



Support for New AP Course Proposal:

Geographic Information Science & Technology

To: Dr. Lawrence Charap
Director, AP Curriculum and Content Development

We, the undersigned organizations, write to urge The College Board to approve the American Association of Geographers' proposal for a new Advanced Placement course in Geographic Information Science & Technology (AP GIS&T).

The AP GIS&T course proposal was developed with a grant from the Geography Education National Implementation Project (GENIP), a consortium of geography organizations including the AAG, National Geographic Society, the National Council for Geographic Education, and the American Geographical Society. GENIP coordinates and supports the development of major national initiatives for geography education, including *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards* and AP Human Geography (APHG).

APHG has proven to be one of the most successful and fastest growing AP courses. In 2016, nearly 180,000 high school students took the APHG exam. We believe that an AP course in GIS&T would be equally successful, for the following reasons:

1) *GIS&T has rapidly become a vibrant component of education, research, and innovation in the United States.* As a widely accepted component of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, GIS&T is a major field of research with a strong presence in U.S. higher education. Several hundred academic programs offer undergraduate and graduate-level coursework in GIS&T that prepares students for exciting and lucrative careers across a wide array of public and private sector organizations.

2) *Access to geospatial technologies has never been greater.* Geospatial technologies include Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the Global Positioning System (GPS), virtual globes, satellite imagery, geographic visualizations, and other locational technologies for the display, management, and analysis of spatial data. Mapping applications and locational technologies are ubiquitous on mobile devices, cars, and computers. Educators in schools enjoy free access to numerous web mapping and open source geospatial software platforms such as QGIS. Additionally, in 2014 the GIS company Esri announced a \$1 billion gift of cloud-based GIS software to support the Obama Administration's ConnectEd initiative. Over 3,000 schools have adopted free GIS software for classroom instruction under the Esri-ConnectEd program.

3) *The GIS&T industry is rapidly growing and evolving.* A recent study commissioned by Google estimates the value of the GIS&T industry's global services at \$150-270 billion annually.

