

Rutgers Prep Welcomes Tao Dijun to Teach Chinese

Miss Tao Dijun arrived from China in late September to join the Rutgers Prep faculty as the school's first teacher of Chinese language and culture. China's Sichuan Province is home to Tao Dijun, where she teaches English language to secondary school students. Tao Dijun is one of seventeen teachers sent to the United States this year by the Chinese government to be a kind of ambassador between China and the youth of the United States. Rutgers Prep is delighted to be one of the seventeen American independent schools selected by the National Association of Independent Schools to be part of this year long groundbreaking program in international understanding.

The opportunity to study Chinese language was eagerly embraced by nearly forty high school students, who have added it to their daily class schedules. Since Mandarin Chinese is the most widely spoken language in the world, with well over a billion speakers, it is clearly an important addition to any World Language Program in American schools. Junior Catherine Rand of Somerset is enjoying her Chinese course immensely, "I really love Miss Tao's classes because she makes us learn real stuff, not just some bunch of words".

All the children in grades one through four are also studying Chinese language and culture with Tao Dijun. The young children celebrated the Chinese Moon Festival by making Chinese paper lanterns, cooking dumplings, and munching on Moon cakes while listening to Chinese music. Third grader Rohan Sachdev of Colts Neck says, "Miss Tao is a good teacher. Chinese words are hard for me to pronounce, but she repeats them for us until we can remember and say them correctly." Rohan's classmate Kayla Bancone of Martinsville has a goal: "By the end of this year I hope I will know enough to have a real conversation in Chinese."

Tao Dijun is very happy to be a part of Rutgers Prep. She has found many friends and says of her experiences so far, “Thank you for helping me feel so welcome here. I have much to learn. I like Rutgers Prep because it is a beautiful place. The students are different and I have to learn how to teach them. I am still adjusting myself to the teaching method here. I like the method here because I can teach them what I like. I hope the students can learn something in this one-year’s time and we can exchange some culture in the class”.