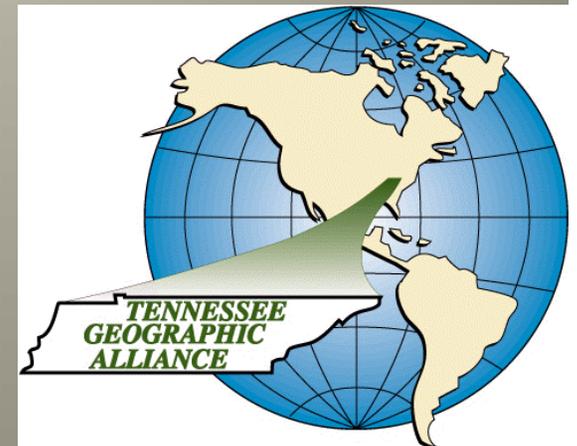


Cumberland URISA Has a Horse in this Race:

The Status of Geography Education in Tennessee

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In the past year, the geography curriculum in Tennessee was gutted when it was rolled into hybrid History & Geography courses.

The negative impacts resulting from the adoption of those hybrid History & Geography courses are:

Geography will now be taught subservient to history instruction in courses called, “U.S. History & Geography” and “World History and Geography”.

A subject whose structure should be based on themes and topics will now be meagerly intertwined with history content and taught in a chronological progression.

6th Grade – World History and Geography: Early Civilizations Through the Decline of the Roman Empire

7th Grade – World History and Geography: The Middle Ages to the Exploration of the Americas

8th Grade – World History and Geography: Colonization of North America to Reconstruction and the American West

9th Grade – U.S. History and Geography: Post-Reconstruction to the Present

10th Grade – World History and Geography: The Industrial Revolution to the Contemporary World

The former stand-alone Social Studies course taught in 7th grade that focused on World Geography was eliminated. Similar content will now be taught in 3rd grade. This will result in less qualified/experienced teachers teaching a course that provides the foundation for understanding of geography, world history and world civilizations. Currently, K-6 certification requires that elementary teachers have taken only one, three-hour college course in Geography.

World Geography and Cultures

Course Description: *Third grade students will learn about the major components of world geography and world cultures. Students will develop skills across the six essential elements of geography: world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical systems, human systems, environment and society, and the uses of geography. Students will analyze the impact of physical and human geography on cultures in times past and present. They will explore the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services on a local and global scale. Students will examine our connections to the past and the ways in which local, regional, and national governments and traditions have developed and left their marks on current societies. They will recognize the contributions of famous individuals from various ethnic, racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups to the development of civilizations around the world. Students will understand the role of rules and laws in our daily lives and the basic structure of the United States government, with opportunities to compare different government systems. They will evaluate evidence to develop comparative and causal analyses in order to interpret primary sources and informational text. Third grade students will construct sound historical arguments and perspectives on which informed decisions can be based.*

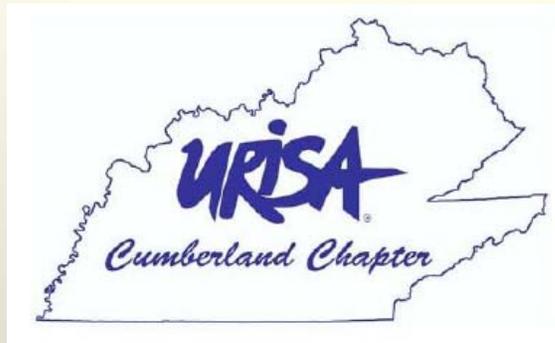
3.5 Explain the difference between relative and absolute location.

3.7 Explain how specific images contribute to and clarify geographical information (diagrams, landforms, satellite photos, GPS system, maps, and charts).

3.13 Summarize how people interact with their environment to satisfy basic needs and how geographic challenges are resolved, including housing, industry, transportation, communication, bridges, dams, tunnels, canals, freshwater supply, irrigation systems, and landfills.

3.39 Describe the diverse but unified nature of people within a continent or region, identifying the distinct contribution made by their culture including language, clothing, food, art, beliefs, customs, and music.

- The new course sequencing and standards have eliminated the option of either World Geography or World History to satisfy the graduation requirements.
- Teachers that are currently certified to teach Geography and/or History in high school will be able to teach the World History & Geography, and the United States History & Geography courses, even if they are not adequately prepared. A teacher who has never taken a college level geography course can teach one of the new hybrid courses.



What can the Cumberland Chapter of URISA do?

Be vigilant

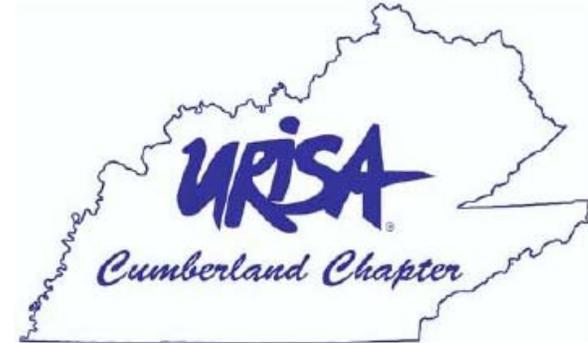
Work with the Kentucky and Tennessee Geographic Alliances (We have resources and experience with advocacy!)

Have a mechanism in place to act swiftly and cohesively

July 16, 2013

To: Members of the Tennessee State Board of Education

**From: The Board of Directors, Cumberland Chapter of the
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association**



The Cumberland Chapter of URISA (a duly incorporated entity within the State of Tennessee) and its parent organization, the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA), are made up of professionals and leaders in the field of Geographic Information Systems and Geospatial Sciences. The Board of Directors for the Cumberland Chapter of URISA, has reviewed the recent recommendation of the Tennessee Department of Education to lower the standard for geography instruction in Tennessee. We believe that the global economy and society that we live in today actually demands even more rigorous standards for geographic knowledge than what was used in the past. Incorporating geography into history studies falls far short of what is needed by a functioning member of society where location is a key component of governance, marketing and public safety. In addition, a 2012 study by the Boston Consulting Group, commissioned by several members of the Geospatial Industry including National Geographic, Google and ESRI, stated that: the *"U.S. geospatial industry generated \$73B in revenue last year, with half a million high-wage jobs"* as well as *"the industry is growing at between 25-30% per year"*. For Tennessee to benefit from such a high growth, high wage profession, we need to produce high school graduates who are well versed in geography and the geosciences. These new standards will not achieve that.

What can you do as an individual ?

Call, write, and/or email your elected officials

**Visit them in your home district or in
Frankfort / Nashville**

Volunteer at your child's school

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