



# Cordova for President

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## The United States Constitution

Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution imposes only three eligibility requirements on persons serving as president, based on the officeholder's age, time of residency in the U.S., and citizenship status:

## U.S. Constitution – Presidential Candidate Eligibility

"No person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty-five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States."

## THE GUARDIAN CURRICULUM

**An Education Philosophy and Policy Framework for Civic Ownership of America's Natural Resource Inheritance**

### Our Campaign Statement for The Guardian Curriculum:

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*We have built a system that teaches children to be consumers and workers but never teaches them that they are owners. Every child in this country is born an heir to \$45 trillion in natural wealth. Not one of them is taught that in school. We will change that. **The first generation raised as guardians of their inheritance will be the last generation that allows it to be taken from them.***

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Every child born in the United States is an heir.

Not to a family fortune. Not to a trust fund. To something larger and older than any of that — an inheritance of natural wealth that was formed over millions of years and belongs, by the most fundamental principle of democratic sovereignty, to every American equally. Timber. Oil. Minerals. Water. Agricultural land. Public forests. Offshore fisheries. Rare earth elements. **An estimated \$45 trillion in sovereign resource wealth held in common by every person who calls this country home.** *[Estimated because no complete, current, independently audited public inventory exists — a fact students will learn in Stage Two.]*



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Not one of those children is taught that in school.

They are taught to read and to calculate. They are taught the branches of government and the dates of wars. They are taught, increasingly, how to prepare for an economy that will employ them. These are not unimportant things. But they are incomplete in a way that has had devastating consequences for American democracy and for the stewardship of American public wealth.

A citizenry that does not know what it owns cannot govern what it owns. A citizenry that does not understand how its common wealth is managed cannot prevent that wealth from being captured by private interests. A citizenry that was never taught that civic participation is the price of self-governance will not pay that price until the consequences of not paying it become impossible to ignore.

The consequences are no longer possible to ignore.

Private equity and institutional investors have taken effective control of the management of American natural resources, returning a royalty of 12 to 18 percent to the public while extracting the remainder as private profit. The same extraction model has taken hold in healthcare, housing, agriculture, and the supply chains that determine what working Americans pay for everything they need to survive. The political system that should have prevented this was itself weakened through decades of campaign contributions, regulatory appointments, and the patient, generational purchase of access to decision-makers.

This did not happen because Americans are unintelligent or indifferent. It happened because the institutions responsible for producing informed, engaged citizens — our public schools — were never asked to produce guardians. **They were asked to produce workers and consumers.** That system produced the outcomes it was designed to produce. The Guardian Curriculum proposes a different design with a different purpose.

This paper proposes something different. It proposes that the purpose of public education in the United States be expanded to include, as a core and non-negotiable obligation, the production of citizens who know what they own, understand how it is governed, and accept the responsibility of guarding it.



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This is the Guardian Curriculum.

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## **PART ONE: THE PHILOSOPHY**

### **What Education Is For and What It Has Been Missing**

#### **THE CURRENT PURPOSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Public education in the United States serves three recognized purposes. The first is individual development — preparing young people with the cognitive tools, knowledge base, and skills needed to live fulfilling and productive lives. The second is economic participation — producing a workforce capable of sustaining and growing the national economy. The third is civic preparation — creating citizens capable of participating in democratic self-governance.

The first two purposes are pursued with genuine commitment and significant resource. The third is pursued nominally.

Civic education in American schools consists primarily of the mechanics of government — the three branches, the legislative process, the Bill of Rights, and the historical narrative of American democracy. These are necessary but radically insufficient. Teaching a child how a bill becomes a law without teaching them what economic forces determine which bills are written, by whom, and in whose interest, is like teaching someone the rules of chess without telling them that the board is already set up to favor one side.

What is entirely absent from American civic education is economic citizenship — the understanding that democracy is not only a political system but an economic one, that public wealth is real and quantifiable, that its governance is a civic function, and that citizens who do not actively participate in that governance cede it to those who will.

#### **THE MISSING PRINCIPLE**



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The missing principle is this: in a democracy, the people are not just voters. They are owners.

