



For Immediate Release

International Students Select Urbandale High School For Enriching Cultural Experience

The Urbandale High School International and Foreign Exchange Student Programs celebrate their welcoming and enriching atmosphere; deemed the school of choice for many international students

URBANDALE, Iowa – December 2, 2013 – The Urbandale High School International and Foreign Exchange Student Programs are sought after by many international students due to their reputation for providing a welcoming and enriching cultural experience. When international students look to study in America they apply to three schools, and more often than not, Urbandale High School is the number one school of choice. Urbandale believes that students with the capacity for accepting, learning and mastering new cultures will be better suited for competing in an increasingly competitive global workforce. Thus, enrolling students from a multitude of nations is a true benefit for the entire student body.

There are currently four foreign exchange students and ten international students enrolled at Urbandale High School. Urbandale families play a pivotal role in hosting these students. Being a host family is an incredibly rewarding experience for both the international student and host family. Often times, bonds formed during the hosting period extend to lifelong relationships. Numerous host families have shared how much they have enjoyed and learned from hosting their international student and what an inspiring experience it was for their younger children as well.

“My host family has been so welcoming and supportive of me—I feel like part of the family,” said Leticia Muniz, Urbandale High School international student from Brazil. “I’ve really enjoyed my experience at UHS and am thankful for my American friends and teachers who mean so much to me. The only thing I’d change is to make the semester last longer!”



1. Leticia Muniz, Urbandale High School international student from Brazil

Muniz believes that Urbandale High School does more to encourage students to think of the possibilities, pursue their dreams and embrace bright futures, than most high schools do in Brazil. She is also impressed with Urbandale’s holistic support of students with intellectual disabilities and all the opportunities to explore and improve oneself by pursuing a wide variety of activities in addition to academics.

“We attribute the increase in international student enrollment to our open and accepting atmosphere, our dedication to building a common understanding across all cultures and our unwavering belief in the value of expanding one’s perceptions,” said Brenda Auxier-Mailey, Director of Student Services, Urbandale Community School District. “The world is changing—we’re much more connected than we were 20 years ago. International and foreign exchange students help Urbandale High School students create personal connections with students/cultures from around the world.”

Two areas Muniz would like American schools to take note of from Brazil are how the school day is structured and the benefits of standard uniforms. In Brazil, students stay in one classroom with the same students throughout the day and it’s the teachers that move from room to room. She believes this helps build stronger connections and friendships, and makes it easier for new or incoming students to fit in. School uniforms are fairly standard in Brazil and she believes it helps all students be on equal ground and decreases bullying.

Receiving such positive feedback from former and current international students is a great source of pride in the [Urbandale Community School District](#). By cultivating a welcoming and accepting atmosphere for students with diverse backgrounds, the district’s vision of teaching all and reaching all is more fully realized.

About Urbandale Community School District

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The district serves over 3,900 students in six elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale district supports an increasingly diverse student population where 50 languages are spoken. Building on the existing foundation of excellence in education, Urbandale is transforming education throughout the district. By implementing innovative [Quality/Continual Improvement](#) strategies that create learning environments that more fully engage, challenge and motivate students, Urbandale is taking transformation from theory into practice. Urbandale prepares students for becoming lifelong learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: www.urbandaleschools.com

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