

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Mike Sitter, Athletics & Activities Director
TO: District 301 Board of Education
DATE: February 3, 2026
RE: German American Partnership Program (GAPP) 2026

GAPP (German American Partnership Program) is a school-to-school exchange program which pairs an American school with a German school to give students from both countries the opportunity to visit each other's schools and to experience each other's cultures by sharing in the lives of their families and communities. The GAPP Program is endorsed both by the German government (Foreign Office) and by the U.S. Department of State. CHS' partner school is the **Ferdinand-Sauerbruch-Gymnasium** in Großröhrsdorf (near the city of Dresden in the East German state of Saxony). Central's involvement in the program started in 1997.. Frau Bliss has overseen GAPP exchanges seven times: 2004, 2006, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2025. (The planned exchange for 2020 was canceled due to COVID.)

There are two parts to a GAPP-exchange. One part is Central students going to Germany, being hosted by German families. While in Germany, students live with host families, attend classes at the partner school, give presentations, and partake in day trips as planned in cooperation with the partner school (e.g., Berlin, Dresden, hiking, etc.). The second part of the exchange is Central students hosting those students whose hospitality they enjoyed while being in Germany. The group size for the CHS group is usually between 8-14 students with two chaperoning staff members. Frau Bliss is seeking permission to conduct the next GAPP cycle which is planned for 2027. **The trip for Central students is planned for June 8 - June 22, 2027.** The reciprocal visit of the German students at CHS is planned for October 2027.

The educational benefits of such an exchange program are manifold: Besides the obvious language benefits, students can also form long lasting international friendships (that often involve entire families), see an increase in personal confidence and maturity and learn to live the district's mission of "engaging the mind" in a holistic way. Students participating directly in the exchange are not the only ones benefiting from the exchange. In the past, the German guests have even visited other schools in the district and met with classes of the middle and elementary schools that they were invited to. The benefits of the program therefore can expand to the entire district.

The estimated cost for such a trip is \$3,000 to \$3,200. Frau Bliss is working with the district on the travel logistics. German language students of the graduating classes of 2028, 2029, and 2030 who completed at least two years of German by the time of the trip would be eligible to apply for the program. Frau Bliss would like to start the application process for the students and their families in late March of 2026.