They own the natural resources beneath the public land. They own the spectrum on which telecommunications companies operate. They own the research that produced the pharmaceutical patents now held by private corporations. They own the infrastructure built by public investment over two centuries. They own, collectively, an inheritance of incalculable value.

Ownership is not passive. It carries responsibility. A property owner who never inspects their property, never reviews the lease agreements on it, never holds their managers accountable, and never participates in decisions about its use will eventually find that the property has been managed in someone else's interest. This is precisely what has happened to the American public's natural resource inheritance.

The Guardian Curriculum is the educational framework for producing citizens who understand their ownership, accept the responsibility it carries, and exercise it actively across their lifetimes.

## **IT IS NOT INDOCTRINATION. IT IS INFORMATION.**

This paper will be accused of promoting a political agenda through the education system. That accusation must be addressed directly and without apology.

Teaching a child that the United States holds \$45 trillion in natural resources that belong to the public is not a political position. It is a fact. Teaching them what royalty rates are and how they are set is not advocacy. It is civics. Teaching them that they have the right to attend a public meeting, review a public contract, and submit public comment on a resource permit is not ideology. It is the law.

What would be ideological is continuing to teach civic participation as a theoretical right while providing no practical knowledge of how economic power operates, how public resources are governed, or what the mechanisms are for citizens to exercise their ownership. That omission has served the interests of those who benefit from an uninformed public. It is not neutral. It has never been neutral.



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The Guardian Curriculum teaches facts, mechanisms, history, and skills. It does not teach students what conclusions to reach. It teaches them how to reach conclusions — and then it sends them into the world with the tools to act on what they find.

## **WHAT THE GUARDIAN CURRICULUM DOES NOT DO**

The Guardian Curriculum does not prescribe a single answer to contested questions. Should royalty rates be 18% or 25% or 50%? Should minerals be extracted at all? Should the Alaska model be replicated nationally? These are legitimate political questions on which reasonable people disagree. The curriculum teaches students how to analyze them — not what to conclude. A teacher who tells a student their Local Resource Report is wrong because it recommends lower royalties has violated the curriculum's neutrality principle. A teacher who fails to teach what a royalty is has violated their professional obligation.

## **THE MORAL FRAMEWORK: TWO LENSES, ONE SPECIES**

Information alone produces clever citizens, not always good ones. The Guardian Curriculum therefore anchors itself to two universal principles — one foundational, one reciprocal.

### **First Lens: One Species**

Before any question of fairness, before any calculation of interest, before any negotiation over who gets what from the common inheritance — there is a prior question:

*Who counts as "us"?*

The Guardian Curriculum answers that question at the start, not as a political statement but as a biological and historical fact:

There is only one human species. Every person on this planet shares 99.9 percent of their DNA. The remaining 0.1 percent has never justified treating anyone as less deserving, less worthy, or less real.



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This is not idealism. It is the plain truth of evolutionary biology. And it has profound implications for how the public inheritance is governed.

A resource policy that benefits one group at the expense of another is not a failure of calculation. It is a failure of species-consciousness. The person in the coal town, the person in the coastal city, the person whose ancestors were stolen from another continent, the person whose grandparents arrived last year — they are all, without exception, members of the same species, heirs to the same planet, and stakeholders in the same American inheritance.

### **The Shared Species Lens is this:**

*Act toward every other human being as if their survival and flourishing were as important as your own — because on a planet with finite resources and a shared atmosphere, they are.*

This lens does not erase difference. It does not demand that everyone want the same things. It does not forbid competition, disagreement, or the legitimate defense of one's own interests.

What it does is forbid the foundational lie that has enabled every extraction and every exclusion: "*They are not like us. They do not count the same.*"

In every grade, in every project, in every resource decision the curriculum examines, the first question is not "*What is fair to me?*" It is not even "*What is fair to my community?*"

The first question is:

*Am I thinking like a member of one species — or like a member of a tribe that has forgotten it is one?*

### **Second Lens: Reciprocity (The Golden Rule)**

Once we have established that there is no "them" — only "us" — the second lens asks: *How then shall we treat each other?*

*Treat the inheritance of others as you would have them treat your own.*



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A student analyzing a mining lease applies the lens: *If the land beneath my home held this mineral, what royalty would I consider fair? What environmental protection would I demand? What voice would I want in the decision?*

**One question is asked in every grade, in every project, in every resource dispute the curriculum touches:**

*Would I accept this outcome if I were the other person?*

That question does not answer itself. It does not replace evidence, argument, or law. It is a discipline of the imagination — grounded first in the knowledge that the "other person" is not a different kind of creature, but a member of the same species, with the same fundamental needs, the same love for their children, the same fear of being forgotten.

