



**Board Workshop Date:** 12/11/2023

**Title:** Portugal 10/12/2025 - International Travel Request - High School Science - Lindsey Smaka

**Type:** Discussion

**Presenters:** Jody De St. Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning; Jenn Carter, Edina High School Assistant Principal; and Lindsey Smaka, EHS Science Teacher

**Background:** In accordance with Policy 538, the following international student travel experience for up to 32 Edina High School students for nine days in October 2024 has received support from the school's administration. Participating students will miss 3-4 school days for this fall travel experience.

This experience is coordinated by CIEE, Council on International Educational Exchange, a nonprofit study abroad and intercultural exchange organization that designs study abroad experiences. CIEE was founded in 1947 following World War II. They were dedicated to promoting peaceful coexistence and respect among nations through student and teacher travel exchange programs. CIEE works with the Department of State for many of its programs.

**Summary of Travel Experience:** For this experience, students will explore aquatic and land-based ecosystems and biodiversity in and around Lisbon, Portugal, alongside biologists and sustainability researchers. Fieldwork and fun trips take you birdwatching at a coastal lagoon, snorkeling in a marine park, kayaking in the longest river of the Iberian Peninsula, observing dolphins in the Atlantic Ocean, and intertidal monitoring at Avencas beach. Students will participate in sustainability projects, such as assessing water quality and threats to ecosystems, census-taking of plant and animal species, and conducting interviews with locals on human and economic impacts of ecosystems. Students will also be immersed in Portuguese culture by learning about food, art, and language. See the attachment for a more detailed itinerary.

In addition to providing growth opportunities in alignment with the Portrait of a Well-Rounded Edina Graduate, this field-based, research-oriented student travel experience supports learning across numerous Minnesota science, social studies, and language arts standards. For this experience, we will focus on the following competencies:

- Intercultural Engagement - Immersion in Portugal with survival Portuguese, working directly with the local community, and community service work.
- Environmental Science -
  - Investigate species and attributes of rivers, estuaries, coastal and offshore marine ecosystems, human impacts, and habitat threats.
  - Research and assess the interdependence of local economies, human activities, and conservation of marine ecosystems.
- Global Conservation
  - Identify how communities in Portugal practice conservation in both land and marine environments
  - Describe the interconnected nature of culture and conservation in Portuguese communities.
  - Discuss conservation challenges and solutions in the world today.

**Cost:** The anticipated inclusive cost of this experience is approximately \$4,500 per student. This price includes all transportation, accommodations, travel & medical insurance, meals, and transfers. Students will be responsible for all costs. There will be need-based scholarships and other scholarships offered. There will also be extensive fundraising opportunities as detailed in the attached [fundraising plan](#).

**Transportation:** All students and chaperones will travel as a group from Minneapolis to Humberto Delgado Airport in Lisbon, Portugal, and return via a major U.S. international airline or partner.

**Accommodations:** Students and chaperones will be housed in dormitories at the CIEE Lisbon Center.

**Supervision:** Staff members traveling with the group are Lindsey Smaka, EHS science teacher, and two additional licensed staff, one of which will be a licensed school administrator.

**Recommendation:** Review the international travel experience for discussion. An additional discussion will occur at the Board Meeting on 1.8.24 and action will occur at the 2.12.24 Board Meeting.

**Desired Outcomes for the Board:** Review the background information provided and provide feedback on the student travel experience.

**Attachments:**

1. Appendix III Board Policy 538 , [Extended Field Trip and Travel Application Preliminary Approval](#)
2. [CIEE Global Navigator Tour Itinerary](#)

