



Testimony on SB 739: "Oregon Studies"

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Oregon Geographic Alliance (Director of Education Programs) and Oregon Council for the Social Studies (member of Board of Directors)

This policy statement is in opposition to the proposal to incorporate "Oregon Studies" into the Oregon Social Studies Curriculum absent a clear statement that there will be adequate funding for professional development for teachers and development of curricular materials for this mandate. Understanding of Geography is critically important if we are to prepare today's students to be global citizens tomorrow. Geography is thus a critical element of the K-12 curriculum. However, to introduce a new requirement for Oregon Studies – including changes in geography, civics, economics, and history – requires that teachers be provided with professional development and curricular materials in order to be fully prepared to implement high quality curriculum. Education policymakers need to recognize the immense dedication of time and resources necessary to properly prepare and teach any new curriculum, including Oregon Studies. Therefore, the position of the Oregon Geographic Alliance (OGA) is that any curricular mandate include adequate funding for professional development support and materials development.

OGA agrees that Oregon students need a stronger grasp of Oregon Studies. However, it is our professional opinion as classroom educators that any curricular mandates be built upon best practices in Social Studies education and developed in conjunction with the Oregon State Social Studies content standards, which were just recently adopted in August 2011. Rather than mandate the teaching of all Oregon Studies curriculum in a discrete time period, OGA suggests that Oregon Studies include the thoughtful implementation of best practices and be incorporated across the K-12 continuum. Social Studies education must begin at the elementary level; any mandate that, directly or indirectly, compromises the ability of Oregon educators to teach Social Studies to this young population is

flawed. The recently adopted content standards include mandated instruction about Oregon in every grade.

Research shows that the best curricular recommendations are made with input from “experts” in that curricular area – especially classroom teachers. Any curricular mandate constructed without such input is foundationally flawed. We are willing to work with education policymakers to help craft a high-quality curriculum that will be thoughtful, effective, and relevant for students within our discipline.

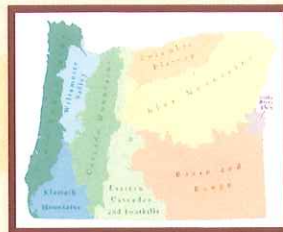
Geographic Literacy

Geographically literate people –

- Know about our complex, interconnected world (“foundational knowledge”; core human and physical geography)
- Understand geographic science and social science concepts and processes (grade appropriate, standards based)
- Use maps, geographic data, and geo-spatial technologies (grade appropriate –e.g., mental maps, GIS)
- Think spatially in order to understand:
 - Regions:
 - What groups of nearby places have similar conditions or connections? Examples: political regions; cultural regions such as the “Bible Belt”
 - Interconnectedness:
 - How does one place influence another? Examples: pollution source/distribution; trade
 - Sequences and transitions:
 - How do conditions change as you travel from one place to another? Examples: global climate patterns; ecological communities
 - Spatial hierarchies:
 - How are smaller entities related to larger ones? Examples: watersheds; political divisions
 - Spatial analogies:
 - Why do places in the world have similar conditions to other places? Examples: climate types; cultural practices
 - Spatial associations:
 - Why do features often occur together? Examples: plate tectonics/volcanoes; tropical regions/specific diseases
 - Patterns:
 - Why are features often arranged in non-random patterns, such as lines, clusters, rings, and waves? Examples: economic activities, trade routes
 - Comparisons:
 - How are places similar or different? Examples: population characteristics, natural resource bases

GEOGRAPHIC LITERACY

REGIONS



What groups of nearby places have similar conditions or connections? Examples: political regions; cultural regions such as the "Bible Belt"

INTERCONNECTEDNESS



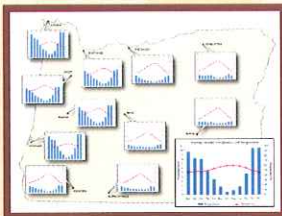
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SPATIAL HIERARCHIES



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SPATIAL ANALOGIES



Why do places in the world have similar conditions to other places? Examples: climate types; cultural practices

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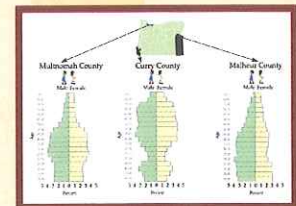
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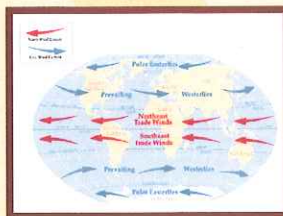
Think spatially in order to understand:

COMPARISONS



How are places similar or different? Examples: Population characteristics, natural resource bases

PATTERNS



Why are features often arranged in non-random patterns, such as lines, clusters, rings, and waves? Examples: economic activities, trade routes

SPATIAL ASSOCIATIONS



Why do features often occur together? Examples: plate tectonics / volcanoes; tropical regions / specific diseases

SEQUENCES AND TRANSITIONS



How do conditions change as you travel from one place to another? Examples: global climate patterns; ecological communities

Logo

