



KAKEHASHI Project (United States) Online Exchange Program for High School Students (Illinois University Laboratory High School) Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

This program was implemented to promote international exchange, foster mutual understanding, and strengthen networks among students studying Japanese at the Illinois University Laboratory High School in Illinois, U.S.A., and students from Akita Prefectural Yuri Senior High School, in Akita, Japan. Through introductions of both schools and small-group exchanges based on shared themes, participating students deepened their connections and enhanced cross-cultural understanding.

【Participants】

Total: 57 students from the U.S. and Japan (High School Students)

(Breakdown) 22 U.S. students, 35 Japanese students

【Locations】 Akita

【First Session】

■ Online Exchange Program: December 10 (Wed), 2025

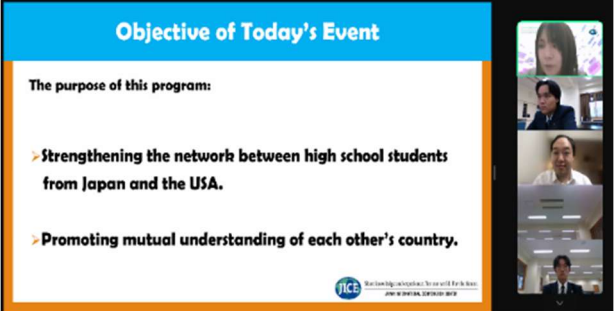
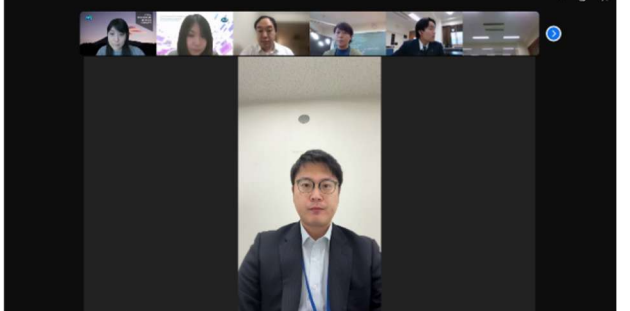
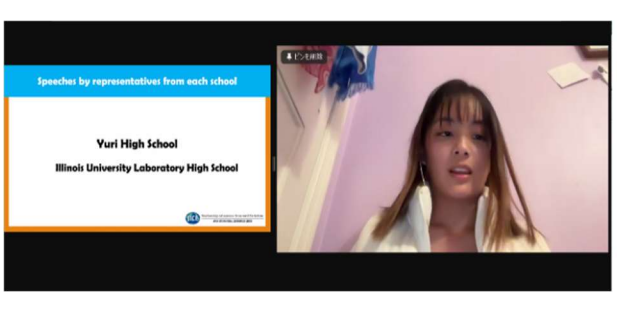
1. Opening Remarks
2. Address
Mr. HARADA Seitarou, Researcher, First North America Division,
North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
3. **【School Exchange】** School Introduction by Akita Prefectural Yuri Senior High School Students
4. **【School Introduction】** School Introduction by Illinois University Laboratory High School students
【Exchange among Participants】 Group Exchange in Breakout Rooms (15min x 3 rounds)
5. Speeches by Representatives of Each School
6. Commemorative photo
7. Information for Participants, Closing Remarks

【Second Session】

■ Online Exchange for High School Students: Saturday, January 24, 2026

1. Opening Remarks
2. **【Exchange among Participants】** Group Exchange in Breakout Rooms (20min x 3 rounds)
3. Commemorative photo
4. Information for Participants, Closing Remarks

2. Program Photos

	
December 10, 2025 【Opening Remarks】	December 10, 2025 【Address】
	
December 10, 2025 【School Exchange】 School Introduction by Akita Prefectural Yuri Senior High School Students	December 10, 2025 【School Exchange】 School Introduction by Akita Prefectural Yuri Senior High School Students
	
December 10, 2025 【Exchange among Participants】 Group Exchange	December 10, 2025 【Speeches by Representatives】
	
December 10, 2025 【Commemorative photo】	December 10, 2025 【Information for Participants, Closing Remarks】

	
January 24, 2026 【Exchange among Participants】 Group Exchange	January 24, 2026 【Exchange among Participants】 Group Exchange
	
January 24, 2026 【Exchange among Participants】 Group Exchange	January 24, 2026 【Commemorative photo】

3. Participants' Inquiries and Interests (excerpt)

- What are the current trends (Apps, SNS, trendy fashion and songs) among high school students in the United States and Japan?
- Do you know any convenient Japanese/English phrases?
- Could you share your school life (classes, club activities, rules, etc.) ?

4. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ High School Student (U.S.)

We were very excited to learn about other people day to day from across the world compared to us. We also felt privileged to have this opportunity to be able to grow in our language learning because this is a big experience where we get to talk to people around the same age and have true conversations, which is the best way to learn a new language.

◆ High School Student (Japan)

We were able to interact in English on our own. We were able to communicate by introducing each other what is popular in Japan and the United States.

◆ High School Student (U.S.)

Before this meeting, I had never had an interaction with someone in another country in another language. This was a really enlightening experience and allowed me to free myself of the nerves that I had about it. It was really fun getting to know what life was like in Japan, both how it was different,

but also not unlike, life in America.

5. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ High School Faculty (Japan)

Thank you very much for this valuable opportunity for online international exchange. It seems that everyone was able to enjoy participating. I also feel that I received good stimulation from the people of the United States who are learning Japanese, which led to an increase in the motivation of students to learn English.

◆ High School Faculty (U.S.)

It was truly heartwarming to see the students making such an earnest effort to interact with one another, and I also learned a great deal from witnessing the unique reactions that only students can have. I am already hearing from the students that they had a great time and that it was a valuable experience for them.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)