

Students hone their painting skills



Preparation for admission tests for arts institutions has started with training in singing, drawing, dancing and acting. Most of China's colleges for the arts conduct their admission tests (*yikao*) around February, four months before the annual college entrance examination. (Above) High School students in Taiyuan, in Shanxi province, at an art class. XINHUA

To cool planet, researchers propose spraying particles into marine clouds

SAN FRANCISCO — A group of researchers at the University of Washington is investigating the idea of marine cloud brightening as a strategy to offset global warming. As a short-term measure for a possible future emergency situation, the strategy involves spraying saltwater into clouds above oceans to boost their capacity to reflect sunlight.

In a paper published in the journal *Earth's Future*, two UW researchers, including lead author Rob Wood, a professor of atmospheric sciences, say small-scale tests of marine cloud brightening would also help answer scientific questions about clouds and aerosols' possible role to

help cool the planet.

One of the biggest uncertainties in climate models is the clouds, which reflect sunlight in unpredictable ways. Water droplets can only condense on airborne particles, such as smoke, salt or human pollution. When the air contains more particles, the same amount of moisture can form smaller droplets, which creates whiter, brighter, more reflective clouds.

For several years, researchers there have been working with a group of engineers in the San Francisco Bay Area of Northern California, on the US West Coast, to develop a nozzle that turns saltwater into tiny particles that could be sprayed high into the



A child cools off in a fountain in late July in Shanghai. REUTERS

marine cloud layer, according to a news release from UW, located in the US Pacific Northwest.

Now waiting for funding from government or private

donors, the researchers propose to produce a sprayer that is able to eject trillions of aerosol particles per second, conduct initial laboratory tests of the sprayer, do preliminary outdoor tests in a fairly flat coastal area relatively free of air pollution and prone to marine clouds, and then move to small-scale offshore tests.

Nevertheless, geoengineering, also known as climate engineering, is controversial on ethical grounds.

Wood argues that "for climate, we're no longer in an era of 'do no harm'. We are altering the climate already. It's now a case of 'the lesser of two evils.'"

XINHUA

Britain's smallest school Ronaldsay Primary to shut after student leaves

LONDON — A school in one of the remotest parts of Britain is to close when its one and only student leaves in just a few days. Known as the smallest school in Britain, North Ronaldsay Primary School will remain closed in the hope that its classroom will be needed at some time in the future.

The school bell will be silenced when Teigan Scott, 12, moves to a high school to continue her education.

But that will mean she will have to make the 20-minute air journey to her new school, Kirkwall Grammar School, on mainland Orkney.

The young student will pack her schoolbag early Monday and return each Friday to her home on an island with a population of around 50.

Local councillor Kevin Woodbridge says in a media interview that the population on North Ronaldsay, the most northern island in the Orkney archipelago area of Scotland, had halved since he arrived in 1977. He blames poor transport links and poor broadband connectivity, saying it affected the population's ability to work.

Woodbridge says: "It's very sad but it demonstrates the decline on the island that has

led to this. When I came here there were 17 people at the school and 127 on the island. Now we have 50 to 60 people. I think it's totally down to the transport on the island. We only get fresh food once a week during winter."

Teigan's mom, Maureen Johnstone, says: "Teigan has just finished primary and is heading to Kirkwall Grammar School. She's had a lot of preparation for the move."

She says the school closure would be a big loss to the island, but her daughter would know a lot of pupils at her new school.

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Fruitful holiday

Young Chinese students going abroad on study tours

More Chinese students are putting overseas study tours on their agenda this summer. Consisting of language courses, sightseeing and international communication, study tours meet the demands of Chinese parents and students for a long and fruitful holiday, despite costs of around \$4,000 to \$6,000.

This year saw the number of students going abroad for study tours increase by nearly 40 percent, with reservations for tours starting almost a year ago, according to English First, a Swedish-English education company in China.

A recent report published by a Chinese tourism website showed most study tour participants were from middle schools. According to the report released by tuniu.com in June, 73 percent of their participants in 2016 were middle school students, 11 percent primary school students and only 3 percent college students.

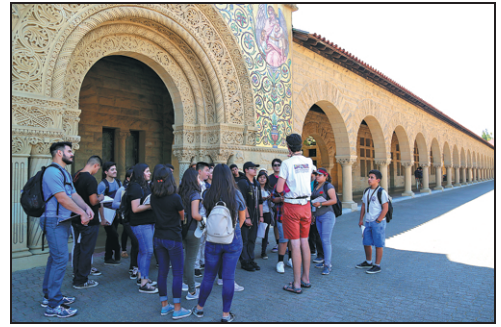
Students of a younger age seem to be the upward trend.

"The biggest growth of our clients in the past few years is among primary school students, over 50 percent," says Joe Chiu, country manager of China's EF International Language Center.

Unlike study tour participants in other countries who are at least 13 or 14 years old, Chinese parents seem to be more willing to let their children go on tours at a very young age, Chiu says, noting that the youngest Chinese participant in his program was only 5 years old.

According to a blue book on global study tours released by New Oriental Education & Technology Group, expanding children's horizons was the major goal for parents, while improving language skills, experiencing independence and exploring cultural diversity were also popular.

Zhan Fuman, a 14-year-old from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, currently on a 15-day study tour in Australia with a price tag of 32,800 yuan



Top: Chinese and international students visit Stanford University this month. Above: Travel companies find study tours are a winner. PHOTOS BY JIA ZHUTAO AND NAN SHAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

(\$4,820), went to the United States for her first overseas study tour last winter.

"She has been much more confident and independent since her first tour in the United States and learned to use knowledge from books and real life communications," says Zhu Wanxia, Zhan's mother.

Going on a study tour does not lead to going to a foreign university in the future, Zhu says, adding that they prefer their child go to a top Chinese university instead.

According to Chiu, only half of the students in their study tour programs went abroad for higher education.

"Some parents consider staying in China as a better choice for their children, and such overseas study tours are more about qualities beyond learning by the books," says Chen Jingjing, Chiu's co-worker from English First.

According to China's Ministry of Education, over 80

percent of Chinese students who studied abroad returned to China in 2016.

Being the world's second-largest economy, China is hungry for talent in all aspects.

According to the Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-20) issued by the Education Ministry in July 2010, China called for more international communication and cooperation to give the country's youth international horizons, making them better understand international rules.

The ministry also encourages primary and middle schools to put short study tours in student curricula.

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International Education Column

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