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Is Your School Geography-Ready?

A Tool for Self-Assessment

Is your school ready to build students' geographic understanding and skills? Is it ready to help students learn about their world, from their neighborhood to places beyond U.S. borders? This tool is designed to help parents and other school leaders determine the geography readiness of a school. Find answers to the following questions, total the points, then compare your score using the ranges at the end.

Mission and Climate

- a. Which of the following ideas are part of your school mission or philosophy? (Score one point for each.)
- Fostering cultural understanding
 - Appreciating differences and/or finding strength in diversity
 - Developing global citizens and preparing students to live in a global, multicultural society
- b. Which of the following appear in your classrooms? (Score one point for each.)
- Posters and bulletin boards that represent different cultures and promote cultural understanding
 - Displays that feature different aspects of people and places around the world?
 - Artifacts from different cultures
 - Signs, banners, and labels in languages other than English

Resources

Note: In self-contained homeroom classrooms, score one point for each subject during which these resources are available to students.

- c. Where in your school are there *at least two* of the following: a globe, a class set of atlases, and a world map? (Score one point for each.)
- In the library
 - In every social studies and/or science classroom (and they are more than five years old)
 - In every social studies and/or science classroom (and they are not more than five years old)
 - In every classroom (and they are more than five years old)
 - In every classroom (and they are not more than five years old)
- d. Where in your school is there a wide variety of books, videos, and other media about **places and landforms** in your state, in the U.S., and around the world? (Score one point for each.)
- In the library/media center
 - In each social studies classroom
 - In each language arts/English classroom
 - In each science classroom
 - In every classroom
- e. Where in your school is there a wide variety of books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and other media about **different cultures and people** around the world? (Score one point for each.)
- In the library/media center
 - In each language arts classroom
 - In each social studies classroom
 - In every classroom



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- f. Where in your school can students use computer and Internet-based **technologies** involving mapping, virtual globes, or global positioning systems (GPS)? (Score one point for each.)
- In some classrooms
 - In the computer lab
 - In every classroom
 - As part of field trips

Professional Development

- g. Which groups of teachers have participated in **geography-related** professional development within the past two years? (Score one point for each.)
- Social studies/history
 - Science
 - Mathematics
 - Language arts/English
 - Performing arts
 - Visual arts
 - World languages
 - Technology
 - Physical education
 - Homeroom teachers
- h. Which groups of teachers have participated in **diversity or cultural sensitivity** training within the past two years? (Score one point for each.)
- Social studies/history
 - Science
 - Mathematics
 - Language arts/English
 - Performing arts
 - Visual arts
 - World languages
 - Technology
 - Physical education
 - Homeroom teachers
- i. How many teachers belong to geography, environmental science, social studies, cultural, or diversity-related **professional organizations**?
- Total

Curriculum and Instruction

- j. Which of the following **geography-related courses or subjects** are offered at your school? (Score one point for each.)
- Geography
 - World history and geography
 - Earth/physical science
 - Environmental science
 - Global/international studies
 - Contemporary issues/perspectives
 - AP Human Geography
 - Other

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- k. How many different **world languages** are offered at your school? (Score one point for each.)
_____ Total
- l. How many teachers assign students research projects related to the National Geography Standards? (Score one point for each example exhibited per class.)
_____ **The World in Spatial Terms** (Using and creating different types of maps)
_____ **Places and Regions** (Researching places close and far from home and connections across state and national borders)
_____ **Human Systems** (various economic, social, and political systems and institutions people have created, i.e. communications, transportation, education, government)
_____ **Physical Systems** (Representing landforms; collecting climate and environmental data)
_____ **Environment and Society** (Identifying how people affect environments and how environments impact people in rural, urban, suburban, and wild places)
_____ **The Uses of Geography** (Studying how geographical knowledge and skills can help people understand the past, interpret the present, and predict the future)
- m. Does your school or district curriculum specify **objectives** for geography? (Score one point for each.)
_____ As a stand-alone course(s)
_____ Integrated with other classes/subjects
_____ Based on the **National Geography Standards**

Extracurricular Activities and Field Trips

- n. Which of the following **extracurricular or enrichment activities** are offered? (Score one point for each.)
_____ International, environmental, or geography clubs
_____ International theme nights or festivals
_____ Cultural performers
_____ Environmental field trips or studies
_____ Cultural field trips
_____ World language clubs
_____ Geography competitions
_____ Guest speakers on environmental and international topics
_____ Career explorations featuring international, environmental, and/or geography-related professions
_____ Opportunities for students to communicate and/or collaborate with students from other countries

Total Points

Add all points to determine how “geography-ready” your school is.

Grades K-8

If you scored

0-15	Poor
15-30	Fair
30-45	Good
45+	Excellent

Grades 9-12

If you scored

0-25	Poor
25-50	Fair
50-75	Good
75+	Excellent

Next Steps

How did your school score? If it did not score as high as you would like, talk with school leaders, parents, teachers, or educational organizations about steps you can take to improve your geography readiness. For parent and teacher action kits and resources, go to www.MyWonderfulWorld.org.