

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
January 28, 2016

Contact: Ken Blackstone
(408) 453-6662

177 “Young Cultural Ambassadors” build understanding, appreciation for five Santa Clara County schools

SAN JOSE, CA – Five campuses across Santa Clara County were [buzzing with activity](#) this week as 177 students, parents and teachers from China celebrated their similarities and shared their differences through an exchange program created by the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) and the Chinese Society of Education.

Titled the “Young Cultural Ambassador Program,” different members of the Chinese delegation spent Wednesday at Ohlone Elementary School (Palo Alto Unified School District), Rolling Hills Middle School (Campbell Union School District), Meyerholz Elementary School (Cupertino Union School District) and Katherine Smith Elementary School (Evergreen School District).

In addition, student ambassadors of the Gold Sail Dance Group from the Beijing No 2 Experimental Primary School performed several Chinese cultural dances with a modern twist, wowing audiences at Ohlone Elementary School. The final group will visit Loyola Elementary School in Los Altos School District on Friday, where the dance group will also perform.

“This cultural experience provides an authentic opportunity for students to communicate with peers who live in another part of world, which adds a tremendous value in building students’ global competence as they develop a deeper level of cultural appreciation,” said Dr. Yee Wan, Director of Multilingual Educational Services for the SCCOE.

Katherine Smith Principal Aaron Brengard said having approximately 65 students, 12 parents and nine teachers from China was “a really great opportunity for our students. When are they going to get the opportunity to connect with other kids that live over 5,000 miles away?”

Visitors at that site were assigned to classrooms and teamed up with a “buddy” in order to get the full student experience.

“She’s very friendly,” Wendy, a Chinese student, said about the child she was paired up with. She added the highlight of the day was when “we played basketball together and other games.”

The visit culminated in an hour-long assembly, where the Chinese visitors showcased their talent in 14 different art forms, including kung fu, classical Chinese dance and singing.

“I felt like they were my students. They’ve only been here for a day but I was just back there asking if they’re nervous, checking on them, they’re giving me high fives and it was like, ‘This is no different than the other 625 kids that are on this campus,’” Brengard said.

Roy Que-Heath, Child Care Center Director for YMCA at Meyerholz Elementary, shared similar sentiments of having the visitors.

“My students were raving at how great of an idea it is for students to visit another country and take part of such a rewarding educational experience,” he said. “They hope that either Meyerholz or the YMCA will follow in SCCOE’s steps one day and take our CLIP (Cupertino Language Immersion Program) students to Beijing to be Cultural Ambassadors from the United States to China.”

[View a photo gallery of the visit](#)

###