



SALEM SUPERINTENDENT ALAN SEIBERT ON HIS WAY TO INDIA

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It has taken nearly a year longer than expected, but Salem School Superintendent, Dr. Alan Seibert, is finally on his way to India.

Seibert, Virginia Secretary of Education Thomas Morris and other Virginia school division superintendents left the Commonwealth today and will spend the first portion of November learning how India's economy is tied to Virginia's and what they can do as educational leaders to help students become more globally competitive.

"The exciting thing is that this is a great match of motivations between business leaders and educational leaders," says Seibert. "Business leaders and civic organizations are paying for the trip because they're committed to seeing the United States remain competitive in a global economy."

The 10-day trip is totally funded by 40 different companies that have offices in the Commonwealth. The Salem Rotary Club and an anonymous Salem business leader stepped up and contributed the funds to make the trip possible for Seibert.

"By and large the school division's investment is of my time and expertise," says Seibert. "The lodging and airfare and other travel costs are all covered by these donations from businesses."

Seibert was originally scheduled to make this trip last November when his delegation was forced to postpone it due to the senseless attacks in Mumbai, India that killed at least 173 people and damaged the Taj Mahal Heritage Hotel where they were scheduled to stay.

"None of us wanted to let the heinous actions of adults deter what we hope to accomplish on behalf of our school children," says Seibert.

Seibert developed that selfless nature while growing up in Woodstown, New Jersey. One of the merit badges he earned on the way to achieving Eagle Scout status in Troop 38 was in "Personal Management" and now he is taking the lessons learned in personal finance and applying them 9,000 miles from Salem.

"I truly believe that emerging technologies will allow Salem's children to compete, participate and succeed in the global economy from right here in the Roanoke Valley," says Seibert. "It is incumbent on a school system to be looking for and then communicating those opportunities to young people."

Seibert will visit a Rotary Club in India, some of India's schools and universities along with several businesses. He also will have a chance to see the Taj Mahal at both sunrise and sunset and ride an elephant.

"The goal is to put our students in contact with students in India and leverage our technology, so our children can collaborate with students there on elementary, middle and high school levels," says Seibert.

Some of that interaction already is taking place. A web space called "Trek to India" features everything from Dr. Seibert's itinerary to interesting kid's questions and interviews. You can view the "wiki" page at www.trek2india.wikispaces.com

Seibert plans to interact with students back in Salem while he is away from the central office and visit a number of classrooms upon his return. His trip will bring him back to Salem on November 10.

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