



Board Workshop: December 8, 2025

Title: France 2027 - International Travel Request - Kim Caster & Pierre Schmidt - Edina High School - World Language

Type: Discussion

Presenters: Jody De St. Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning; Jenn Carter, Edina High School Assistant Principal; Kim Caster EHS World Language Teacher; and Pierre Schmidt EHS World Language Teacher

Background of Current French Exchange: In accordance with Policy 538, the following international student travel experience for up to 20 Edina High School Students students for one week in February, 2027 has received support from the school's administration. Participating students will miss 5 school days for this travel experience.

In early 2023, Georges Duby High School contacted Pierre Schwartz and Kim Caster to create a school exchange among 10th and 11th grade students. This high school, in Aix en Provence France is a specialty high school focused on the study of English and English-speaking opportunities (ACT, SAT, American colleges, etc) so that their students can have in-country experience before graduation. These students fill out applications and go through interviews to be accepted to this highly competitive school. The 2023-2024 school exchange was developed and was approved by the school board on May 15, 2023.

After multiple meetings with the organizers for Georges Duby High School and Jenn Carter for Edina High School, we followed the protocol of the South Korean exchange to create an application process for both the Edina side and the French side of this exchange. Once the school board approved the travel on May 15, 2023, the students on both sides applied to exchange and host each other during this experience.

As part of the application process, students and families confirmed that the "traveling student" would have a private bedroom, access to privacy in the bathroom, and access to their dietary and medical needs (allergies) during the homestay. Students were then paired based on the needs and interests of the students participating in the exchange. Families are vetted through background checks. After this pairing and vetting was complete, student and parent emails/information was shared and in August students started communicating with the family from the opposite country.

The French arrived on October 19, 2023 and departed on November 6, 2023 (after a 5 day delay due to weather issues all over Europe. During this time, an itinerary ([attached here](#)) was developed so that the French chaperones had daily connection either by phone or in person

with their French travelers. American students brought their French students to school when asked and on other days, the French students went on excursions around the Twin Cities. During their stay all French students had access in two languages to their chaperones and could text or call at any time of day if anything went wrong.

For the board approved 2026-27 exchange the Edina group will be arriving in France on Saturday, February 13, 2027 and departing February 25, 2027. The same protocols to ensure a dynamic, safe, and rich experience for the French students while in Edina will be in place for Edina students while in France.

Summary of French Exchange for Proposed 2027 Exchange: While other travel opportunities allow our Edina students to see other cultures, this is a rare opportunity for our immersion and traditional students to learn day-to-day vocabulary, live a French life, and to do it in an affordable way that allows for more access. The proposal to continue the exchange and approve travel to France for Edina students in February of 2027 is coming forward with an established school partnership, strong protocols for safety, and rich learning experiences directly connected to MN World Language Standards and competencies of the Portrait of a Well-Rounded Edina Graduate.

The [itinerary](#) is based on past exchanges the last 2 years and is open to slight adjustments based on experiences and feedback from families and students.

Additional Information: This travel exchange will be available to all ninth and tenth grade students during this current year of 2025-2026. (Sophomores and Juniors in 2026-2027) Students applying to participate will be enrolled in French classes, either French III, Extended French V, French IV or AP French Language and Culture. Students participating on this exchange will:

- a) use their French-speaking skills both in the fall (when hosting a French student) and in February (when traveling to France). Students will get extended time speaking to native speakers, reinforcing what they've learned over the past 5-10 years of French education
- b) make cultural connections about their experiences with their host families and while they're in France in general. They will get to see real life examples of what they've studied or new examples that they can bring back to the classroom about French and Francophone cultures.

This experience is coordinated by the organizing teachers, Kim Caster and Pierre Schmidt in conjunction with their counterparts in France. These teachers will use Delta Group Travel for the purchase of the flights to and from France. Students will be paired with a French student/family and will stay with these families during their time in France.

Cost: The estimated cost will be \$1500. A secondary cost for all families is hosting the French student in the fall, paying for meals and experiences while the French student is here.

Transportation: Airlines, family vehicles, trains and buses in France

Accommodations: Homestays

Supervision: Staff members traveling with the group are Kim Caster and Pierre Schwartz, EHS World Language Teachers.

Recommendation: Review the international travel request for discussion.

Desired Outcomes from the Board: Review the report, have questions prepared, and provide feedback on the key information presented.

Attachments:

1. [Appendix III Board Policy 538, Extended Field Trip and Travel Application Preliminary Approval](#)
2. [May 15, 2023 Approved French Exchange](#)
3. [2024-2025 Approved French Exchange](#)
4. [2025-2026 Approved French Exchange](#)
5. [Fundraising](#)
6. [Insurance - Delta Travel](#)