

Southern Oregon education service district awarded almost \$1 million to improve teaching of American

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Walden wrote letter in support of U.S. history program

The Southern Oregon Education Service District in Medford, Ore., has been selected to receive a \$984,294 federal grant to improve the quality of American history education, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced Thursday. This year, the Teaching American History program will award 122 new grants worth \$116.6 million to school districts in 40 states nationwide.

"This is an extraordinary and well-deserved grant for Southern Oregon school teachers, and the students they teach," Congressman Greg Walden, wrote a letter in support of the grant to Southern Oregon ESD, said. "I am grateful that the U.S. Department of Education has teamed up with local districts to ignite the interests of America's youth in our nation's rich history. Giving students a firm understanding of our country's past is an essential part of raising the next generation of civically engaged Americans."

"These grants will provide teachers with the resources they need to engage their students and provide them with a better understanding of our nation's history and the principles of our democracy," Secretary Spellings said. "A strong foundation in American history will ensure that our young people grow up to become active and informed citizens."

The professional development program titled Legacy of Freedom Liberty Fellowship will provide teachers with a comprehensive knowledge of American history through the use of primary sources; the study of historical events, issues, modern historiographies; and more. Participants in the fellowship also will write historical narratives, create substantive lessons and generate lessons as historical experts do, which will include web-based history activities from the Oregon history standards.

The Teaching American History discretionary grant program supports three-year projects to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of traditional American history through intensive, on-going professional development. Grantees must work in partnership with one or more organizations that have extensive knowledge of American history, including libraries, museums, nonprofit history or humanities organizations and higher education institutions.

History is one of the core academic subjects under the landmark No Child Left Behind Act; however, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, which is commonly known as the "Nation's Report Card," shows that less than one-quarter of America's students in grades 4, 8 and 12 are proficient in American history. To improve student achievement, the Teaching American History grant program will immerse history teachers in American history content and researched-based teaching strategies, to help them teach American history in an exciting and engaging way.

More information about Teaching American History grants is available at:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/teachinghistory/index.html>.

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