



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito
Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per l'Emilia-Romagna

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

BETWEEN

OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (OCDSB) (the “Canadian Partner”)

(Tax ID/Federal Business Number 119 249 233 RT0001), with registered office at 133 Greenbank Road - Ottawa, ON K2H 6L3 (hereinafter referred to as "OCDSB"), represented by Dr. Pino Buffone, Director of Education

AND

The Regional School Office for Emilia-Romagna (the “Italian Partner”)

(Fiscal Code 800 62970373), with registered office at Via de' Castagnoli 1, Bologna (hereinafter referred to as "USR"), represented by Dr. Bruno E. Di Palma, Director General

Regarding: Italy-Canada Youth Exchange Program

- Objectives:** The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to establish a framework for the Italy-Canada Youth Exchange Program, aimed at promoting global awareness, critical thinking, creativity and innovation, intercultural competences, particularly regarding the cultural identities of each nation, among students from selected secondary schools in Italy and Canada.
- Participants:** The Italian partner [Host School] will select a group of students in their third and fourth year of upper secondary school through a selection process to be determined by mutual agreement of the parties. The Canadian partner will select an equal number of 10th and 11th-grade students from high schools supported through the Ottawa-Carleton Education Network (OCENET). The exact number of students will be determined from year to year as agreed between the two partners. For the first year, a pilot project will involve a group of up to 10 students from an upper secondary school directly chosen by the Italian Partner [Host School] and a secondary site chosen by the Canadian Partner [Host School].
- Selection Criteria:** Participating students will be selected based on various factors, including but not limited to; language proficiency in English and/or French, academic performance, commitment to international experience, engagement, cultural awareness and understanding.
- Duration:** The exchange program will last two weeks (Fall for OCDSB in Italy and Spring for Emilia-Romagna in Canada) during which participants will be involved in various activities, including workshops, seminars, cultural outings, and collaborative projects.
- Themes:** The main focus of the exchange program will be on global awareness, critical thinking, creativity and innovation, intercultural competences and cultural understandings between the two countries. Participants will explore these themes through discussions, presentations, and experiential learning opportunities and activities.



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6. **Activities:** The list of possible activities, events, initiatives, and projects includes:

- a. **Global Competencies Workshops:** Both Italian and Canadian students will participate in workshops focused on cultural understandings, cultural diversity, and social responsibility. The workshops will encourage dialogue, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving.
- b. **Community Engagement Projects:** Participants will be involved in practical projects aimed at raising awareness and promoting action to preserve and promote cultural understandings within local communities.
- c. **Cultural Exchanges:** To foster intercultural understanding and appreciation, students will have the opportunity to participate in cultural opportunities, visits to historical sites, museums, local events, and cultural performances. These activities will provide insight into the rich cultural heritage of both Bologna and Ottawa, the host cities, promoting mutual respect and appreciation.
- d. **Virtual Collaborations:** In addition to in-person activities, students will have the opportunity to collaborate virtually on projects with peers from partner schools in Bologna and Ottawa. Through online platforms, students will exchange ideas, share experiences, and work together on joint initiatives related to global awareness and cultural understandings.
- e. **Reflection and Discussion Sessions:** Throughout the exchange program, participants will engage in structured reflection and discussion sessions to provide an overall account of their experience, share ideas, and reflect on how to apply what they have learned to create a positive impact in educational and social communities. These sessions will be coordinated by project leaders and will encourage self-reflection, empathy, and active citizenship.
- f. **Guest Speakers and Experts:** To enrich the learning experience, the program may include guest speakers and meetings with local experts who will share their knowledge and perspectives on various topics. These sessions will provide valuable insights to students to further enhance their cultural understanding.
- g. **Final Event:** The exchange program may conclude with a final event where participants will present their projects, share their experiences, and celebrate their achievements. This event will offer students an opportunity to reflect on their journey, communicate with peers, and inspire them to contribute through global awareness to a more just and equitable world.

7. **Cultural Visits:** Visits in Bologna and Ottawa may include:

- a. **Exploring National Capital Region:** During their stay in Ottawa, students will have the opportunity to explore the rich cultural and historical heritage of Canada's capital, the National Capital Region and surrounding regions. This will include critical learning about Indigenous traditions, histories and teachings. Guided visits may include historical landmarks and monuments, such as; Parliament Hill, the Rideau Canal, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Canadian Museum of History. These visits will provide students with insights into Canadian history, politics, and culture and society.



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- b. **Exploring Emilia-Romagna:** During their stay in Emilia-Romagna, students will explore the rich cultural and historical heritage of the region. Several cities feature monuments included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Guided visits will include historical sites in various cities (e.g., Bologna with its porticoes, Ravenna with its mosaics, Ferrara with its Renaissance heritage, Modena with its Cathedral, etc.), as well as opportunities to savor local cuisine and experience traditional Italian hospitality.

8. **Recreational Activities:** Outside of school hours and cultural visits, students will have the opportunity to participate in cultural events and recreational activities organized by host families and/or local organizations. These activities may include culinary arts opportunities, sports tournaments, art and outdoor excursions, giving students opportunities to build relationships with peers, develop language skills, and experience daily life in the National Capital and Emilia-Romagna regions.

By incorporating these elements into the exchange program, students will not only broaden their cultural competencies and deepen their understanding of global issues while also form lasting friendships and create lifelong memories.

9. Responsibilities:

a. The Italian partner [Host School] will be responsible for organizing students' accommodation, local transportation, and cost of activities and excursions developed by the school for the visiting Canadian students and staff during their stay in Italy. Accommodation will be provided with host families selected by the school. The Canadian partner [Host School], through the OCENET, will make similar arrangements for Italian students and staff during their visit to Canada.

b. The Italian Partner [Host School] and the Canadian Partner agree to ensure that all exchange participants have appropriate insurance coverage. This coverage may be provided by the schools or arranged individually by each participant.

c. Additional agreements between the participating schools will outline the specific details of how the exchanges will be implemented, including insurance requirements. Neither the Regional School Office (USR) nor the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) will be responsible for arranging or overseeing insurance coverage, nor for the terms of any additional agreements between the schools.

d. Both parties will collaborate to develop an itinerary that includes educational, cultural, and recreational activities related to the program's objectives. Both partners will ensure that the process for selecting students and host families, in both regions, complies with the policies and procedures of their respective school districts.

10. **Evaluation:** At the end of the program, participants (students and staff) will be required to provide feedback and participate in evaluation sessions to assess the effectiveness of the program and identify areas for improvement.



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CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

This MOU can only be modified by means of a written amendment that is signed by all parties.

The signing of this MOU implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated herein.

Signed on the 18th day of December, 2024.

The Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)

Dr. Pino Buffone, Director of Education

AND

The Regional School Office for Emilia-Romagna

Dottor Bruno E. Di Palma