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DHS Alumnus, Now Teaching in Argentina, Reaches Out to a DHS Language Classroom

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Darien High School world language teacher Jonathan Smith recently got a request he could not refuse.

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A DHS alumnus, Kyle Byrne (pictured above right corner), had accessed archived editions of the DHS *Blue Wave News* and saw Smith's efforts to video-conference with students in other parts of the world.

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Smith had conducted similar work when he was at Middlesex Middle School — forming a robust collaborative to Darien, Panama. Smith even made a journey into the jungles of Panama to visit the town's namesake.

So when Byrne, who teaches English and Media at the *Colegio Lincoln* in La Plata, Argentina, wanted to have his students video-conference with Smith's Spanish 5 class, Smith had no hesitation. They connected last week.

“Our classroom was enlarged, and learning was extended far beyond the walls of our beloved high school. In one class period, much knowledge and understanding were gained, and new friendships were formed,” said Smith.

Smith prepared students in the art of interviewing, active listening, and asking follow-up and clarifying questions — a challenge in English, and more challenging in a second language. The information gained from the exchange is being used for a class assignment.

Smith noted that there were some challenges. Some seniors had to learn to use the old Spanish pronoun "vos" which is conjugated differently and not customarily taught in textbooks. The pronoun, however, is used by every teenager in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and many other Latin American countries.

“Our Spanish 5 students did a first-rate job,” said Smith.

— *Marc Marin is district director of instructional technology. This article is republished from the Darien Public Schools News of the Week newsletter.*

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- [Hindley Students Contribute Artwork for Student Art Show About Amusement Parks](#) (March 21)
- [Ox Ridge Students Collect Food for Those in Need](#) (March 7)
- [Royle School Students Get Lesson on Weather Forecasting and TV from Channel 12 Meteorologist](#) (Feb. 14)
- [Freedom Riders Discuss Civil Rights Era with Darien High School Students](#) (Feb. 9)
- [Four DHS Students Learn Leadership Skills to Support Unified Sports](#) (Jan. 10)
- [Darien Public Schools Join 'Hour of Code' Events This Week](#) (Dec. 8)