

Grade 8 Washington DC Trip Proposal

Background: In June of 2012, Chenery Middle School piloted a 5-day Grade 8 trip to Washington, D.C. 247 students travelled with 21 faculty and staff along with one school administrator and a school nurse. The trip, conceived and organized by a team of dedicated CMS teachers, allowed students to gain valuable firsthand experience while visiting sites integral to the 8th grade US History and ELA curricula: US Capital, Ford's Theater, the Holocaust Museum, Mount Vernon, and the battlefields of Antietam and Gettysburg. The response from parents and students was overwhelmingly positive. According to an online survey conducted after the trip, 96.5% of parents and 98.8% of students reported that the trip met or exceeded expectations.

Proposal: To create an annual, Grade 8 overnight trip to Washington, D.C.

Participants: As a school-sponsored event, the trip is open to all grade 8 students and all are encouraged to participate.

Staffing: The number of chaperones required is dependent on the number of students participating while maintaining a 12:1 student to chaperone ratio. Assuming at least an 85% student participation rate, this would mean a minimum of 22 chaperones based on current student roster data. It is a core belief that this trip is best served by utilizing CMS faculty and staff to chaperone this trip. In addition to chaperones, the trip requires the on-site presence of the upper school assistant principal as well as a school nurse.

Travel Company: After a year-long search, it was determined that World Strides Education Travel provides the appropriate level of trip support for Chenery. The company, based in Charlottesville, VA, provided our students with tremendous logistical support as well as on-site and on-call safety support. In addition, World Strides was able to provide CMS with the lowest overall trip cost.

Travel: Students will travel to and from CMS as well as to and from D.C. locations and sites on coach buses hired through World Strides.

Itinerary: While there are some whole-trip events on the first and last day of the trip, the majority of the trip sees students divided into three large groups. These three teams then rotate through three days of touring and learning. One day is focused on Mount Vernon and the sites of Northern Virginia, another is focused on the U.S. Capitol, the Holocaust Museum and the Smithsonian, while the last day is a trip to the battlefields of Antietam and Gettysburg.

Projected Costs: Estimated cost of the 5-day trip for 2013 is \$837. This price includes transportation, hotel, meals, entrance fees, and World Strides course leaders.

Fundraising: It is a core belief that this trip is a Chenery Middle School event that is open to all students, regardless of their financial circumstances. As such, it is our hope that all students who are interested in attending are able to. World Strides does offer some financial assistance to families. However, these monies are limited and are offered to families on a first-come, first-served basis.

In order to offer enough financial assistance to families for the 2012 trip, more than \$10,000 was raised through a combination of the support of individual contributions, significant PTO support, and a

generous grant from FBE. For us to continue this trip with our underlying core beliefs, we will need to continue to target between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year in fundraising. It is our belief that the following sources of funding will continue to be available to us to reach this goal (estimated totals in parentheses):

- PTO (\$3,000)
- Student Fundraisers (e.g., talent show, Student Council support) (\$5,000)
- Individual Contributions (\$2,000)

Prior to distributing any financial assistance, however, we require guidance from the school committee as to the criteria for providing assistance to our families. It is our hope that these criteria are in line with the district's tiered support for families meeting eligibility in other fee areas and that these criteria become our practice at the building level.