

BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIP REQUEST

Note: Trips of 150+ miles from Bedford, or overnight trips MUST have School Committee approval PRIOR to the trip. Please submit at least five (5) weeks prior to the trip.

Name: Sarah Leshay Date: 3/25/2024
School: Bedford High School
Teacher(s): Sarah Leshay
Grade(s): Current 9-10th Graders # of Pupils: 32
Destination: Panama & Costa Rica

Trip Date(s) 2/12/26 - 2/21/26 Departure TBD Return TBD

Out-of-State: () yes () no If yes, please complete the Out-of-State Guidelines form
Overnight: () yes () no

Chaperones: Sarah Leshay TBD
Nicole Prince TBD
Tami Toomey

Educational Aims:

To allow students to experience a new culture, learn about the natural environments in both Costa Rica and Panama - and try new activities that they may not have tried before.

Estimated Expenses:

Transportation Cost: N/A Cost to Pupil ~\$4,000
Provider: Explorica
Admission N/A Substitute Needed () Yes
Cost to School N/A () No

Approvals:

Handwritten signatures and dates for Program Administrator/Director and Principal.

Superintendent/Designee Date

Out-of-State:

School Committee Approval: () Yes () No Date:

Panama & Costa Rica - February 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

(Please submit with your Educational Field Trip Request and your Out-of-State Field Trip form to the School Committee)

1. ***Who will be eligible to go on the trip?***
Students who graduate in 2026 and 2027 will receive preference for this trip with underclassmen being eligible IF space is available. Students must be in good standing with the school for selection - the final list will be reviewed by BHS administration before invitations are sent out.
2. ***What will happen if more than the designated number of students elect to participate?***
If more than 32 students fill out the trip application, we will move to a random lottery selection to fill the 32 slots with the upperclassmen. Underclassmen who apply (Class of 2028 and 2029) will be placed on a waitlist and if we have space, a random selection will occur to fill open spaces (beginning with members of the Class of 2028 and then the Class of 2029).
3. ***Could more than the designated number of students elect to participate?***
No, we will not take more than 32 students - this is the maximum number of students we are comfortable taking in order to ensure smooth traveling and appropriate supervision of our student travelers.
4. ***Are you expecting to provide fundraising opportunities?***
No.
5. ***Will students miss any school time?***
Yes, students will miss the Thursday and Friday before vacation.
6. ***Will the students need travel insurance and how can they obtain it?***
Travel insurance is HIGHLY encouraged - it can be purchased through Explorica as an add-on (which includes the medical insurance) or families can opt to purchase it on their own from a third-party. We will ask all families to show proof of international medical insurance - this can be purchased independently if families opt to not buy Explorica's insurance for a minimal fee. Teachers will also purchase medical insurance.
7. ***Will students need any special medical information or check-ups?***
We always refer families to the CDC for information on additional vaccinations, along with a conversation with their own PCPs to determine what is recommended for their traveler. Additional information can be found on the [Costa Rica traveler information website from the CDC](#) and the [Panama traveler information website from the CDC](#).
8. ***Is the water safe to drink?***
Yes, in most locations in Costa Rica and Panama it is safe for travelers to drink the water. Food and water standards are similar to those in the United States. Most travelers do not need to take special food or water precautions beyond what they normally do at home. Our tour guide will provide information at

each site we visit about water and food safety. We will purchase large jugs of water during the trip as well for travelers who want to stick to bottled water.

9. ***Will the students need passports?***

Yes, all student travelers will need current, valid passports which do not expire within six months of our travel dates.

10. ***Will there be free time for students to explore on their own?***

This trip has a VERY full itinerary but there may be small blocks of free time during the trip where students can explore on their own. In these instances, areas for exploration are defined, students must stay in small groups, times to check in and out are provided and locations of chaperones are known by all student travelers.

11. ***Are there safety concerns in any of the countries you visit?***

As of March 2024, Costa Rica has a Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution travel advisory from the United States due to crime. According to the US Department of State, “While petty crime is the predominant threat for tourists in Costa Rica, violent crime, including armed robbery, homicide and sexual assault, occurs in Costa Rica. The Costa Rican government provides additional security resources in areas frequented by tourists.”

As of March 2024, Panama has a Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution travel advisory from the United States due to crime. Two specific areas in Panama (Mosquito Gulf and the Darién Region) are listed as Do Not Travel - our trip will not take us near these areas.

12. ***Will parents and other family members be updated during the trip?***

We will regularly post to TInstagram during the trip and families are encouraged to sign up for the blog through Explorica that is maintained by the tour guide. If needed, group emails can be sent to all families with updates and individual caregivers will be contacted if needed. (No news is good news!)

13. ***What will the weather be like during the trip?***

February is one of the drier months in Costa Rica and the temperature tends to range from 75-95°F, depending on where you are in the country. February is one the best months to travel to Panama - this is one of the drier months of the year and temperature ranges from 75-90°F. All student travelers will receive a detailed packing list before we leave.

Memo

To: Principals/Program Administrators and Directors
From: Superintendent
Re: OUT-OF-STATE FIELD TRIPS/OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS

School Committee members have requested more detailed information when presenting an out-of-state field trip or overnight field trip request. I would ask that you forward answers to the following guideline questions so that I can include them with your request. Please attach as well any documentation/itinerary that may prove informative.

1. Dates of trip – will students be missing any school time.

February 12-21, 2026. Students will miss the Thursday and Friday before vacation for this trip. This allows us to return on Saturday with wiggle room on Sunday in case of travel difficulties.