A citizen who cannot imagine the humanity of the person across the negotiating table is not a guardian. They are just another interest group. The Guardian Curriculum produces the former. It has no interest in producing the latter.

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## PART TWO: THE FRAMEWORK

### Grade-by-Grade Implementation

#### THE FOUR STAGES

The Guardian Curriculum is organized in four developmental stages, each building on the last, each appropriate to the cognitive and civic capacities of the student at that stage.

Stage One — Belonging (Grades K through 3)

Stage Two — Understanding (Grades 4 through 8)

Stage Three — Participation (Grades 9 through 12)

Stage Four — Specialization (Post-secondary)



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## **STAGE ONE: BELONGING**

*Grades K Through 3*

The foundational concept of Stage One is simple enough for a five-year-old and important enough to ground everything that follows: some things belong to everyone.

At this stage the curriculum does not address policy, economics, or governance. It addresses relationship — the relationship between children and the natural world they share with every other human, and the concept that shared ownership creates shared responsibility.

### **Core Learning Objectives:**

Children understand that public lands, parks, forests, rivers, and natural spaces are shared property — they belong to everyone in the community and the country, and everyone has a responsibility to care for them.

Children develop a personal, local relationship with a specific natural resource in their region. A class in the Pacific Northwest visits and studies a public forest. A class in the Gulf Coast studies a public fishery. A class in the Great Plains studies a public watershed. The resource is real, local, and connected to the child's actual life.

Children understand the concept of stewardship — that the things we share require care, that we receive them from those who came before us and pass them to those who come after, and that how we treat them matters.

**Children learn that every person on Earth is the same kind of creature. A class studies a simple fact: we all need water, air, food, shelter, and each other. The question asked: "Does the river know the difference between your family and the family downstream?" (Answer: No. Neither should you.)** [Shared Species Lens embedded]

Children learn the Golden Rule as a living practice, not a memorized phrase. Before a class decides how to care for "their" shared forest or river, they are asked: "If this were your family's water, how would you want the people upstream to treat it?" The answer becomes the class's stewardship covenant.



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### **Pedagogical Approach:**

Stage One is experiential. Field visits to public lands, parks, and natural resource sites are curriculum requirements, not enrichment activities. Every child in every school district has the right to a direct, personal encounter with the natural inheritance they share.

Local resource managers — forest rangers, watershed managers, fishery biologists, public land administrators — are regular classroom visitors. Children meet the people who do the work of stewardship and understand that this work is a public function carried out by public servants on behalf of all Americans.

### **STAGE TWO: UNDERSTANDING**

*Grades 4 Through 8*

Stage Two is where the curriculum becomes substantive. Students at this level can understand cause and effect, can read basic financial information, and can engage with questions of fairness, governance, and accountability.

### **Core Learning Objectives:**

**The Resource Inventory.** Students develop a detailed understanding of what the United States owns — the full inventory of natural resources on public lands and waters, their estimated value, their geographic distribution, and their relationship to the economic and physical life of the communities where they exist. This is taught as a subject with the same rigor as mathematics or science, because it is as important as either.

**How Public Resources Are Governed.** Students learn the governance structure of American natural resource management — the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue, state resource agencies, and the role of Congress in establishing the rules under which public resources are leased and managed. They learn what a lease is, what a royalty is, how royalty rates are established, and who participates in that establishment.

**The History of Public Resource Governance.** Students study the actual history of how American natural resource policy developed — the 1872 Mining Law that still governs hard rock mining and has not been substantively reformed in 150 years. The history of oil



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royalty rates. The creation of the National Park system. The Alaska Permanent Fund and what it produced for Alaskan civic life. The history of water rights in the American West. This history is not sanitized. Students learn what was gotten right and what was gotten wrong and why.

