

Supporting the Student Returning to School in Mexico

Procedures to support your student's successful return to Mexico to work or attend school differ based on the **grade level** the student will enter on return to Mexico.

Grades K-9: Binational Transfer Document

The U.S. Office of Migrant Education and Government of Mexico have entered an agreement. Schools in Mexico are required to accept US educational documents for grades K-9 when provided on a specific form. The Transfer Document for Binational Migrant Student is offered in two versions: one for grades K-6, and one for grades 7-9. The forms help the placement counselor in Mexico understand which of their requirements the student's education in U.S. schools will satisfy.

Get the form. Your school counselor can easily obtain this form from this website: www.msdr.org or from your Washington school district's Migrant Records Clerk. Each form has a "Folio Number" that is unique, so print a new one each time one is needed.

Process. The form is completed by hand or (preferably) with a typewriter. The grades your student received in Washington will be converted from our letter grades to their numeric scale using the simple chart on page 2 of the form. Provide the completed Form and transcript in a single sealed envelope with your own and the building administrator's business cards to the family. Have them hand carry this packet to the school in Mexico. Encourage them to enroll the student immediately upon arrival in Mexico.

Learn from other schools' experiences

- **Translate course titles to Spanish.** Some schools in Mexico do not have English language translators. If course titles you enter can be recorded in Spanish, your student's enrollment is less likely to be delayed while clarification is requested and received.
- **Name must match in documents.** It is essential that the student's full name and birth date listed on your school transcript, on the Binational Transfer Document, and (if available) the student's educational record from the most recently attended school in Mexico match exactly.
- **The CURP number.** Near the middle of the left side of page one of the form you are asked for the student's Clave Unica de Registro de Poblacion (**CURP**) (pronounced "coop" with a trilled R). This is a number assigned to your student when he or she was first enrolled in school in Mexico and should be found easily on educational records issued by the last school the student attended in Mexico.
- **Signature.** Both the Binational Transfer Document AND the student's official transcript MUST be signed by your building Principal or Assistant Principal. It is a good idea to enclose your own and the building administrator's business cards in the sealed envelope with the transcript and Binational Transfer Document so they can readily contact you with questions. DO NOT write anything by hand on the transcript, or staple anything to either document.

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Grades 10-12 and University: Apostille

In the Geneva Convention near the end of World War II, many nations, including USA and Mexico, agreed there was a need for some method of authenticating documents so countries would know which should be accepted. So documents they sign will be accepted internationally, a strategy was devised to have a centralized government agency authenticate signatures of notaries public and public officials. The document on which the agency authenticates that signature is called an Apostille.

Who issues Apostilles? In Washington, Apostille's are only issued by the **Office of the Secretary of State** in Olympia. From the date they receive the request, issuance takes about four days. Also consider mailing time. To minimize the issuance time, the family can hand carry the cover letter, transcript and payment to Olympia.

Assemble the information and documentation

- **Mailing envelope.** We previously recommended the student identify the specific school or university in Mexico that will receive the Apostille, including complete address. However, in May 2009 the Secretary of State says approximately half of envelopes with their agency listed in the return address are not reaching their intended destination in Mexico. They recommend the family provide a large envelope with their own return address. It will be mailed to the student's close relative living near the school, or else to the school to be attended. The Secretary of State's envelope will be inserted in this envelope and then mailed. On receipt in Mexico, the close relative can deliver the package to the school.
- **Contact information.** If the Secretary of State's office staff has questions, they will call the student's family, not you. So you will need to be prepared to provide a daytime telephone number where the student's parent or guardian can be reached.
- **Payment.** Have the family provide a signed Money Order payable to "**Secretary of State**" in the amount of **\$15.00**.
- **Transcript signature: Principal or Assistant Principal.** Have your school registrar issue a transcript for your student. Make sure it is signed by the Building Principal or Assistant Principal, no one else. It is the signature that is authenticated, so the transcript must actually be signed. In summer, the transcript can be signed by the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent of the District.
- **Sealed envelope.** Place the transcript in an envelope and seal it. If hand carried, the envelope must still be sealed when it reaches the Secretary of State to be valid.

Cover letter. Help the family prepare a cover letter to forward the sealed envelope and payment to the Secretary of State and request that an Apostille be issued. The letter must include the following information:

- Student's full name (see Learn from... below)
- Country asked to accept the Apostille (Mexico?)
- Parent's daytime phone number
- Name and address to which the Apostille should be mailed in that country.

With the cover letter, we suggest including your own and your building administrator's business cards and that you request they be enclosed with the Apostille mailed to Mexico. Do NOT attach them to the transcript.

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Address the letter to: Secretary of State, Corporations Division
Apostille & Certification Program
P.O. Box 40228
Olympia, WA 98504

If the student's family will hand carry the request to Olympia, provide the following information:

Driving directions: From north or southbound I-5 travelling to Olympia, take exit 105 (State Capitol exit) and follow the signs "State Capitol/City Center." At the 2nd traffic light, take a right turn onto Capitol Way. Travel through 2 sets of traffic lights. The **Dolliver Building** at 801 Capitol Way South is located on your left 4 blocks after the 2nd traffic light. Inside the building, ask for the **Apostille & Certification Program** in the Corporations Division. Parking is available behind the building. The office is open Monday-Friday (except holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Phone (360) 725-0344.

Learn from other schools' experiences

- **HS Graduate.** An Apostille is needed by the student who graduated from your high school and plans to return to Mexico to seek employment or attend a university. Make sure the transcript VERY CLEARLY states that the student has completed all requirements for, and been awarded, a high school diploma from your school.
- **Replacement.** If the mailed Apostille does not arrive safely in Mexico, have the family call you. Issue a new transcript and cover letter. Indicate in the cover letter that the formerly authenticated documents did not reach their intended destination, and you are asking that a duplicate be issued. In this circumstance, no fee will be charged for re-issuance.
- **Which region?** Many schools that receive migrant students from the western USA are most familiar with procedures in California, where regional offices issues Apostilles. If the university in Mexico asks for your region number, simply explain that Washington is a much smaller state than California and has only one government office that issues apostilles. We have no regions.
- **Match the name precisely.** The student will have less trouble gaining admittance if the name listed on the Apostille (taken from your cover letter), on your school's transcript, and on educational records from the last school attended in Mexico match precisely.
- **Valid transcript.** Do not write any information by hand on the transcript, other than the Principal's signature, or attach anything to the transcript. Doing so may invalidate it.
- **Course descriptions.** Give the student an official course catalog from your high school to take to the school placement counselor in Mexico.

Please Notify Your School Counselors

The Secretary of State's office says transcripts of foreign exchange students must also be authenticated through the Apostille process to be accepted for employment or further education in most international countries.

Content reviewed, revised and approved by A. Roos, Program Director,
Apostille & Certification Program, Office of the Secretary of State, WA on 5/20/09
Carol Hansen Devine, on behalf of SEMY