

Rationale for Funding Support

The Center for Canadian-American Studies at Western Washington University, a U.S. Department of Education-designated *National Resource Center for Canada* (in consortium with the Canadian studies Center at University of Washington), has been training American teachers for more than thirty years through its annual *STUDY CANADA Summer Institute for K-12 Educators*. Since 1978, the six-day workshop has served as the core educational outreach program and has provided teachers from across the USA with an excellent foundation for teaching about Canada.

Indeed, *STUDY CANADA* is the nation's premier vehicle for educating teachers and developing student interest in Canada...the study of which is increasingly important to social studies curriculum due to Canada's role as our nation's most important trade partner and as a model for historical and political comparison. Because of the workshop's success, the Embassy of Canada has provided additional grant funding to subsidize the cost of enrolment. Your district's support for the \$500 registration cost for this significant professional development opportunity is appreciated since the combined registration and travel cost to Vancouver, British Columbia, is prohibitive for many educators otherwise. School and district support for participation is vital so that teachers can earn 3 undergraduate university quarter credits or 40 clock hours provided by the accredited course and begin including curricula on Canada as promoted by the US Department of Education and the National Council for the Social Studies..

It has been heartening to have teachers from across the country register for the program each year—from both border and non-border states—and receive local support for their attendance. Their state and district curriculum supervisors recognize the need for students to learn about Canada. In states, like Washington, that do not specify Canada in any grade level directives, it is *important* for educators to find ways to integrate Canadian subject matter into regular social studies curricula—particularly as new initiatives for teaching global perspectives take hold. In border states, it is particularly *imperative* to teach about our northern neighbor and partner in the world's largest trade relationship. Indeed, we are pleased that the National Council for the Social Studies has been targeting greater attention to filling this curriculum “gap” by showcasing Canada at its 2008 annual conference—an effort led by our National Resource Center for Canada—and that district social studies supervisors around the country are providing increasing support for teachers to foster global citizenry in their students.

David Paltrow, a student at WWU's Woodring College of Education, expressed this as well when asked in 2006 why Canada should be taught in K-12 classrooms:

Connecting Canada and the United States in our classrooms is one of the best ways that we can start children on the path towards global citizenship. As communication, trade and transportation continue to bring the world closer together students need to see how important it is to understand other countries and cultures. This is especially important in the case of Canada and the United States. With the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the economies of our two countries have become closely intertwined. Issues such as the export of inexpensive Canadian lumber into the US have caused tremendous political controversy. American politicians are being asked to stop these imports in order to protect American jobs. Is protecting the American lumber industry in the best interest of both countries? For our students to become effective leaders in the 21st Century they must understand issues such as this from the perspective of both countries. Exposing our students to these issues today will prepare them to be effective leaders in the mutually interdependent North America of the 21st Century.

All considered, the *STUDY CANADA Summer Institute for K-12 Educators* offers exceptional educational value. The “in-country” experience is affordable and the instruction on Canada is simply unmatched by any other professional development program. In addition to sessions on Canada's history, geography, government, and economics taught by experts from both Canada and the US, a focus on culture, Aboriginal issues, climate change, and social/environmental sustainability initiatives created for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games will be offered. Many teaching resources will be distributed and curriculum ideas discussed throughout the week.

I invite all interested K-12 educators, principals, and district social studies supervisors to contact me regarding our annual “STUDY CANADA” and other teacher-training initiatives.

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