Shandong Region

Where California, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts and Utah meets Tai’an, Qufu and Beijing
Sights from Tai’an
Sites from Qufu
“Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.”
EDUCATION
The hopes, dreams, and future of China’s wonderful children exists within the four walls of the classroom.
Education takes many forms. Students learn more than just math and science.
The Chinese students proved that kids are kids, regardless of the language and cultural differences.
The symbolism in this mural was representative of the rebirth of Chinese education.
A variety of arts opportunities were offered at each school, in addition to academics and were an option K-12, not just in elementary school. Some schools had artists teaching!
Music
Most teachers had incorporated technology into daily instruction through multimedia presentations. Some courses were recorded so that students could re-watch them.
These images represent a few of the many takeaways I have from our travels to the Shandong Province. The cooperation between our two countries is a wonderful symbol. In classrooms we saw the Chinese educators implementing what we in America would call "just good teaching" practices. Students taught students; the teacher was the facilitator; students worked cooperatively to solve problems and ensure group understanding. Many students participated actively in the classrooms where there were 40-60 students. The respect for the teacher by the students was amazing to observe. There are many lessons to learn from each other. — Peter Cohen
This is a specially designed classroom that gives the opportunity for teachers to observe and to present lessons for the purpose of improving teaching methods. The technology of the room (cameras, microphones, etc.) allows for remote viewing of the classroom. The room also has two way mirrors allowing direct observation without disrupting the classroom. The emphasis on collaboration and improvement on teaching methods is promising, focusing on the time and effort of teachers to improve instruction for students.
Observing students being taught values central to their culture resonated with me as we do not deliberately do this in our schools. The value placed on ensuring students develop an understanding of their rich heritage can only serve to strengthen their unity.

Kim O’Donnell, Maine
What student doesn’t love to devour a good book?
Gary Thomas
Students asked a variety of questions. One question asked of me was, “How can we be happy like you are?” I thought about that question for the remainder of the trip.

Leanne Condon, Maine
Teachers in China have 2-3 times more available for preparation than teachers in the U.S. That preparation time allows for planned instruction, integration of technology, and additional time for students to request extra assistance from their teachers.
This experience has built a better understanding of the cultural background our guest teachers bring to our classrooms.

Mary Anderson – Canyons School District - Utah
I enjoyed seeing that they begin teaching all students gross motor skills from a young age to help develop the left and right side of the brain. I feel this helps students learn and develop stronger reading skills. Lynda Tierney, Granite District, Utah
The National Movement Curriculum is clearly solid and in place at all levels. It was amazing to see an entire school of students organized and moving, with no one sitting on the sidelines and choosing not to participate, as we might see here in the US.

Movement & Learning
Students are actively engaged academically because they see a direct link between education and their goal of participating in the American dream - and language is the essential tool to their success.
Christine Morrone
The highlight of the trip was having the opportunity to speak with a class of 59 ninth graders for 45 minutes. The students wrote a lovely letter and asked engaging questions regarding educational similarities and differences between the United States and China. I was so impressed with the respectful behavior by the students to their peers and teachers. There was a genuine sense of compassion and warmth throughout the class. I had an incredible trip and wonderful experience with the students.

Thank you. Lisa Sherman-Colt
CULTURE
I am impressed with how the Chinese maintain culture, tradition and values through the practice of calligraphy--John Anderson
Walking through the temple, as an educator, was a powerful reminder of the impact a teacher has on both students and the larger society. The richness of history and impact Confucius had on society was palpable and present in the classrooms and sites visited. It was humbling to experience the temple.
Confucianism promotes the inherent goodness of mankind, the necessity for correct behavior, and the way to achieve happiness in daily life. As the founding father of education in China, we learned his teaching shared an inherent simplicity much like the water that flows through his temple.
We were fortunate to have seen first hand a wide variety of food offerings during our short time in Qufu City. It was amazing to see the street vendors placed around the streets of the business district, working hard to sell local delicacies.
Words alone cannot express the amazing culture and history of China. It is a country full of traditions and historical culture that are still alive today. From students learning the arts, writing and history of their ancestors.

To experience it first hand is a memory that will last a lifetime and one could only look back on an experience like this with amazement. From the people, schools, historical landmarks to the food, and culture - all of it is amazing.

Lynda Tierney, Granite District, Utah
Another impressive aspect of schools in China was the efforts in some schools to beautify their campuses. I loved the fountains at the Normal High School in Beijing.
“My future will not be a fantasy” (Hanban, 2015)
Mount Tai, Tai’an
RELATIONSHIPS
We were all so impressed with our Chinese “Hosts”. What great examples of success in education.
“Care for the life of each student to make them happy and healthy every day.” This quote, which I saw posted in a Tia’an school, is indicative of the sentiments we saw both displayed and modeled in each of the Shandong schools we visited. The most rewarding part of the experience was the opportunity to interact with students. It is my hope that the relationships initiated on this trip will provide opportunities for the students of Cache County School District to build true friendships and lasting connections. Shauna Winegar
Whether it be with amazing students or our friends we made on the street, we will cherish the relationships we have created from our wonderful experience.
Relationships gained from this trip are most valuable - from signing contracts to become partners and friends with schools in China, to students we have met and can continue to communicate with in the future, to the new educator friends we have made on this adventure. With modern technology, new relationships that were formed and easily continue. Lynda Tierney, Granite District, Utah
Forging New Partnerships
Both Shandong China Principals and USA Principals were excited to create partnerships with schools in the USA. I saw a sense of excitement and passion with all the Principals we met as they are trying hard to create a culture of friendship and peace – with a mindset of ingenuity and creativity to be taught. I hope that the relationships formed on this trip will provide future opportunities for our students in Granite School District. Today is a wonderful day. Let’s make tomorrow even better!

William “Charlie” Peterson
This trip represented the development of friendships, the sharing of ideas and the transition from “old” to “new.” Education is the mechanism for bridging differences and promoting excellence. Darin Nielsen, Box Elder
The End