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Los Nietos Hosts Chinese Educators during International Exchange of Educational Techniques

Whittier, CA – Scribbling copious notes and asking questions at every stop, 20 educators from Chengdu, China toured Aeolian Elementary School on Jan. 23 during an international exchange that allowed Los Nietos School District educators to explore fresh curriculum.

The visitors arrived as a part of an international relationship the District established in 2014 that has led to an annual trip to China by Los Nietos staff members and a return trip by staff from the capital of China's Sichuan province.

The Chinese educators visited several classrooms to observe techniques and management, and also provided a math lesson to a fourth-grade class. The visit concluded at the Los Nietos District Office where the group from China reviewed the day's events with Superintendent Jonathan Vasquez and other staff members.

"We were honored to welcome our international colleagues and share practices that will help us all better inspire our students," Aeolian Principal Becky Speh said. "The visits infuse our staff with ideas and help us to provide our children with the best possible learning environment."

The 20 visiting educators came from four elementary schools in two districts in China where enrollment can range from 1,000 to 3,000 students per school. Of particular interest to the group was how Los Nietos serves special needs students. In China, special needs students often attend separate campuses.

Split into two groups of 10, with one translator for each group, the educators inquired about student seating arrangements, lesson plans and rewards programs that propel achievement. The math lesson taught to Aeolian students involved geometry.

"It's a very advanced lesson and gives the students here an idea of some of the things we teach," said Jim Miller Zhuang, the director of the International Education Program that organizes visits to U.S. schools. "It's very valuable for us to be able to share techniques, but also learn from the style of American educators and take things back to use in our schools."

Aeolian teacher Rick Gallardo visited Chengdu, China in August 2014, paving the way for the international relationship. Educators from China have visited Los Nietos every year since, often bringing administrators, parents and sometimes students. Aeolian Principal Becky Speh will travel to China along with Gallardo and teacher Christina Fontenot during spring break in March.

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They will visit school campuses, lead professional development about western education and exchange ideas with fellow educators.

“Our relationship abroad has helped us explore educational approaches that can help us grow as a District,” Superintendent Vasquez said. “As a community, we should always be striving for growth and improvement while remaining open to learning new ways to empower our children.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

020317_LOSNIETOS_CHINESEEDUCATORS: A group of educators from Chengdu, China gather during their tour of Aeolian Elementary School on Jan. 23. A group from China visits the District annually to exchange educational practices.

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