**Following the Money.** Students learn the formal mechanisms through which private interests participate in resource governance: campaign finance (as legally structured), lobbying (disclosure rules, permitted activities), regulatory comment periods, and the qualifications for agency appointments. They also learn the historical record — including cases where royalty rates have remained unchanged for decades, and the legislative and administrative processes by which that occurred. The goal is not to teach that influence is improper. The goal is to teach how influence actually works, so that students can judge for themselves whether any given outcome serves the public interest.

**Financial Literacy as Civic Education.** Students learn to read a public budget, a government lease, a royalty statement, and a public financial report. These are civic documents that belong to every American and that every American should be able to read. The fact that most Americans cannot is a governance failure, not an inevitability.

## **The Capstone for Stage Two — The Local Resource Report:**

Every student in grades 7 and 8 completes a Local Resource Report — a research project documenting the natural resources in their county or region, how those resources are currently governed, who holds the relevant leases or permits, what the public receives in return, and what the student believes should be different and why.

**Every Local Resource Report must begin with a mandatory acknowledgment: "The people affected by this resource decision are the same species as me. Their children are the same as my future children." The report is not accepted without this acknowledgment.** [Shared Species Lens embedded]

Every Local Resource Report must include a section titled "The Other Side." In this section, the student writes the strongest possible version of the argument against their own position — and then applies the lens: "If I were the person whose livelihood or community



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depended on the current system, would I find my own proposal fair?" The report is incomplete without this section.

This report is presented to the class and submitted to the local county government or resource agency as a public comment. It is not a simulation. It is a real submission to a real government body. Students learn that their voice has a destination.

## **STAGE THREE: PARTICIPATION**

*Grades 9 Through 12*

Stage Three moves from understanding to action. High school students are approaching voting age. They are capable of genuine civic participation. The Guardian Curriculum at this stage requires it.

### **Core Learning Objectives:**

**Comparative Resource Governance.** Students study how other nations and jurisdictions have managed public resource wealth. Norway's Government Pension Fund — built from oil revenues and now the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world, generating returns that fund Norwegian public services permanently. The Alaska Permanent Fund and its annual dividend to every resident. Singapore's public housing model. Bolivia's nationalization of natural gas and the outcomes, both positive and negative, for its population. Students learn that the current American approach to resource governance is a choice, not a law of nature, and that different choices produce different outcomes.

**The Economics of Extraction.** Students study in depth what the extraction model is, how it operates, and what its consequences have been. Private equity in resource industries. The financialization of commodity supply chains. The difference between investment and extraction. The economic history of communities built around extractive industries — coal towns, timber towns, oil towns — and what happened to them when the extraction was complete. This is economic history with human faces.

**Organizing and Civic Action.** Students study the history of successful civic movements that changed resource governance — the conservation movement and the creation of the National Park system, the environmental justice movement and its intersection with resource policy, the Alaskan citizen movement that produced the Permanent Fund, the



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community land trust movement in housing. They study the tools of civic action: public comment processes, permit challenges, Freedom of Information requests, local elections, ballot initiatives, and cooperative formation.

**The Law of Public Resources.** Students receive substantive instruction in the legal framework governing public resources — the Public Trust Doctrine, the Property Clause of the Constitution, the General Welfare Clause, the history of eminent domain, and the legal mechanisms through which citizens can challenge resource governance decisions. This is not law school. It is the legal literacy that every citizen in a resource-owning democracy should have.

## **The Capstone for Stage Three — The Guardian Project:**

Every senior completes a Guardian Project — a year-long engagement with actual civic governance at the local, state, or federal level related to natural resource management or public wealth.

The Guardian Project requires the student to:

Identify a specific public resource governance issue in their community or region. This may be a grazing lease, a mining permit, a timber sale, a water rights dispute, a public land management plan, or any other real governance question involving public resource wealth.

Research the issue thoroughly — reviewing public documents, attending relevant public meetings, interviewing relevant officials, landowners, workers, and community members.

