This past year, Peter Schmidt, WACNH’s Vice President and Education Committee Chair and Spanish teacher at Pinkerton Academy, was awarded a fellowship in Global Education with the U.S. Department of State. Pete was selected from over 400 national applicants for only 80 openings in the Teachers for Global Classrooms Program (TGC). The TGC is a specialized training program for K-12 teachers in the study, practice, and theory of Global Education. The year-long fellowship program has three components. The first is a graduate-level online course focused on the development of global competencies, cultural programming, cross-curricular pedagogy, global citizenship, project-based learning, and sustainability and global education growth at the local K-12 district level. Upon successful completion of the course, fellows were invited to Washington, D.C. to attend the TGC Global Education Symposium to meet with other fellows, share ideas, work on projects, and attend workshops presented by leaders in the field. Fellows were then assigned an overseas teaching assignment location. Pete was chosen to join the Brazilian delegation last summer.

Pete spent three weeks in Brazil learning, teaching, and researching. Pete’s ongoing research focused on identifying the principle challenges to ensuring FAPE (free and appropriate education) for Brazilian students and how those challenges were being addressed. Pete’s trip started in Brasilia, Brazil’s capital, where he visited the US Embassy, the Ministry of Education, the offices of the Brazilian State Secretaries of Education, a series of local school visits, and cultural sites around the city. Pete then flew to Nova Iguazu, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro to work with a host teacher in the local public schools. During his teaching assignment, Pete primarily taught American Culture to high school students, but also had the opportunity to teach middle school and adult learners, including a joint class at a local university. One of the highlights of his experience was engaging one-on-one with students and teachers. Both teachers and students alike were energetic and interested in learning about the U.S. Likewise, Pete was interested in learning about them and Brazil. It was cross-cultural learning at its finest.

For Pete, this fellowship has been one the high watermarks of his professional teaching career. He gained much from his experiences afield and has brought back what he has learned to the Granite State. Over the past year, Pete has presented at various state teachers’ conferences on Global Competency in the Classroom and was a presenter last year at our inaugural Academic World Quest/Think Global Conference. He has also been working with the teachers and administration at Pinkerton Academy on the development of a global competency certificate program and increasing domestic and international global engagement opportunities for Pinkerton students. As a capstone project for his fellowship, Pete developed a global education resource guide website to help state educators incorporate global competencies into their teaching and curriculum. Globalocity: A Global Education Resource Guide http://globalocityeducation.weebly.com/ The website is full of resources, lesson plan ideas, publications, program and project development, global technology implementation, travel blogs, and more.

Because of this fellowship, Pete has made global education a part of his ethos and looks to further his passion by connecting New Hampshire students with the world and the world with New Hampshire students. “The only way to truly understand the world beyond our borders, is to embrace it. As our students enter the world of interconnected globalization, the need for fostering global competency, cultural awareness, and cross-cultural dialogue has never been more important.”