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New Social Studies Standards commission announced; first meeting set for May 4

PIERRE, S.D. — Today, the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) announced the formation of a new Social Studies Content Standards Commission and set the first meeting date for Wednesday, May 4. The commission will meet throughout the summer.

The new commission is comprised of 15 members, plus a facilitator who will help manage the preparation of the draft standards that will be put forth for public review. The purpose of the first meeting is to allow the commission to get organized and begin a review of the draft Social Studies Content Standards.

“The goal of this review process is to receive input from a diverse range of experts, including parents, educators, and Native Americans to create the best standards for our schools and ensure that our kids learn true, honest, and balanced social studies,” said Secretary of Education Tiffany Sanderson. “This thorough and transparent process allows for us to develop strong and comprehensive standards for our schools to continue to improve upon the education provided to our children.”

The Social Studies Content Standards Commission is comprised of the following members:

- Mark Miller, Chair of Commission
- Joe Circle Bear
- Janet Finzen
- Stephanie Hiatt
- Benjamin F. Jones, Ph.D. – State Historian
- Dylan Kessler
- Aaron Levisay
- Christopher Motz
- Shaun Nielsen
- Fred Osborn – State Director of Indian Education
- Jon Schaff
- Mary Shuey
- State Representative Tamara St. John
- Samantha Walder
- State Senator John Wiik

The social studies standards are reviewed every seven years. The standards provide the expectations for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. School districts use them to inform local K-12 curriculum. Once approved by the commission, the draft standards will be open to public review, which includes four hearings at locations around the state. The Board of Education Standards will make a final decision on approval after the public comment period has concluded.

More details on future meetings and processes will be reviewed at the May 4 meeting.

An overview of the South Dakota Content Standards process may be reviewed [here](#).