

To: Media
From: David Barnes, Director of Communications
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Re: **Central MS - Biddick forming global partnership**

Kokomo-Center Schools officials confirmed today a partnership with their first international sister school. This agreement is part of the corporation's goal of creating international partnerships with students around the world. The International School at Central Middle School will begin a formal partnership with the Biddick Sports College near Newcastle, England for the 2012-2013 school year.

Primary goals within Kokomo-Center's International School program are developing international mindedness and global awareness. Superintendent Jeff Hauswald explained that students learn a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures when provided with the opportunity to experience and celebrate these differences in person.

"Studying abroad allows students an opportunity to learn from another culture while living within core educational concepts that are an integral part of that school's goals and mission," Superintendent Hauswald added.

Central Middle School Principal Mike Sargent is excited about the opportunity for the students.

"The student exchange with Biddick Sports College in England will provide students with a life-changing experience," Mr. Sargent noted. "While studying abroad, some of our students will have a cultural immersion opportunity; but more importantly, all students in the International School will have the opportunity to learn from Biddick students when they spend three weeks in Kokomo."

Superintendent Hauswald believes this is a wonderful opportunity for Kokomo-Center students.

“I know our staff has been working diligently to meet the growing demands and interests of our students and parents,” Mr. Hauswald explained. “This unique opportunity strengthens our international education programs at Kokomo-Center Schools.”

The Biddick Sports College is a Years 7-11 school near Newcastle, England. The Biddick students would be in grades 6-10 in the United States educational system. Biddick is located in an industrial community of approximately 60,000 people and the school has achieved multiple recognitions for its core academic achievements, as well as its fundamental balanced approach to education, according to Mr. Hauswald.

A team of Kokomo-Center educational leaders recently visited the English school for three days and met with school leaders at Biddick Sports College as part of the authorization process to form this partnership. Kokomo-Center school personnel met with students and teachers, visited classrooms, and gathered with school leaders, including the Biddick Board of Governors.

Mr. Hauswald noted that the purpose for the visit to Biddick was to ensure that the English school met the standards for a partnership, while confirming that Kokomo-Center students would be safe while attending the partner school in England.

Board of School Trustees President Marsha Bowling was a member of the Kokomo-Center contingent. Mrs. Bowling reported to her fellow board members that the Biddick school exceeded her expectations and she would have no reservations about encouraging our students to take advantage of this study-abroad opportunity.

“The school, as well as the community, were safe and friendly, while Biddick was focused on education,” Mrs. Bowling said. “It was amazing how much we have in common even though we are thousands of miles apart. I am very excited that our community will be able to welcome Biddick students to Central Middle School, while some of our students will be able to visit Biddick beginning next school year.”

Superintendent Hauswald noted that program details are being finalized and a team of leaders from Biddick Sports College plans to visit Kokomo near the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. In the meantime, school leaders from both schools are continuing ongoing dialogue to plan this partnership.

Mr. Hauswald anticipates that students from England will be attending Central Middle School for approximately two to three weeks in March 2013. Students from Central Middle School will be invited to apply to attend classes at Biddick Sports College in June 2013 as part of the overseas study abroad program.

Ms. Julie Canady, a teacher at Central Middle School, also visited Biddick as part of the authorization team and already has begun planning for this unique educational opportunity.

“Not many other corporations have created such an exciting opportunity for their students,” Ms. Canady said. “This exchange will benefit all Central students as they learn from the English students attending Central Middle School in the spring. Attending classes and learning at an overseas school is the chance of a lifetime. These are the type of opportunities I only dreamed of as a student. This experience will positively impact their lives for years to come.”

Additional information on the Biddick school opportunity will be made available to Central Middle School students and parents.

“Several parent meetings to discuss studying abroad will be scheduled,” Mr. Sargent explained. “We believe this opportunity will first be offered to next year’s seventh graders, who are attending the International School, because of how closely this program aligns with the goals of our new International Baccalaureate-candidate school.”

Additional information on Kokomo-Center’s first sister school, pictures of Biddick Sports College, as well as of the community, and an interest application to study abroad as part of the 2012-2013 school year can be found at www.kokomoschools.com. Although limited spaces remain, all parents interested in applying for the International School at Central Middle

School, and those wanting more details on the study abroad program may contact Mr. Sargent, Principal at Central Middle School, at 765-454-7000 or at msargent@kokomoschools.com or Mrs. Lori Magnuson, International School Coordinator, at lmagnuson@kokomoschools.com.