tourist-level language is not sufficient for an education-based exchange activity. Also, the students must have completed no more than 11 years of primary and secondary school (excluding kindergarten) or be between the ages of 15 and 18 ½ at the time of enrollment. They must have demonstrated academic success since students who struggled academically in their native languages and countries will be even more challenged when classes are conducted in English. They also must be mature. This may not be easy to judge, but it is a critical factor. When sponsors accept into their programs individuals who fail to meet all of the screening criteria, the risk of unsuccessful experiences and failed public diplomacy efforts is greatly increased.

Screening Potential Host Families

First and foremost among the Department's concerns are the health, safety, and welfare of all secondary school exchange participants. Their youth and inexperience give rise to situations in which sponsors and host families must

be particularly sensitive to their vulnerabilities. The existing Exchange Visitor Program regulations establish a significant number of steps that sponsors must take fully to screen and select potential host families. Recognizing that one incident of abuse is unacceptable, the Department insists that sponsors exercise due diligence in the host family selection process. The Department has previously stated that "[a] mere superficial compliance with this regulatory requirement will not be tolerated."[16] The mandatory steps of the host family screening process are set forth below.

Sponsors must "[p]rovide potential host families with a detailed summary of the Exchange Visitor Program and the parameters of their participation, duties, and obligations." [22 CFR 62.25(j)(1)] Families contemplating adding a new member for an extended period should have prior knowledge of the program's parameters and sponsors' and students' expectations.

The standard application form should provide a "detailed summary and profile of the host family, the physical home environment, family composition, and community environment." [22 CFR 62.25(j)(2)] This is important, not just for determining whether a family is capable of providing a "comfortable and nurturing home environment," but also for relaying this information to exchange visitors prior to their arrival, in order to facilitate their adjustment to their new environments. [22 CFR 62.25(j)(4)]

Sponsors must "[c]onduct an in-person interview with all family members residing in the home" in order to assess the suitability of the entire family. [22 CFR 62.25(j)(3)] Sponsors must also ensure that the "host family has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations" to avoid the stress and discomfort that could ensue if the exchange student were to become a burden on the family. [22 CFR 62.25(j)(6)]

Equally critical is the need for sponsors to thoroughly assess the reputation and character of the family. This is accomplished in part both by interviewing two individuals from the "school or community" who know the host family well and by obtaining a criminal background check on "each member of the host family household eighteen years of age and older…." [22 CFR 62.25(j)(5) and (7)]

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16 *Federal Register*, Vol. 58, No. 52, March 19, 1993, 15180, 15191.

The Department cannot substitute its judgment for that of the sponsors when it comes to screening and selecting host families. Similarly, it does not provide guidance on how to interpret the results of criminal background checks or how to determine the veracity of personal references. There are nearly 30,000 fact-specific situations that sponsors collectively face when selecting appropriate and safe environments for their participants. The Department expects sponsors to have competent and responsible staff who are capable of making these crucial judgments. At a minimum, sponsors must perform the mandated screening steps and evaluate intangible characteristics of potential families, *e.g.*, their ability to provide emotional support, guidance and discipline, and be properly motivated to host exchange students.

The Match Game [We Take It Seriously]

As described above, there are many types and sizes of American families. Similarly, the population of secondary school student exchange visitors is characterized by significant diversity. There is neither a perfect or ideal family model, nor student participant profile: matching of host families and students participants is necessarily a two-way street.

It is just as important that the students are comfortable with the families as it is that the families are comfortable with the student. Since there is no magic formula for correctly matching students and families, sponsors must be critically aware of and sensitive to the need to engage employees and volunteers who have good instincts and experience for makings such decisions and are able to exercise sound judgment.

Anecdotes and Allegations

The following scenarios represent situations that may possibly arise in the selection, screening, placement, and monitoring of secondary school student exchange program participants. These scenarios are a compilation of the "issues" sponsors have identified as potential risks to otherwise successful programs:

- ***Placing Students in Homes before Host Families are Fully Screened.*** Sponsors are required to complete all the steps of screening a host family before allowing exchange visitors to move into temporary and permanent homes. In the last minute rush to place all students and meet contractual commitments, sponsors may be tempted to place them first and finish the necessary screening later.

- ***Inadequate English Language Proficiency.*** Students who lack adequate English proficiency to participate at the high school level likely will struggle in all facets of their exchange experience.

