

Oregon Geographic Alliance Strategic Plan 2009 – 2014

Dated: October 2008

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Identification of OGA's Stakeholders:

Internal:

1. Teacher Consultants
2. In-service teachers
3. Pre-service teachers
4. Co-coordinators
5. Staff
6. Steering Committee
7. Portland State University
8. Western Oregon University

External:

1. Oregon schools and students
2. Oregon parents and families
3. National Geographic
4. Community partners and funders
5. Funders
6. Oregon Department of Education

Status: Where we are now, how we got there, and where we are headed at this point:

Where are we now (our situation)?

Strengths:

- We produce useful, good geographic materials for teachers
- We provide grants to teachers for travel, family geography and professional development
- We have a strong, varied TC network
- We host a well-attended Spring Conference
- We host well-attended summer institutes
- We are recognized as a leader at the national level
 - National Geographic Society recognition
 - National Council for Geographic Education conference site in 2011

Weaknesses:

- The state content standards are weak in geography and geography is not a required course in Oregon schools
- We have not been successful in integrating GIS into our materials
- Monitoring our outreach is difficult

How did we get here (our momentum)?

Strengths:

- Support from National Geographic
- Successful grant writing
- Focus on travel experiences and fieldwork for teachers
- Support from Portland State University and Western Oregon University
- Consistent quality in programs
- Free credits, materials (and keeping all costs low for teachers)
- Staff excellence
- Ability to anticipate and respond to change
- Leadership that covers both geography and education programs
- High level of professionalism while being teacher-friendly

Weaknesses:

- Limited outreach program to those other than teachers
- Shoe-string budget
- No endowment

Where are we going (our direction)?

- Continue institutes and conferences
- Take advantage of national exposure due to NCGE conference in 2011
- Increase TC base by adding new teachers each year
- Increase Oregon-focused materials, including GIS
- Continue outreach to remote areas of state
- Work on improving Oregon content standards

- Continue national advocacy for geography education and funding
- Seek NGS endowment (if still available)

Issues the Alliance faces in the coming years:

Technological issues

- Opportunity = technology increases efficiency of access and dissemination but need well-crafted lessons
- Technology is a threat to some teachers
- Variability in access to technology
- Increasingly virtual world creates an opportunity to expand our outreach
- Growth in geography/GIS careers
- Technology access, cost, training
- Informal/recreational applications of geospatial technology
- Limited training available

Economic Issues

- Demographic changes of students
- Increasing economic value of global knowledge
- Because of restricted funding, there will be a need to form partnerships to help fund geography opportunities in the schools
- Competition for public/private funding
- Increasing poverty – access to education
- Declining funding of education
- Current economic situation will decrease funding

Political Issues

- Teaching Geography is Fundamental – federal and state unfunded legislative mandates
- Ballot measures affect funding
- District policies and politics affect content
- Re-alignment of national and state standards
- Literacy is focus
- Equalization of funding from sources
- Equalization/timber changes funding
- Elections change make-up of legislative advocacy

Social Issues

- More emphasis on testing and other subjects
- More, younger teachers – need professional organizations
- Student needs and experiences (impact how we teach)
- Literacy is the big focus
- English Language Learners population – affects OGA plans, materials, and presentations
- Falling behind world in global knowledge; too America-centric; OGA can fill void
- Trend/threat: family dynamics changing; kids not getting outside

Given our mission, stakeholders, status, issues we face and our current direction, the Steering Committee agreed on the following 1-Year and 5-Year plans giving the Alliance focus areas and tasks as follows:

1-Year Plan

- Spring Conference idea: session on careers in geography; AAG website
- Informal ed: Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts “Badge Day”; MWW
- Literacy integration
- OGA Summer Institutes
- OGA Spring Conference
- Increase Teacher Consultant numbers – from districts, other subject areas, all grade levels
- Increase presentations by Teacher Consultants to professional organizations, district in-services, buildings
- Libraries – local; public through MWW/Geography Action; State Atlas of Oregon; set home page
- Attract new/ongoing funding (both 1-year and 5-year)
- MWW – promotion with community partners
- Reestablish connections with Teacher Consultants across the state: local lead Teacher Consultants, list of Teacher Consultants

5-Year Plan

- Conduct in-services through literacy in geography, technology through geography, other topics; use Teacher Consultants as presenters/service of OGA; offer PDU/credits through university
- OGA traveling in-services
- Ties to work force development
- Carry momentum past hosting NCGE
 - Increase Teacher Consultant membership
 - Re-involve existing Teacher Consultants
- Continue existing geographic education (Institutes)
- Help teachers integrate geography into Outdoor School (pre-teaching concepts)
- Increase OGA Teacher Consultant involvement in NCGE – mentor program, awards, 2011
- Partner with alliances to enlarge/exchange/mentor Teacher Consultants: Institutes (Washington- Hawaii-Alaska-California; other alliances)
- Target teachers to be new Teacher Consultant who are in their first-fifth years
- Developing links between science and geography (i.e. natural resources)
- Attract new ongoing sources of funding

