

October 29, 2003

Cheri Pierson Yecke, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, Minnesota 55113-4266

Dear Commissioner Yecke:

Members of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information recently had an opportunity to review the current draft of the Social Studies Standard and were pleased to learn that it included a strong geography component. It voted unanimously to endorse the adoption of the standard with its emphasis on geographic education.

Members were especially pleased that the standard emphasized technology, including the provision that high school geography students "use Geographic Information Systems to answer geographic questions at a variety of scales from local to global." Geographic Information Science and Geographic Information Systems, known as GIS, are used by a growing number of organizations within Minnesota and throughout the nation for activities ranging from protecting the environment to responding to emergencies. Students introduced to GIS in high school will be prepared to apply those skills to their postsecondary studies and in productive careers that benefit us all.

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information brings together 23 experts from the geographic information community representing government agencies, higher education and the private sector, including 18 appointed annually, to coordinate millions of dollars of annual investments and recommend policies and practices that promote the effective use of GIS. The council considers GIS to be essential to improving the quality of geography education.

Please contact me if you have any questions about our endorsement or about the Council. The Council's web site is www.gis.state.mn.us.

Sincerely,



Larry Charboneau, Chair
MN Governor's Council on Geographic Information
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