

Hello, my name is Brandi LeRoy. I am a social studies teacher at Bangor High School and am currently working on my PhD in Geographic education through Texas State. I helped with the revision work the DOE did this past summer on the standards and as we were doing the work we saw there was a need in revising the geography standard to make it clearer and add in the new mandates.

Being an educated global citizen starts with the study of geography. Global citizens are conscious-minded of the world around them, understand others, and work towards making the entire globe a better place. That all starts with the study of geography!

Geography is the study of the earth, its people, and the connections between humans and the space they occupy. In an ever growing global society geography standards should show the interconnectedness of the world.

So, why update the geography standards? It's more important than you think — these new revisions will help our Maine students better understand news, help fight climate change, be a part of a global community, understand cultures, and learn history. At the end of the day, geography will help them become a better overall global citizen.

The geography standards were revised to address a change in the law on what needs to be taught in Maine schools (Wabanaki, African American, and Holocaust studies) and make the standards more relevant for our students. The overarching standard of “Students understand how physical and human geographic characteristics of place, as well as culture and experience, influence people’s understanding of places and regions in Maine, the Wabanaki Nations, the United States, and the world” is presented from K-12 with age appropriate performance indicators, scaffolded for each level, that will allow students to understand the places they live and how they are connected to other places. The standard itself, in concept, changed only minimally, but reworded to make it easier to understand and include the new mandates. The performance indicators were reworded to provide more clarity, inclusion, and relevance.

K-2 Allows students to explore the world's physical features and their community geographies. They learn about maps and globes, spatial skills that will help them in the future (left, right, up, down, near, far, north, south, east, west, etc), they identify ways geography impacts other groups of people and how community leaders use geography to make decisions.

3-5 expands on the K-2 standards and adds in a performance indicator looking at how geography is used in real professional settings. According to the American Association of Geographers geospatial competencies are one of the fastest growing skills needed in

the workforce. Understanding what people can do with these skills allows the subject to become more relevant to the students and help better prepare them for the future and create a place for powerful knowledge to be acquired. It also adds a performance indicator using inquiry in grade 5 so students can begin to learn to ask geographic questions.

6-8 scaffolds the standard even more expanding on the previous and adding how we use the global grid and bringing in geospatial technologies to help students find locations and patterns of phenomena, as well as becoming 21st century learners. It also progresses in the scaffolding to show the interconnectedness of subjects and how geography connects them.

9-12 develops more analysis skills so students can evaluate issues in the world around them, and understand more of the “whys” of the world. These performance indicators allow students to expand on their previous knowledge and apply it to real world problems.

We added spatial and geographic awareness into the enduring themes, because knowledge of where things happen and why help in the understanding of all elements of social studies and should be used across the disciplines.

The standard revisions took elements from the Geography for Life national standards as well as the C3 framework. The new revisions allow for a more inclusive geographic experience and allows us to include the geographies of state mandated topics, such as the Wabanaki, African Americans in Maine, and the Holocaust. It also allows room for other topics and issues to be addressed and flexibility for future mandated topics to be included.

Thank you,
Brandi LeRoy
Social Studies Teacher- Bangor High School
Geographic Education PhD student- Texas State University

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