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## **New Standalone Western Civilization Content Standards Proposed for Idaho High Schoolers**

(BOISE) – New standalone content standards will ask students to demonstrate knowledge of the development of Western civilization, including the rise and fall of ancient empires, progress of the scientific revolution and the birth and development of ideals at the foundation of our U.S. Constitution. The new guidelines were developed by content area experts and were introduced as part of the Idaho Department of Education’s review and revision of statewide social studies standards.

Content standards, which serve as guidelines for academic consistency statewide, are developed and maintained by the Idaho Department of Education and subject matter experts and are reviewed for approval by the State Board of Education and the Idaho Legislature.

The new Western civilization content standards have been developed to support a two-semester, high school elective course focusing on the key ideas, events and figures that shaped the modern Western world and the foundations of American society.

The standards support student knowledge in the following areas:

- Introduction to Western Civilization
- Ancient Greece (c. B.C. 800 – B.C. 150)
- Ancient Rome (c. B.C. 500 – A.D. 500)
- Byzantine Empire and Middle Ages (c. A.D. 330 – A.D. 1450)
- The Renaissance and Reformation (c. A.D. 1400 – A.D. 1600)
- The Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution (c. A.D. 1500 – A.D. 1800)

“Ensuring that Idaho students have a thorough understanding of where many of our rights and responsibilities as Americans come from helps to ensure that they’re prepared to represent these ideals as citizens and future participants in self-government,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield. “Idaho has the opportunity to set an example of what’s possible

when students are given the tools to fully appreciate and participate in the exceptional American experience.”

Idaho joins only a handful of states with standalone standards dedicated to supporting students’ understanding of Western civilization and the events and ideas that make up the American republican process and its modern political and social landscape.

“A strong understanding of Western civilization gives students the context to better understand the principles and freedoms that define our state and nation,” said Idaho State Board of Education President Kurt Liebich. “These standards are designed to help students connect history to their own lives and prepare them to be thoughtful, engaged citizens.”

The standalone Western civilization standards were approved by the Idaho State Board of Education late last month and will move through the negotiated rule-making process this fall, before receiving final approval during the 2026 legislative session. If approved, they’ll be available for use by any local education agency interested in offering the two-semester course next school year.

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