



# Italian Study Abroad

February 2020

Bristol Central  
High School and  
Bristol Eastern High School  
Coordinator: Gina Gallo Reinhard

### **Proposal: Bristol Central /Bristol Eastern and G. Nolfi Exchange Program**

Bristol Central High School is requesting permission to travel to Italy and host Italian exchange students during the 2019-2020 school year. We have asked BEHS to participate as well so we hope to offer this as a combined opportunity. Bristol students and staff would like to maintain our 12 year partnership with the G. Nolfi classical language school in Fano, Italy. This proposal requests that we host our sister school during the fall of 2019 and travel during the February break of 2020. This period of time is has been chosen so to miss minimal instructional/learning time in the US and maximize learning while abroad.

We are requesting permission to offer this exchange one year in advance to ensure that students and parents have enough time to prepare for the trip. We would like to give families sufficient time both to save for travel costs as well as to help plan this educational experience. We will take the proper travel precautions when planning this trip and will follow all Board of Education policies. We will purchase additional travel insurance to insure the maximum safely coverage as well. This exchange is a once in a lifetime opportunity; with your support and approval we can facilitate an interest in and an understanding of this great culture among our students.

### **The Benefits of This Experience:**

The world language curriculum is based on the five C's, the Standards for Foreign Language Learning and the ACTFL standards of proficiency. Those standards incorporate communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities. Communication in languages other than English, gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures, connect with other disciplines and acquire information, develop insight into the nature and language of culture and participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world; the exchange program that we have organized offers our students an unparalleled opportunity to practice and refine all areas of proficiency (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Our priority standards, based on the state frameworks, and the NEASC report both stress the importance of authentic interactions with other languages and cultures.

It is not realistic to expect that all BCHS students will be able to have the opportunity to study abroad for a semester or an extended period of time. This program will allow total immersion in the Italian language and culture at a reasonable price. The importance of a study abroad program is a topic discussed in classrooms across the nation. The following list was compiled by Diversity Abroad, a website that discussed the importance of a study abroad experience. This list highlights the effectiveness of a study abroad experience and its impact on the face of education across the nation.

**When studying abroad students will have the opportunity to gain skills such as:**

- The ability to adapt to unfamiliar environments
- The ability to learn from different teaching styles
- The opportunity to learn to effectively communication among diverse groups
- The willingness to extend beyond one's own comfort zone
- The knowledge of a foreign language

By studying abroad students will benefit from many unique experiences unavailable at the high school level. Such experiences include:

- Learning from students from different cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds
- Honing cross-cultural communication skills
- Mastering a foreign language
- Exposure to new ideas and philosophies

For many students study abroad is a life-changing experience. Students come back from study abroad more independent, confident and eager to take on any challenge, academic, professional or personal. There are many personal benefits to study abroad. Some of these benefits include:

- Increased self-confidence
- independence and maturity
- Global networking of friends
- Appreciation of other cultures as well as appreciation for the American culture
- Ability to face challenges in the future
- Learn to creatively solve problems
- Better understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses

The knowledge gained during this program will continue far beyond the week-long time frame for Bristol Central students and teachers. The understandings that the students will develop from this experience are directly linked to the world language curriculum and district priority standards. The following list of priority standards has been taken from the level 2 set of standards.

- **Performance Standard 1** states: Students will understand and interpret spoken and written language on a variety of topics. This is an interpretive skill that will allow students to understand the topics discussed during the class. A learning opportunity such as this will allow students to use authentic materials to aid their interpretive skills.
- **Performance Standard 2** states: Students will engage in conversation, provide and obtain information, express feelings and exchange opinions. Students will be able to listen to actual conversations and be a part of the culture and traditions. The students will be asked to give their opinions and express ideas and feelings about the information they are seeing. In order to insure that all students are benefiting from this teaching technique these activities will be differentiated to make the language accessible to all language learners.
- **Performance Standard 3** states: Students will present information, concepts and ideas to listeners or readers on a variety of topics. The students will be asked to speak to the teacher and native Italian speakers. The opportunity to interact on a daily basis with Italian people in their own environment is not available in the course of the normal school day. Having students respond to the different situations presented offers them the opportunity to experience real-life communication.
- **Performance Standard 4** states: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, products, practices and perspectives of the cultures studied. There is no better way for students to experience the culture and traditions of a place than to experience them first hand. The students will be walking the streets of Italy and attending courses taught by native speakers of Italian.
- **Performance Standard 5** states: Students will reinforce and expand their knowledge of other areas of study through the World Language. The students left in the US will be able to view an entire culture via the experience of their teacher and their classmates. The study of a culture will show the students a broader world view from their seats in Bristol, Connecticut. Besides the obvious links to Italian history, art and culture, there will be seminars on Italian music, cinema and archaeology that will engage but the student and teacher. This experience will make them better citizens of our country as well as better citizens of the world.
- **Performance Standard 6** states: Students will acquire and use information from a variety of sources only available in the world language, using technology, print audiovisual, media, data and human resources. This experience will allow the students to tap into the newest facets of technology and media studies.

