

Groundbreaking report details status of US secondary Earth science education

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The Center for Geoscience Education and Public Understanding at the American Geosciences Institute has released a landmark report on the status of Earth Science education in U.S. middle and high schools, describing in detail significant gaps between identified priorities and lagging practice.

The report, "Earth and Space Sciences Education in U.S. Secondary Schools: Key Indicators and Trends," offers baseline data on indicators of the subject's status since the release of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in April 2013. Establishing clear aims for the subject, the NGSS state that the Earth and Space Sciences should have equal status with the Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Technology, and Engineering. However, the report shows that school districts and other organizations fail to assign the Earth Sciences this status.

Only one of the nation's 50 states requires a year-long Earth/Environmental Science course for high school graduation, whereas 32 states require a Life Science course, and 27 require a Physical Science course, according to the [report](#). Only six states require that students are taught Earth Science concepts as part of their graduation requirements. Detailed and analyzed are key indicators including:

- presence of Earth Science topics in state and national standards;
- consideration of Earth Science as a graduation requirement;
- evaluation of Earth Science concepts on high-stakes assessments;
- and

- acceptance of Earth Science courses for college admission.

Recommendations for better treatment of Earth Science subject matter include changes in the subject's relevance to graduation requirements, the discipline's presence on assessments, designation of Earth Science courses as laboratory courses, and establishment of an Advanced Placement Earth Science program.

Provided by American Geosciences Institute

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