



**Board Meeting Date:** 1/8/2024

**Title:** Zimbabwe 3/25/2025 - International Travel Request - High School Global Scholars - 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 Global Scholar Coordinator

**Background:** In accordance with Policy 538, the following international student travel experience for up to 20 Edina High School Students students for two weeks in March, 2025 has received support from the school's administration. Participating students will miss five school days for this travel experience.

This experience is coordinated by Love For Africa, an organization that designs tours with a focus on social responsibility. This company was founded by Zimbabwean Blessing Munyenyiwa, who has worked closely with the Rotary Club of Edina over the past several years to implement an international grant project at a local hospital.

**Summary of Travel Experience:** For this experience, students will travel for a service-learning trip and immerse themselves in Zimbabwean culture. Students will work with have the opportunity to take part in a variety of different service projects, including helping at a local hospital where the Edina Rotary Club recently re-equipped their entire Maternity ward. This maternity ward will re-open after being closed for 20 years. They will also have the opportunity to volunteer at an orphanage and visit a women-owned Chaya farm. The major service project for this experience will be to help build a secondary school. Students will spend a few days learning about the school and the Zimbabwean education system and working on building projects. In addition to service, students will explore Zimbabwe with a few safaris in two different National Parks. Students will participate in Rhino tracking, game drives and explore caves with paintings. Here, students will learn about environmental concerns surrounding their National Parks and the human-wildlife conflict that impacts local communities. To complete the trip, students will have the opportunity to visit Victoria Falls, one of the world's largest waterfalls and one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World.

In addition to providing growth opportunities across the EPS Educational Competencies, this field-based, service-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 objectives:

Objective 1: Expand Global Competency by engaging with Rotarians and Zimbabwean people while performing service work to help local villages.

Objective 2: Explore Global Issues using the Sustainable Development Goals. Scholars will also complete their Capstone project while on site.

- "Life on Land" Environmental Conservation- learn about Rhino and Wild Dog conservation research at one of Zimbabwe's National Parks. Learn about human/wildlife conflict.
- "Good Health & Well Being" - Contribute to a food garden at a maternal unit in one of Zimbabwe's hospitals. Students learn about the Chaya plant and how it is essential to nutrition, culture & business in Zimbabwe.
- "Quality Education" - explore inequities in rural Zimbabwean education. Help build classrooms in the rural school to help battle inequities.
- "Partnership for the Goals" - Learn about Love for Africa's travel mission and social responsibility project. Explore the impact of Western travel to Zimbabwe and improving reciprocity.

**Cost:** The anticipated inclusive cost of this experience is approximately \$5,500 per student. This price includes all transportation, accommodations, 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 fundraising plan attached below.

**Transportation:** All students and chaperones will travel as a group from Minneapolis to O.R. Tambo International in Johannesburg, South Africa. Internal travel includes flights to and from South Africa and buses within Zimbabwe. The group will return via a major U.S. international airline or partner.

**Accommodations:** Students and chaperones will be housed in hotel rooms throughout the stay.

**Supervision:** Staff members traveling with the group are Lindsey Smaka, EHS Global Scholar Coordinator, and Assistant Superintendent Randy Smasal.

**Recommendation:** Review the international travel experience for discussion. 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. [Love for Africa Tour Itinerary](#)
3. [Fundraising Plan](#)