**Develop a Species Impact Statement — one paragraph describing how the student's proposed governance would affect people who are different from them in race, class, geography, or political belief. The student is not required to change their proposal. They are required to prove they thought about everyone, not just their own.** [Shared Species Lens embedded]

Develop a substantive position on what public governance of that resource should look like and why. A position defending current governance is as acceptable as one proposing reform, provided it is substantively reasoned and evidence-based.



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Present that position in a public forum — a county commission meeting, a state agency hearing, a congressional town hall, or a formal public comment submission.

Document the experience and its outcome in a written and oral presentation to the school community.

Projects are evaluated in part on whether the student demonstrated genuine engagement with stakeholders who hold opposing interests. A project that never speaks to a worker, a leaseholder, or a community member who would be harmed by the student's proposal has failed the empathy requirement. The lens is not optional.

The Guardian Project is not graded on whether the student's position is adopted. It is graded on the rigor of the research, the quality of the reasoning, and the genuine exercise of civic participation. Students learn that participation is the obligation, not the outcome.

## **STAGE FOUR: SPECIALIZATION**

*Post-Secondary Guardian Education*

Every community college and trade school in the country — fully funded under the American Resource Dividend framework — integrates Guardian education into vocational and professional training.

Post-secondary Guardian education is integrated into existing vocational and professional programs through required modules totaling no more than 30 instructional hours per credential. Content focuses on the governance of resources relevant to the student's field. No separate "Guardian course" is required; the material is embedded.

**Every post-secondary Guardian module includes a case study of a resource decision that harmed a group because they were deemed "undeserving" — and asks: "What would the Shared Species Lens have required instead?"** [Shared Species Lens embedded]

The principle is straightforward: the industries you work in and the resources you work with have a public governance dimension that is inseparable from your professional responsibilities as a citizen.



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## Examples of Integration:

**Construction and Trades.** Students in electrician, plumbing, HVAC, and construction programs learn about the resource governance of the materials they work with — lumber, copper, steel, rare earth minerals for electrical systems. They learn how cost-plus public resource pricing would change the economics of their industry.

**Healthcare.** Students in nursing, medical technology, and healthcare administration programs learn about the history of healthcare financialization, the nonprofit model for healthcare delivery, the governance of pharmaceutical patents as publicly-funded research assets, and the civic mechanisms for holding healthcare institutions accountable to public interest.

**Agriculture and Environmental Science.** Students learn about federal water rights, agricultural land leases, the history of corporate consolidation in agriculture, and public trust management of agricultural land.

**Energy and Environmental Technology.** Students in renewable energy, environmental technology, and natural resource management programs learn the full governance framework for the resources their careers will involve.

## The Guardian Credential:

Every post-secondary student who completes the Guardian education component of their program receives a Guardian Credential — a formal recognition, appended to their vocational certificate or associate degree, that they have completed civic ownership education. The Credential is recognized by relevant federal agencies for hiring preference in public-resource management positions.

Over time, the Guardian Credential becomes a meaningful signal in the labor market — not a requirement, but a recognition that this person understands the public dimensions of their professional work and is prepared to engage with them.



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## PART THREE: THE ALASKA MODEL

### Proof That Ownership Changes Everything

The Alaska Permanent Fund was established by constitutional amendment in 1976, requiring that at least 25 percent of all mineral royalties received by the state be deposited into a permanent fund invested for the long-term benefit of all Alaskans. Every Alaska resident receives an annual dividend from the fund. In 2023, that dividend was \$1,312 per person.

The fund currently holds over **80 billion in assets and has paid out over 25 billion in dividends** since its establishment.

But the economic benefit, significant as it is, is not the most important outcome of the Alaska Permanent Fund. The most important outcome is what it did to Alaskan civic consciousness.

Alaskans know what the Permanent Fund is. They follow its annual performance. They engage with debates about its investment policy, its dividend formula, and its long-term management. They vote on candidates and ballot measures with the fund's health as a genuine consideration. Politicians who propose raiding the fund or changing its structure face immediate, organized citizen opposition — because every Alaskan understands personally what is at stake.

The fund created a population of resource owners who behave like owners because the financial reality of their ownership is tangible and annual. A check arrives. It is real. The source of that check — the resource wealth of their state, managed in their interest — is understood.

