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Mehboob: seeing how schools prepare students for work.

Educators from other countries find schools here not so foreign

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When Tahira Mehboob visited Hawkins Elementary School yesterday, she was in for a pleasant surprise. The sixth graders she talked to actually had heard of her homeland of Pakistan.

"They were quite enthusiastic," she said. "They seem to know about it very well."

She is owner and principal of a two-year-old private school in Peshawar called the Institute for Learning and Motivation. She is among four educators from other countries who are swinging through Toledo this week during a month-long, coast-to-coast visit sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency.

They're among about 40 foreign educators who are in the United States to gain insight into the U.S. educational system and programs to develop a competent work force. That delegation broke up into small-

er groups, one of which is visiting the Glass City. Toledo Sister Cities International found families for them to stay with.

Mrs. Mehboob said she's here mostly to learn how American schools prepare students for the transition from high school to the world of work. She's also willing to gather any other ideas.

Also in Toledo are Abdulla S. Al Saai, manager of training and development for Eurogas in Qatar; Davidson Kuyateh, second-in-command of the Sierra Leone Teachers Union; and Phillip John Hale, a vocational educator from Wales.

Yesterday the four went their separate ways. Mr. Al Saai visited McKinley School, then his counterpart at the Sun Oil refinery. Mr. Kuyateh shadowed Toledo Federation of Teachers president Dal Lawrence. Mr. Hale spent the day with Jama Roman, director of vocational education of Toledo schools.

Today, all of them will visit the

main branch of the library, the Private Industry Council, and the Toledo schools' International Studies Center, then view the Rubens exhibit at the Toledo Museum of Art before leaving town.

Mrs. Mehboob said she was impressed with Hawkins School.

"The atmosphere is happy," she said. "It's the sort of atmosphere where children will learn."

She spent the day with Hawkins principal Dennis Thayer and talking about the similarities and differences in their schools. Mostly, they said, there are similarities.

One difference has to do with homework, or in Mrs. Mehboob's case, after-school work. Children attend her school from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and do all their homework during the last 90 minutes of the day. When they do homework at home, they suffer from distractions like television, and often rely too much on help from parents and other adults, she said.