



Placing Minnesota Students in Travel Abroad Programs

Fiscal Year 2017

Report to the Legislature

As required by Minnesota Statutes,

5A.03 subdivision 2

COMMISSIONER:

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Cost of Report Preparation

The total cost for the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to prepare this report was approximately \$198.00. Most of these costs involved staff time in analyzing data from surveys and preparing the written report. Incidental costs include paper, copying and other office supplies.

Estimated costs are provided in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2015, section 3.197, which requires that at the beginning of a report to the Legislature, the cost of preparing the report must be provided.

Legislative Charge

Subd. 2. Placing Minnesota students in travel abroad programs.

(a) A school district or charter school with enrolled students who participate in a foreign exchange or study or other travel abroad program under a written agreement between the district or charter school and the program provider must use a form developed by MDE to annually report to the department by November 1 the following data from the previous school year:

(1) the number of Minnesota student deaths that occurred while Minnesota students were participating in the foreign exchange or study or other travel abroad program and that resulted from Minnesota students participating in the program;

(2) the number of Minnesota students hospitalized due to accidents and the illnesses that occurred while Minnesota students were participating in the foreign exchange or study or other travel abroad program and that resulted from Minnesota students participating in the program; and

(3) the name and type of the foreign exchange or study or other travel abroad program and the city or region where the reported death, hospitalization due to accident, or the illness occurred.

(b) School districts and charter schools must ask but must not require enrolled eligible students and the parents or guardians of other enrolled students who complete a foreign exchange or study or other travel abroad program to disclose the information under paragraph (a).

(c) When reporting the data under paragraph (a), a school district or charter school may supplement the data with a brief explanatory statement.

MDE annually must aggregate and publish the reported data on [the department website](#) in a format that facilitates public access to the aggregated data and include links to both the United States Department of State's Consular Information Program that informs the public of conditions abroad that may affect students' safety and security and the publicly available reports on sexual assaults and other criminal acts affecting students participating in a foreign exchange or study or other travel abroad program.

Introduction

Minnesota Statutes, § 5A.03 subd. 2 requires all providers of travel abroad programs to register with Minnesota Secretary of State. Registered travel abroad program providers must report to districts and charters incidents that result in student deaths or illnesses requiring hospitalization and the cities in which the death or hospitalization occurred. Districts and charters must submit the reported information to MDE by November 1.

Minnesota Statutes, § 5A.03 subd. 2 requires [MDE](#) to publish links to the [United States Department of State's Consular Information Program](#) informing the public of conditions abroad that may affect students' safety and security and the publicly available reports on sexual assaults and other criminal acts affecting study abroad program participants during program participation.

Conclusion

Reported travel abroad incidents

Districts and charters reported no incidents of student illnesses requiring hospitalization or deaths during the 2015-2016 school year.

Areas not deemed safe for travel

CIA World Fact Book provides information about country profiles. The background section of the World Factbook country profiles describes a country's historical U.S. relations and any recent military conflicts, which may inform a district or charter's decision to travel to that country.

[Office of Higher Education Study Abroad Health and Safety Report](#) provides information on study abroad data on death and hospitalization incidents from the previous academic year.

[Students Abroad, a U.S. Department of State consular affairs website](#), provides comprehensive information on specific destinations by country.

[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#) produces and disseminates accurate statistics on drugs, crime and criminal justice at the international level. The information can be searched by type of crime, region and country.

[U.S. Department of State](#) issues two types of information related to traveler safety. Travel warnings are issued when the department of state wants travelers to consider very carefully whether they should go to a country at all. Travel alerts are issued for short-term events the department of state thinks travelers should know about when planning travel to a country.

Alerts and Warnings are issued daily and are accessible from the [U.S. Department of State and Consular Offices U.S. Passports and International Travel website](#).

Sexual Assault and other criminal acts data

Data on sexual assaults and other criminal acts affecting students participating in a foreign exchange or study or other travel abroad program are available only for participants in higher education study and travel abroad programs. [Minnesota Office of Higher Education](#) provides data on incidents reported by Minnesota colleges and universities. The data do not include location in keeping with data privacy laws.

Nationwide, similar data for secondary travel abroad programs is not available in any centralized location.

Student safety

General safety information offered for students in higher education is also relevant for students in secondary programs.

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) provides valuable information for travelers on its website.

[University of Minnesota's Learning Abroad Center](#) offers multiple resources including health and safety information.

[University of California Los Angeles \(UCLA\) StudentAbroad.com](#) offers basic health and safety information including top ten health and safety issues for students in study abroad programs.

Bibliography

[Minnesota Office of Higher Education Study Abroad Health and Safety Resources for Students and Parents](#)

[Students Abroad, U.S. Department of State Website](#)

[Study Abroad Health and Safety Report of the Office of Higher Education](#)

[U.S. Department of State and Consular Offices: Passports and International Travel, Alerts and Warnings](#)