A teacher from Emporia High School started Paraguay as part of a teacher exchange program last summer. Now, a total of six teachers are traveling to Emporia in the second part of the program.

Mercedes Bogarin, a teacher from Paraguay, has been working in a classroom with Betsy Sanchez, a third-grade teacher at Village Elementary School. Bogarin is one of three Paraguayan teachers who will visit the district this spring, as part of a collaborative effort with Emporia State University, the Paraguay Teacher Exchange program led by Amanda Deihl, a teacher at Emporia High School. "This program get started with a collaboration with [Ron] Werner (director of the Teachers College at ESU)," Andy Koenigs, assistant superintendent of human resources for the district said during a Feb. 8 Board of Education meeting. "We got talking about those opportunities where we could send our teachers down and experience their classroom and where they could come up and visit us.

"The doors were open when we worked with teachers at private school in Paraguay," said she applied for the exchange program after hearing about the opportunity from the principal at her school.

"I was curious about it." Bogarin said. "I had three interviews with different people and I found an email that I was one of the teachers I was chosen and excited." Working with Sanchez, Bogarin said several aspects of teaching in America differ from her school in Paraguay. Technology and classroom size were two big differences which stood out to Bogarin. "We have technology, but they don’t teach you how to do it in the right way," she said. "There’s 25 students, I’d like, in a room half the time."

"In Paraguay we have two classrooms in a room, and they’ll ask students something about Paraguay, and they’ll ask something about my country," Bogarin said. "They’re like ‘are you from South America?’ and they ask about my culture or ‘how do you say this in Guarani?’"

Bogarin said her time in Emporia will also prove valuable when she returns to Paraguay, as she is hoping to incorporate some lessons into her classroom back home. "I can tell them about the other classrooms and how this is a fantastic program," she said. "There are things like free groups where the kids are able to help each other learn and the way they teach and meet and share ideas.”

Left to right: Mercedes Bogarin, Betsy Sanchez, Andy Koenigs, Tania Meza and Amanda Deihl.

Bogarin and Meza are teachers visiting Emporia Public Schools from Paraguay as part of a teacher exchange program. Deihl visited Paraguay in the summer of 2016.

By Jon Ruston

The Business Administrative Technology program at Flint Hills Technical College prepares students to operate in business settings.

From a one-on-one service to large organizations, individuals trained in office management, computer software, accounting, transcription and legal assisting are in high-demand. Students learn how to be productive and efficient leaders within an office setting.

"Every business has one or more employees who need for professional, tech-savvy, bookkeeping, professional leaders," Business Administrative Technology Instructor Kerri O’Mara said. "Building those leaders is our business in Business Administrative Technology.

Students in the program can obtain a technical certificate or an associate of applied science degree. The technical certificate is a one-year program. Graduates should have the skills to perform numerous office related tasks like accounting, filing and transcription. They are also adept at using the latest technology, computers and software.

The program is popular among students, due in part to the variety of course options offered. The Business Administrative Technology program is one of two programs offered at the college, which a student can complete entirely online.

In 2012, the program relocated to the downtown campus on the third floor of the Administrative Building. The Education program provides students at the high school and an e-learning simulation lab. Students can enroll in the program as long as they are 15 years old, have graduated from high school, obtained a GED or are currently in high school as a junior or a senior. Students must have completed a high school or GED and be in the program to demonstrate and apply proper keyboarding techniques. The course also includes students to have basic computer skills and knowledge. "Our program takes students from high school level," O’Mara said. "We had a couple of junior start our program coming part-time they could essentially graduate high school with both their high school and an associate degree. Intermediates are a critical link between FHTC and local businesses. They provide a practical way for students to master the skills and knowledge they have learned in the classroom. Employees also benefit from the skills of the students.

The program is in ways looking to additional internship opportunities for students. Businesses can also benefit from students. They leave."

Employers also benefit from additional internship opportunities for students. They are interested in having an additional intern. They should contact FHTC.

"We feel that real-world experience in a business is valuable," O’Mara said. "It helps them to create great relationships with businesses and hopefully have great contacts to put on their resumes when they leave." Students in the associate’s degree have the opportunity to obtain office administration in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The certifications are important for resume and can increase job placement. Graduates from the Business Administrative Technology program are employed in a variety of industries. Employment in banks, investment firms, nonprofit organizations and government agencies are among the many career options.

For additional information, visit www.fhtc.edu.