Building Capacity and Global Awareness for School Leaders

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The culture of schools is influenced in part by the principal. The vision the principal holds for leadership and direction of the school becomes an important compass for the development of curriculum, pedagogy, and mindset of teachers and students. The educational leadership faculty at The University of Toledo believe that graduate students preparing to become principals must develop understandings and awareness of what it means to be globally competent. This case study illustrates how even a short trip to China can begin to shape the thinking of future principals toward this end.

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES

The competencies from the Global Competence Matrix (World Savvy, n.d.) that will be addressed include:

Core Concepts:

- Perspectives are shaped by varied belief systems which create social affiliation structures, cultural norms and build a sense of purpose.

Values and Attitudes:

- Self-awareness about identity & culture, & sensitivity and respect for differences.
- Valuing multiple perspectives.
- Humility.

Skills:

- Listens actively and engages in inclusive dialogue.

Behaviors:

- Seeks out and applies an understanding of different perspectives to problem solving and decision- making.
- Forms opinions based on exploration and evidence.

CASE BACKGROUND

Qinhuangdao in Hebei Province, China, is a port city of over 3 million people on the edge of the Bohai Sea. It is home to the start of the Great Wall of China; that is, of course, if you consider the Great Wall to be the body of a dragon with the head called Laolongtou reaching out into the sea. The city is named after the Emperor Qin Shi Huang and holds a fascination for many who have read about the mountains, the vast land, and its rich history. In 2008, the city hosted some of events for the Beijing Summer Olympics. Situated on the sea and the rail transport line for North China, it is a major transportation hub sustaining industries of glass manufacturing, building materials, metal pressing, and food processing. To reach Qinhuangdao from the Detroit Metro Airport requires taking a 13 + hour flight to Beijing, China and then another three-hour van ride north. Five graduate students and two faculty members in a principal preparation program at The University of Toledo made the trek to Qinhuangdao, China.

The purpose of this trip was to visit Yanshan University, located in Qinhuangdao. The university serves 39,000 students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels with an emphasis in the engineering sciences, business, law, liberal arts, economics, and education. In recent years, a College of International Exchange