

SPEAK UP FOR GEOGRAPHY

JOIN THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION
IN SUPPORTING GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION



NCGE supports geography education at all levels and its members—whether a pre-service teacher starting in the profession or a retired educator who has spent a career inspiring lifelong geography learners—are dedicated to improving the quality and status of geography teaching and learning. For this reason, the NCGE promotes education reform efforts that strengthen geography in our K-12 schools. Members often ask what else they can do to support reform efforts and so we have drafted these tips.

TIP 1. PERFECT YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH

If we each had a nickel every time someone asks us what geography is, we'd have the funding we need for geography education! In the meantime, knowing what geography is and what geographers do lets geography advocate for itself when someone asks that perennial question. Our elevator speech changes depending on the audience, but we're often inclined to say that geography is about the connections between people and places. How can students understand the world they live in if they do not know about the global economy, natural disasters, world conflicts, or where their water comes from? Plus, geography has important real-world applications. Geographers are employed in every sector of the economy—from deciding a business location, to planning evacuation routes, to preventing the spread of contagious diseases, to making so many other important decisions in agriculture, city planning, and decision-making—geographers understand how the physical and human systems of the world interact.

TIP 2. KNOW HOW EDUCATION POLICY IS DETERMINED IN YOUR STATE AND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Standards, assessment, teacher certification requirements are all determined by a group of people—either at the state level or the school district level depending on where you live. If the civil servants who draft education policy do not understand the importance of geography to students, then they may not make sound educational decisions. Find out who the education policy decision-makers are in your area and let them know that you value geography in K-12 schools by attending open curriculum review hearings and writing them letters.

TIP 3. JOIN THE SPEAK UP FOR GEOGRAPHY CAMPAIGN

At SpeakUpForGeography.org, you can send digital letters in support of the Teaching Geography is Fundamental (TGIF) act. This act will provide funding for teacher professional development in geography and help to improve the geographic literacy of K-12 students. On April 19, 2012, geography educators from across the country will meet with Senators and Representatives on Capitol Hill to ask for their support of TGIF. You can help convince Congress that teaching geography *is* fundamental by spreading the message about the Speak Up For Geography campaign. Speak up yourself and share SpeakUpForGeography.org on your social and professional networks. You can add a small icon onto your facebook and twitter profile pictures by going to <http://twibbon.com/cause/Speak-Up-For-Geography>.

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