The Guardian Curriculum does for civic ownership what the Alaska Permanent Fund dividend does for financial ownership. It makes the inheritance real. It makes the responsibility personal. It creates the lived experience of being a stakeholder rather than a bystander.



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The American Resource Dividend proposed in this administration's economic framework is the national equivalent of the Alaska Permanent Fund. The Guardian Curriculum is the educational system that ensures every American understands what that dividend is, where it comes from, and what their role is in ensuring it continues to be managed in their interest.

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## **PART FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION**

### **How the Guardian Curriculum Gets Built**

#### **FEDERAL FRAMEWORK, LOCAL EXECUTION**

The Guardian Curriculum is established as a federal educational framework — funded through the American Resource Dividend and implemented through the Department of Education in partnership with state education agencies. It sets minimum standards and learning objectives at each stage. It funds curriculum development, teacher training, and the Guardian Project infrastructure.

Local school districts retain control over pedagogical approach, local resource focus, and specific curriculum content within the federal framework. A school in rural Montana focuses its resource education on timber and water. A school in urban Detroit focuses on industrial minerals, manufacturing supply chains, and public banking. A school in coastal Louisiana focuses on offshore energy, fisheries, and the environmental consequences of extraction. The framework is national. The content is local.

#### **RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL ACCOMMODATION**

The Guardian Curriculum respects existing rights of parental opt-out and religious accommodation. Students who do not participate in Guardian Projects or specific instructional modules for constitutionally protected reasons shall complete alternative



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civic assignments of comparable rigor, determined by the school in consultation with the parent or guardian.

## **TEACHER TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION**

A Guardian Curriculum Teacher Certification program is established through the Department of Education in partnership with public universities. Teachers who complete the certification program — which covers resource governance, public finance, civic law, and community organizing — receive a salary supplement funded through the Resource Dividend.

This serves two purposes. It ensures that the curriculum is taught by people who genuinely understand it. And it begins to correct the national challenge of teacher compensation that has made it difficult to attract and retain talented professionals, particularly in high-cost regions and high-need schools.

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

The Guardian Curriculum is developed through a National Curriculum Council — composed of public school teachers, curriculum specialists, resource managers, civic organizations, labor representatives, and academic researchers in economics, law, environmental science, and history. No seat on the Council is held by any representative of private resource extraction companies, private equity, or financial industry interests.

The curriculum is published as open source material — available to every school in the country, freely adaptable, continuously updated as resource governance landscape evolves. It is not a product sold to school districts by a curriculum corporation. It belongs to the public, like the resources it teaches students to govern.

## **FUNDING**

The Guardian Curriculum is funded through the American Resource Dividend at an estimated cost of 15 to 20 billion annually — covering teacher training and certification supplements, curriculum development and maintenance, Guardian Project infrastructure, field visit programming, and post-secondary integration. This represents less than 5



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percent of the Resource Dividend's annual allocation and less than 2 percent of current total K-12 education spending.

It is the most important 2 percent ever spent.

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## CONCLUSION: THE GENERATION THAT GUARDS

Every reform this administration proposes — the National Resource Trust, the nonprofit healthcare system, the public auto insurance fund, the affordable housing framework — will face continuous pressure from the interests it displaces. That pressure will not stop when the legislation passes. It will not stop when the first administration ends. It will be sustained, patient, generational, and well-funded.

The only force that can match it, over generations, is a citizenry that was taught from childhood to be guardians.

Not passive beneficiaries. Not grateful recipients of government programs. Guardians. Owners. People who know what they have, know who is trying to take it, and know exactly what to do about it — and who never forget that the people across from them are the same species, deserving the same consideration, bound by the same shared fate.

The Guardian Curriculum produces that citizenry. It is the infrastructure beneath every other infrastructure this campaign proposes. It is the reform that makes all other reforms last.

**The first generation raised as guardians of their inheritance — and as members of one species — will be the last generation that allows it to be taken from them.**

That is the purpose of public education in a democracy that takes itself seriously.



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*For you.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Cordova'.

**Vincent Cordova**

*The next 48<sup>th</sup> President of the United States,*

**A Member of Your Global Family**

*On behalf of all who refuse to surrender the future without a fight.*