

Brandon Teacher is recognized for his award-winning work to advance geography teaching in Canada

OTTAWA, ON, October 24, 2018 – Rob Langston is a teacher on a mission. Whether he is training students how to use the latest cutting edge technologies to solve geography problems, facilitating geo-technology workshops for Manitoba teachers, providing advice on geographic texts, this Geography teacher at École secondaire Neelin High School in Brandon, Manitoba does all this and more simply to advance geographic literacy in Canada.

For his dynamic teaching approach, Rob Langston is being recognized with The Royal Canadian Geographical Society's (RCGS) [2018 Geographic Literacy Award](#), which celebrates individuals who have made significant contributions to geographic literacy in Canada. "Rob is energetic and creative and possesses a passion for geography that exceeds the job description of a typical geography teacher," says Connie Wyatt Anderson, chair of Canadian Geographic Education and vice-president of the RCGS Board. "He goes above and beyond the prescribed curriculum and regularly engages his students in robust fieldwork, scientific studies and ever-changing geo-technologies; as well, he is the GIS go-to for Manitoba teachers."

"It was an extremely proud moment to be nominated for and to win the Geographic Literacy Award," says Langston. "With the multiple problems facing the Earth and society today being geographic in nature, it is essential that students are made aware of the importance of geography and that they leave school with the geographic knowledge and skills that will better prepare them for the future. It is an honor to be recognized for my efforts in supporting students and other educators in this area."

Rob Langston often takes his students out of the classroom to give them a more practical and informed understanding of the complex issues facing our society. For example, Manitoba's Grade 12 curriculum asks students to identify the major issues facing Indigenous groups in the world today. Working with Kevin Tacan, an Elder from the Sioux Valley Reserve, Neelin students and teachers traveled to Brandon's former residential school and visited the local reserve to study the community's culturally significant areas and features. Using GIS, students were able to analyze, organize, and present geographic data, as well as to create bilingual informational posters that have been well received wherever they are presented. Beyond mastering GIS technology, Langston's students benefitted from gaining a better understanding of life on a reserve, the challenges associated with it, and likely a better appreciation for Indigenous People and their cultures.

Langston's innovative teaching methods are scoring results. At the Skills Manitoba Competition, a provincial GIS Skills Competition, Neelin students have won 29/33 medals and all 11 gold medals since the GIS testing was added to the competition. "Rob has been an integral part of putting geospatial technology in the hands of students in Manitoba," says Jean Tong, K-12 Manager at [Esri Canada](#). "Through the many partnerships and projects he has developed, the students have a chance to become citizen scientists and make a difference."

The Geographic Literacy Award is comprised of a medal and \$2,500 prize, split evenly between the award winner and a donation in their name to support geographic education in Canada. Rob Langston will be donating \$1,250 to [Canadian Geographic Education](#). Langston will be presented his medal at a medal ceremony on November 1. The ceremony precedes the RCGS College of Fellows dinner taking place at the National Arts Centre.

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