



DEFINING EXCELLENCE

Board Workshop: November 19, 2024

Title: Nepal 7/31/2026 - International Travel Request - Lindsey Smaka - Edina High School - Global Scholars

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 24 Edina High School students for fifteen days in July 2026 has received support from the school's administration. Participating students will not miss school days for this travel experience. This experience is coordinated by Gokul Thapa, Rotary Club president in Kathmandu and owner of Real Himalaya travel company, who specializes in custom trips for schools in the United States traveling to Nepal.

Summary of Travel Experience: This travel experience will bring Edina Rotary Global Scholars students to Nepal with a focus on service learning and international development. Students will expand their global competency by engaging with Rotarians and Nepali people while performing service work to help local villages and schools. Students will also explore global issues using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and complete their Capstone project while on site and connect to their project locally in Minnesota. We will focus on three of the SDGs. The first is "Life on Land" which will focus on environmental conservation. Students will complete a trekking journey while exploring the ecosystems of Nepal and what environmental factors they face. The second is "Quality Education". Students will explore inequities in rural Nepali education and help improve the school with service projects. The third is "Partnership for the Goals". Students will learn about the importance of collaborative work between countries and how Rotary and our travel experience can aid in this. While in Nepal, students will explore historic sites, work and collaborate at a school and complete a trekking experience.

Cost: The anticipated inclusive cost of this experience is approximately \$5,147.50 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 Kathmandu, Nepal, and return via a major U.S. international airline or partner.

Accommodations: Students and chaperones will be housed in hotels at the various locations.

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

Recommendation: Review the international travel experience information and come prepared with your initial reactions (comments and questions). An additional discussion will occur at the Board Meeting on 12.2.24 and action will occur at the 1.6.25 Board Meeting.

Desired Outcomes for the Board: Review the background information provided and come prepared with your initial reactions (comments and questions) on the student travel experience.

Attachments:

1. Appendix III Board Policy 538 , [Extended Field Trip and Travel Application Preliminary Approval](#)
2. [Fundraising](#)
3. [Itinerary](#)
4. [Insurance](#)