- ***Involuntary Repatriation.*** Conflicts between host families and exchange visitors are not necessarily the fault of the visitors, and sponsors should act as advocates to try to resolve such matters equitably. Students should be repatriated only after sponsors have taken all reasonable efforts to resolve the situation, address the underlying problems, or, if necessary, move the student to another host family.

- ***Non-Traditional Host Families.*** The Department does not define the composition of host families nor make any judgments regarding their values and religious or other beliefs. By fully screening both exchange visitors and potential host families, sponsors can learn enough about both parties' expectations to achieve appropriate matches.

- ***The Unwilling Family***. Sponsors under pressure to find enough host families may cajole families to agree to host students when they really are not committed. As the families lose privacy, incur costs, and are inconvenienced by the presence of another individual in their home, conflicts are likely.

- ***Placing Students in Homes with Adults Whose Criminal Background Checks Have Revealed Criminal Convictions.*** The Department requires criminal background check of all host family members over the age of 18 who reside in the home. As convictions are variable and their evaluation is not a science, sponsors must necessarily exercise sound judgment when reviewing such reports.

- ***Situations Conducive to Sexual Abuse.*** The news is filled with stories of sexual predators. This is an area of concern to us all.

- ***Double Placements.*** Double placements should be reserved for those cases where the added companionship of a second exchange student seems to round out a family that lacks high-school aged children. They should not be used as a last – or first – resort when sponsors struggle to secure as many host families as they have commitments to students.

- ***Multiple Placements in a Single Home.*** Three, four, and even five students have been placed on a temporary basis in a single home. Even on a temporary basis, such placements – which the regulations do not allow – create conditions conducive to stress and conflict.

- ***Multiple Homes.*** Temporary or welcome homes are permitted but they should be treated as the exception, and not the rule. As is the case with multiple schools, students who change host families numerous times may be denied cohesive exchange experiences.

- ***Non-Accredited Schools.*** Exchange visitors have attended non-accredited schools and were thereby potentially deprived of either adequate academics or typical American high school experiences.

- ***Home Schools.*** Sponsors allowed host families to home school exchange visitors. This practice is not permitted as such schools are not accredited and they do not provide the intended academic and cultural exchange in a high school setting.

- ***Multiple Schools.*** Students for whom sponsors have secured school placements prior to their entry into the United States likely will remain in those schools for the entire exchange period. Conditions under which exchange visitors may experience multiple schools include: (1) their sponsors' failure to secure initial school placements, (2) moving from temporary host family households to permanent ones that are not convenient to the schools, or (3) moving as a result of problems with initial host family placements. As the school year progresses, it becomes increasingly difficult for students to integrate into new school environments.

- ***Starting Program after School Start Date.*** Students who must already overcome language and cultural differences to become part of a school community should not be disadvantaged by starting school late. They may miss initial introductory "assemblies," try to join teams with closed rosters, be denied critical introductory academic lessons, or be at a disadvantage in making friends and getting to know their teachers.

- ***Placing Students in Boarding Schools While Attempting to Find Permanent Placements.*** Boarding schools are not appropriate "holding areas" for students while sponsors try to identify individual host families and day schools for them.

- ***Placing Students in Schools with Large International Populations.*** This is a counter-intuitive exchange, as the purpose of the program is to expose foreign nationals to American culture and education.

- ***Placing More than Five Students in a School.*** The more foreign exchange students in a single school, the more apt they are to bond with each other, and not mingle with American students.

Now That I've Read This, What Am I Supposed To Do?

The Department of State and the designated sponsors of Secondary School Student Exchange Visitor Programs share the same goal: We all want successful exchange programs. The Department's interest in such success is motivated by its foreign policy objectives. Sponsors, their employees, and volunteers have a number of different motivations, including altruistic interests in international exchanges, personal satisfaction and professional success, and continued organizational viability. These motivations come together in a pivotal public/private partnership that offers both an opportunity and a reason for the Department and sponsors to work together to ensure the success of each and every student's exchange experience.

This paper should be viewed as an invitation to sponsors to join the Department in an on-going dialogue to improve the Secondary School Student Exchange Visitor Program. The Department welcomes individual

or combined responses. We ask the community to refute ideas or concepts stated herein, to identify other potential causes of unsuccessful exchanges, or to otherwise use this paper as a springboard for offering constructive ideas or approaches that can contribute to our combined successes.

Every successful individual exchange program builds towards our common success.