2. Reason for trip.

To allow students to experience a new culture, learn about the natural environments in both Costa Rica and Panama - and try new activities that they may not have tried before.

3. Number of students participating and grades involved. How will students be selected?

A maximum of 32 students will be selected, depending on interest. Open first to current 9th and 10th graders (who will be 11th and 12th graders by travel time and then to younger students. We will ask students who are interested to fill out a application about why they are interested and then will enroll from there.

4. Cost to students.

The total tour fee is \$4,043 (\$3,843 with early sign-up discount) - this includes airfare, meals, hotels, included activities, added optional activities (folklore evening). See detailed tour breakdown below.

We also will ask for between \$200-250 from families to cover incidentals, bus to the airport and tipping.

5. Cost to school.

No cost to school.

6. Transportation – public, private, school van, etc.

We will hire a bus to transport students from BHS to the airport. Families will pick up their students at the airport when we return.

7. Chaperones – number, names. Please remember that if it is an overnight trip and attended by male and female students, a male and female chaperone is required.

There will be one chaperone to every six students on the trip - our preference is to take two males and three females, though at least one male and one female will be guaranteed. Sarah Leshay will be the trip lead, Nicole Prince and Tami Toomey will be the additional female chaperones. Two male chaperones will be finalized later on.

Requests that do not have this form attached will be returned to the teacher. All approvals by School Committee need to be submitted one month in advance. Faculty should not discuss trips with students/parents before School Committee approval has been given. Thank you for your attention to this.

Detailed Tour Cost Breakdown

Tour Fee*	\$4,003.00
Folklore evening	\$40.00
** Early Enrollment Discount	\$ -200.00
	<hr/>
Total Fee*	\$3,843.00



Panama & Costa Rica

explorica.com/Leshay-4726

February 12 - February 21, 2026

Day 1 Buenas Panama City (groups flying from the west coast may be required to depart day 0)

Meet your tour director and check into hotel

Day 2 Panama City landmarks

Panama City guided sightseeing tour: Panama Canal, Casco Viejo, handicraft market, Biomuseo visit
Panama Canal & Gatun Lake boat tour

Day 3 Panama City

Chagres National Park and Emberá village excursion: Rio Chagres boat ride, Waterfall hike, Emberá Village visit

Day 4 Panama City--Bocas del Toro

Fly to Bocas del Toro
Bocas Town city walk

Day 5 Bocas del Toro

Bocas del Toro islands excursion: Snorkel in Coral Cay, Dolphin Bay Preserve, Zapatilla Island

Day 6 Bocas del Toro--Puerto Viejo

Ferry to Almirante
Cross the Panama border into Costa Rica
Travel to Puerto Viejo
Punta Uva beach time

Day 7 Puerto Viejo

Cahuita National Park visit
Sloth Rescue Center visit

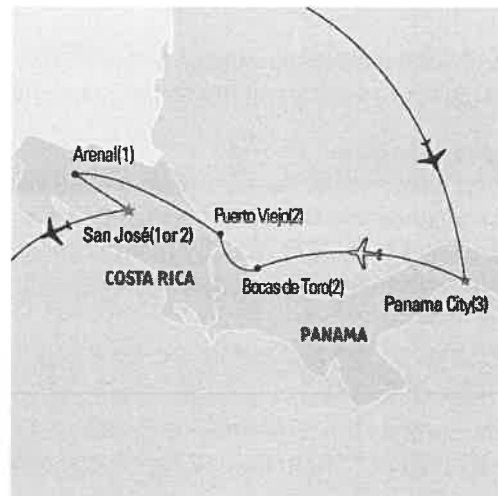
Day 8 Puerto Viejo--Arenal

Travel to Arenal
Canopy zipline tour in Braulio Carrillo National Park
Hot springs visit

Day 9 Arenal--San José

Arenal Volcano and 1968 lava trails hike
Lake Arenal kayaking tour
Travel to San José
Optional Folklore evening

Day 10 End tour



Reserve Your Spot!



Tour Center ID: Leshay-4726
Registration deadline: May 23, 2024

What's included

We provide everything you need for a remarkable trip:

- Round-trip airfare
- 9 overnight stays (11 on extension) in hotels with private bathrooms
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily
- Full-time services of a professional tour director
- Guided sightseeing tours and city walks as per itinerary
- Visits to select attractions as per itinerary
- Tour Diary™
- Local Guide and Local Bus Driver tips; see note regarding other important tips
- Note: On arrival day only dinner is provided; on departure day, only breakfast is provided
- Note: Tour cost does not include airline-imposed baggage fees, or fees for any required passport or visa. Optional excursions, optional pre-paid Tour Director and multi-day bus driver tipping, among other individual and group customizations will be listed as separate line items in the total trip cost, if included.

Tour investment

Students (travelers under the age of 23): \$3,843
Adults (age 23 and over): \$4,373

Price reflects savings of \$200 scholarship. Sign up by 5/23/2024 & enter code Travel1F in order to take advantage of this limited-time offer!

Automatic monthly payment plan

Pay just \$50 upon enrollment and the balance will be divided into equal monthly payments, charged automatically to your credit card or checking account. As of March 22, 2024, your monthly payment would be just \$180.62. (Manual plan also available; learn more on explorica.com/paymentplans.)

Travel protection

Most Explorica travelers protect their investment with one of our trusted plans, starting from just \$16 per day. To learn more, visit explorica.com/cfar.

Enroll online,
by phone, or by mail.



Visit explorica.com/Leshay-4726



Use Leshay-4726 to register



1.888.310.7121

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by WorldStrides

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a paper application on
explorica.com/resources

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