

April, 2009

Social Studies Updates



*Keeping Maine educators informed
about current issues from the
Maine Department of Education.*

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Current Events Teacher Resource

**PBS's online *NewsHour Extra* provides
in-depth current events teacher resources.**

The website contains news pieces on a broad variety of current topics, lesson plans, and editorials and essays written by students. Recent postings have included reports on piracy off the coast of Somalia, President Obama's first 100 days in office, and how water scarcity is threatening global security.

To visit the site, go online to
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/>.

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GEEO Educators' Travel Programs 2009: Tunisia and India

Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO) is a 501c3 non-profit organization that helps and encourages educators to travel abroad. GEEO hopes to make America more outward-looking by helping teachers travel and then giving them an effective way to share these experiences in their classrooms.

For our summer 2009 programs we still have room left in our trips to Tunisia and India. Both of these trips are nearing capacity, so if you are interested, please contact GEEO as soon as possible.

Educators can earn graduate school credit and professional development credit while seeing the world. The trips are designed for teachers and include activities such as school visits and homestays that give participants authentic exposure to local culture. The trips are deeply discounted so as to be affordable to teachers. GEEO also helps teachers find funding to subsidize the cost of the trips.

Detailed information about each trip, including itineraries, costs, travel dates, and more can be found at www.geeo.org. GEEO can also be reached 7 days a week, toll free at 1-877-600-0105 between 9AM-10PM EST. To sign-up for GEEO's listserv, please send an email to listserv@geeo.org with the subject line "subscribe".

The Bill of Rights Institute: Links for Educators to Help Navigate the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) has been signed into law. Common questions educators are asking include:

- How can we use the funding to improve student achievement?
- How can we use the funding to increase teacher effectiveness?
- How can we use the funding to make progress in creating rigorous college- and career-ready standards and valid high-quality assessments?

Below are some useful links that will help you answer these questions:

- ARRA site: www.recovery.gov - a good place to start!
- State of Maine ARRA site – an overview of the funds allocated to Maine including education

<http://www.maine.gov/recovery/>

- U.S. Department of Education
 - State allocations
 - www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/recovery.html
- Learning Points Associates site: www.learningpt.org/recovery/ - LPA is a research/consulting firm that is offering an Education Recovery and Reinvestment Center web page.

Assessment Designer Measured Progress Presents Informational Video

Social Studies is no longer a part of Maine's state testing, but the New England Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP) is an important assessment component for elementary and middle schools in Maine. Now Measured Progress, the designer of Maine's state assessments (NECAP and MHSA) is presenting a six-minute video covering the company's history, as well as a range of features of testing processes such as item development for NECAP and how educators can use assessment data in the classroom. (NOTE: all items shown were screened to guarantee that no unreleased items were used!!)

To watch the full episode, please visit <http://www.wmur.com/chronicle/18810028/detail.html>.

Maine High School Graduation

The bill regarding graduation in Maine now has the designation LD 1325 and is still working its way through the legislative process. You can find the text of the bill at http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_p.s.asp?id=1325&PID=1456&num=124. A public hearing has yet to be scheduled.

Maine Course Pathways (the Syllabus Project)

The Maine Course Pathways (MCP) project is still on track. Several schools have been working on developing and submitting their syllabi. We're still planning to open up the tool in September for everyone who would like to use it. There will be training sessions in the fall. For more information visit the MCP website at <https://www.epiconline.org/maine/>.

This publication contains third-party information and links to internet sites not affiliated with the Maine Department of Education.