

Chinese teachers come to Oakland County to teach language **WITH VIDEO**

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Three Oxford district students stole much of the attention at an Oakland University news conference Monday when they spoke to the audience using the Chinese language they've learned at school.




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The news conference was called to announce a new partnership

between OU School of Education and Human Resources, Oxford School District and the Beijing Consulting Co. The partnership will increase the number of Oakland County students who will have the opportunity to learn the language spoken by Gavin Shampine, a fifth grader; Jessica Duronio, Oxford Middle School; and Rachel Baker, Oxford High


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Beginning in the fall, college students from China, who want to be teachers, will come to the United States to study at Oakland University. And as part of their educational program, they will do their student teaching in classrooms at all 28 Oakland County public school districts.

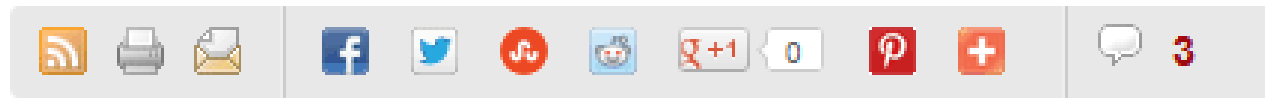
"We are very excited that this is starting," said Nancy Mclamed Brown, associate dean of OU's School of Education and Human Services (SEHS), who has led the effort at OU to bring the partnership together.

"This is such a great opportunity for (OU) students and children in this area," Brown said. "They are going to make the world smaller," said Brown. She said the students from China will not only do student teaching with younger children but will be working with traditional OU students as they complete their teaching degrees.

This means both Chinese and U.S. students will learn about each other's cultures and will likely become lifelong friends by the time they graduate to begin teaching jobs, she said.

Louis Gallien, dean of the SEHS, said OU has had a program with a province in China for 25 years and one of its first students from China is now a professor at OU.

Oxford school district, which requires students to take Chinese language every year in school, has the largest Chinese language program in Oakland County. **Continued...**



Oxford has partnerships with several schools in China, whose students pay tuition to the district, plus a boarding school in Oxford for students from China who come here for part of their study program.

Oxford Middle School Chinese teacher Zhijun Zhang was recruited two years ago by Xuyang Yao, CEO of the Beijing Consulting Co. to teach Chinese at Oxford schools. Zhang said he was proud of his students who spoke at the conference. He is one of about 100 teachers brought to the United States from China by Yao, most of them to Michigan.

Yao said Beijing Consulting is based in Lansing now, but is relocating to Oxford as it begins this new partnership.

Oxford Superintendent William Skilling said he decided to incorporate Chinese into the district instead of another language because of Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson's vision and after he made a visit to China himself.

A movement to initiate a Mandarin Chinese program in every district was inspired by Patterson in 2007, after he made a trade visit to China.

Patterson, who spoke at the press conference, said more people in China speak English than people in the United States speak English. He also said that China's economy is growing so fast that it will exceed that of the United States by 2016. He said Oakland County has 33 businesses from China; 28 percent of those in Michigan. That means students need to learn the language and culture to do business after they graduate.

"Like any other proud father, I am delighted," with the new partnership between OU, Beijing Consulting and Oxford schools," Patterson said.

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