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A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE

JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION UPDATE #9: JF INVITATIONAL GROUP TOUR REPORT

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THE JAPAN FOUNDATION INVITATIONAL GROUP-TOUR PROGRAM FOR U.S. EDUCATORS 2014

June 27 - July 5, 2014

Last month, the Japan Foundation invited 14 American education administrators to Japan for a nine day tour of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka in the hopes that tour participants bring back a strong affinity for the country. Candidates for the tour were selected from schools and districts which have recently started, or plan to start, a Japanese language program. By taking these administrators on a fun and educational tour of Japan, the Japan Foundation hopes to establish administrative support for these fledgling programs from the very beginning.

The 14 tour participants are principals and world language program supervisors from all over the States.



They had never met each other before the 1-day pre-departure orientation in Los Angeles, and almost none of them had ever been to Japan. Several had never even been abroad. Thanks to this program, they established friendships and solidarity among themselves as well as a more global perspective on education.

During the tour, the group sat down with staff from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for a briefing about public schools in Japan and a detailed question and answer session which covered topics like curriculum design and students with disabilities. At the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, they discussed the strong economic relationship and friendship between Japan and the States.

Participants visited Senboku Municipal High School in Sakai City and met the energetic principal, Mr. Kuwahara, who graciously gave everyone a tour of the buildings where participants observed chemistry, math, and English classes. They also got the chance to sit down with several teachers to discuss teacher training and evaluation, entrance exams, and discipline in Japan.

A highlight of the trip was the visit to Osaka Municipal Tarui Elementary School where participants were treated to a lesson on Japanese traditional games like *kendama* and *ayatori*. In return, participants each gave a short show-and-tell presentation to the fourth-graders about their own schools in America.

Throughout the trip, participants spoke warmly about the friendliness and generosity of the Japanese people they met. The relationships between teachers and students also impressed them, along with the fact that elementary school students are given the responsibility of cleaning the school and serving school lunches.

Overall, the tour was a big success! Through this program, the administrators developed an awareness of the value of teaching Japanese in American schools. One participant wrote, "This went far beyond my expectations. I really am so thankful for being selected for this opportunity and I will now be able to accelerate the kinds of support and resources that can expand Japanese language culture across my school community."

The Japan Foundation is looking forward to continued collaboration with them to promote Japanese language education throughout the United States.



This month's Advocacy Tip: Have you considered starting an AP Japanese course at your school? Taking the AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam motivates students to study hard in order to get college credit. Find out how you can start an AP Japanese course at AP Central's [AP Japanese Language and Culture Exam Home Page](#). Don't forget to join the Community for teachers!

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