



## High honor

Davie teacher one of 400 picked for tour of China

By Scott Fishman  
STAFF WRITER

Karen Marten of University School's Middle School in Davie was one of 400 educators chosen nationally to visit China for a weeklong tour to better understand the country's culture and language.

The trip, sponsored by Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters, in partnership with the College Board, looks to build and expand Chinese culture and language programs in U.S.

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schools.

"We appreciate the support of Hanban, which has enabled more American students to learn the Chinese language, discover the vibrant culture of China and participate more fully in the cultural exchange between our two countries," said College Board President Gaston Caperton.

Marten, one of the school's associate directors, sat in on physics, English and other classes with students and teach-

ers in Chengde in the Hebei Province.

"We hear a lot about China and about Chinese students and their educational success," she said. "After visiting their school and learning about their educational system, I understand their progress. I do believe, however, that comparing our achievements with the achievements of the Chinese is not valid. Our systems are entirely different."

Marten saw students demonstrating ancient

Chinese calligraphy and other forms of artwork. The U.S. contingent was treated to several performances, including traditional dances and music played with traditional Chinese instruments. One student gave the group a little taste of home by singing the American pop song *Because of You*.

She came home with books, maps and materials for the school's growing Chinese language program, as well as a newfound level of interest in

the culture.

"We have a sister school in Xian, so I hope we can strengthen and expand our relationship with the Bode School," Marten said. "All of our students would benefit from such a relationship. I hope that we might bring another native speaker to our school to teach as our program expands. A student exchange program would also be fantastic."

After three years in existence, the middle school Chinese program is mak-

ing its mark.

As the only middle school students in a competition full of high school and university representatives, the students were able to impress the judges with their grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation and intonation at the third annual Florida International Chinese Speech Contest at Florida International University earlier this year.

"Chinese is one of the hardest languages to learn," said parent Numi

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