

Newtown Public Schools Press Release: December 2010

Newtown High School's Global China Initiative **Selected as a National School Model:**

Hanban-Asia Society Confucius Classrooms Network

Newtown High School's *China Initiative* has been selected as a national model school program by the Hanban-Asia Society-Confucius Classrooms Network. The Newtown program is one of forty schools selected across the country that is recognized by the Network. In only its third year, the program has established a cultural-language program for the high school that highlights Mandarin and a student ambassador preparatory program. The program has recently implemented a sister school partnership that now stretch grades 5 through 12. Last year, Newtown sent one of the country's largest education delegations to visit China and will send twelve high school student ambassadors to study in Liaocheng, China in April 2010. This highly anticipated trip will also solidify a new partnership for The Reed Intermediate and Newtown Middle Schools when educator representatives will travel abroad.

Asia Society, one of the world's most prominent Asian/ Pan-Asian organizations has been identifying, through a competitive program, model sites for the teaching and learning of Chinese in the United States. These model schools selected not only have effective Chinese language instruction, but also demonstrate strong local leadership and support, a demonstrated commitment to international exchange and collaboration, and are ready to act as resource centers for other schools in the region. Each selected model school is linked with a network of international schools throughout the world to enhance opportunities for language learning and to provide students, teachers, and administrators with opportunities to conduct exchanges and joint projects. Asia Society is responsible for the selection process of the top 100 U.S. model programs, assisting them in creating international linkages with global programs, convene annual meetings in conjunction with the National Chinese Language Conference, provide support through e-newsletters and professional development seminars, and collect data to assess the progress of school programs. Newtown has now joined this network becoming part of the first 40 programs.

The Newtown China Initiative now becomes connected to the infrastructure of Asia Society's Confucius Classrooms Network that develops effective and sustainable Chinese language programs for American students. As part of this network, Program Coordinator Jason Hiruo and the team of educators committed to the China Initiative will become part of an international community, targeting professional development for Newtown teachers on a global scale, and will attend the annual Confucius Classrooms Network conferences to share and gather program information. The network will expect model schools such as Newtown to continue to implement an innovative project aimed at enhancing and expanding its Chinese language and cultural program, and develop an ongoing partnership with schools in China.

Asia Society acknowledges that the model schools network not only recognizes schools of excellence in Chinese language teaching, it is also the beginning of an ongoing field-building process to establish high-quality, sustainable Chinese language programs in all regions of the United States. Newtown becomes a part of a project that is an important step in strengthening Americans' understanding of China and in building bridges between young Chinese and American students.

Newtown Selected by the *Confucius Classrooms Initiative*

Expert Advisory Committee:

- Marty Abbott**, Director of Education, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Washington, DC
- Lois Adams-Rodgers**, Deputy Executive Director, Council of Chief State School Officers, Wash DC
- Rosa Aronson**, Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Washington, DC
- Anne Bryant**, Executive Director, National School Boards Association, Washington, DC
- Selena Cantor**, Director, Chinese Language and Culture Initiatives, College Board, New York
- Cen Jianjun**, Head Counselor, Education Office of the Chinese Consulate General in New York
- Chen Qun**, Vice President, East China Normal University, Shanghai
- Chen Yulu**, Vice President, Renmin University, Beijing
- Robert Davis**, Manager, World Languages and International Studies, Chicago Public Schools, Illinois; Director, Confucius Institute in Chicago
- Matthew Friedrich**, Project Manager, North Carolina Center for International Understanding
- Jennifer Gibson**, Representative, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
- Daniel Gregg**, President, China Education Exchange Services, Connecticut
- Bobby Hobgood**, Director of Research & Development in Online Curriculum & Instruction, University of North Carolina
- Yu-Lan Lin**, World Languages Program Director, Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts
- Jennifer Liu**, Professor, East Asian Languages & Cultures, Indiana University
- Jun Liu**, Professor and Head of the Department of English, University of Arizona
- Liu Yongbo**, Director, International Affairs, Shandong Education Department
- Paula Patrick**, World Languages Coordinator, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia
- Rebecca Richey**, Foreign Language Assistance Program, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC
- Gregg Roberts**, World Languages Specialist, Curriculum, Utah Department of Education
- Marcia Rosenbusch**, Director, Foreign Language Education Center, Iowa State University
- Kun Shi**, Director, K-12 Chinese Flagship Program, Ohio State University
- Duarte Silva**, Executive Director, California Foreign Language Project, Stanford University
- Jessica Stowell**, Associate Director, Confucius Institute, University of Oklahoma
- Frank Tang**, Director, Multilingual Multicultural Studies, New York University
- Shuhan Wang**, Deputy Director, National Foreign Language Center, Washington, DC
- Brenda Welburn**, Executive Director, National Association of State Boards of Education, Virginia
- Yong Zhao**, Professor; Director of Center for Teaching and Technology; Executive Director, Confucius Institute, Michigan State University
- You Shaozhong**, Minister Counselor, Education Division of the Chinese Embassy, Washington, DC
- Zhou Chuangbing**, Vice President, Wuhan University

The History of Asia Society

Asia Society has become the leading global and pan-Asian organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders, and institutions of the United States and Asia. The organization seeks to increase knowledge and enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression, and generate new ideas across the fields of arts and culture, policy and business, and education.

Asia Society was founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd. Initially established to promote greater knowledge of Asia in the US, the Society today is a global institution—with offices throughout the US and Asia—that fulfills its educational mandate through a wide range of cross-disciplinary programming. As economies and cultures have become more interconnected, the Society's programs have expanded to address Asian American issues, the effects of globalization, and pressing concerns in Asia that also include human rights, the status of women, and environmental and global health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

In celebration of its 50th anniversary in 2006, Asia Society announced a dramatic expansion of its network that includes the building of major new facilities in Hong Kong and Houston. National headquarters are located in New York City, Washington D.C., Hong Kong, and Shanghai.