



BOARD OF REGENTS SOUTH DAKOTA OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP REPORT | 2024

SOUTH DAKOTA OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 2003, the South Dakota Legislature authorized the Regents Scholarship Program to allow South Dakota's eligible high school graduates to receive an affordable education at any university, college, or technical school that the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accredits. The following year, the Legislature named the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship (SDOS) scholarship and authorized funding from the state of South Dakota's Education Enhancement Trust Fund, beginning with the high school graduating classes in 2004.

THE PURPOSE FOR DEVELOPING THE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM WAS TO ACCOMPLISH THREE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

- To persuade students to complete a rigorous high school curriculum that would enhance college readiness for high school graduates as they pursue postsecondary careers;
- To encourage high-achieving graduates to remain in the state;
- Enhance the likelihood that these students would remain in the state after graduation from their postsecondary education to become a part of the workforce.

During the 2008 Legislative session, the curriculum provision was modified to align with the new distinguished graduation requirements established by the South Dakota Department of Education. Beginning with the 2010 graduating class, recipients were required to complete the "distinguished" graduation track to meet the high school curriculum requirements. These curriculum provisions were further modified in 2010 to align with the newly established graduation requirements approved by the Board of Education before the start of the 2010 legislative session. Changes implemented in 2010 allowed students entering high school during the Fall of 2010 to take either Foreign Language or Career and Technical Education coursework to meet initial eligibility requirements.

Last year, during the 2023 Legislative session, increased funding for the Opportunity Scholarship was approved. House Bill 1055 modified the award amount for new incoming students to \$1,500 for the first, second, and third year and \$3,000 for the fourth year.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

PUBLIC ACCREDITED

BOARD OF REGENTS

Black Hills State University

Dakota State University

Northern State University

South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

South Dakota State University

University of South Dakota

BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Lake Area Technical College

Mitchell Technical College

Southeast Technical College

Western Dakota Technical College

PRIVATE ACCREDITED

Augustana University

Dakota Wesleyan University

University of Sioux Falls

Mount Marty University

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM SD OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

To meet the curriculum requirements for the Opportunity Scholarship, all recipients must receive a “C” or higher on all coursework, including:

- 4 units of English (courses with major emphasis upon grammar, composition, or literary analysis may be included to meet this requirement).
- 3 units of Social Studies (such as history, economics, sociology, geography, U.S. government, and similar courses).
- 4 units of Algebra or Higher Mathematics (algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or other advanced mathematics, as well as accelerated or honors mathematics [algebra] at the 8th grade, shall be accepted). *Not included:* arithmetic, business, consumer, or general mathematics or similar courses.
- 4 units of Science, including 3 units of approved laboratory science (courses in biology, chemistry, or physics in which at least one regular laboratory weekly).
- 1 unit of Fine Arts (in art, theatre, or music, or approved extracurriculars).
- 2 units of either of the following or a combination of the two:
 - Approved Career and Technical Education Courses
 - Modern or Classical Language (Includes ASL; all units must be in the same language)
- 1/2 unit of Personal Finance or Economics
- 1/2 unit of Physical Education
- 1/2 unit of Health or Health Integration

Students seeking to determine whether coursework at their school district will be counted toward units in English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Fine Arts, or Modern/Classical Language are encouraged to review the list of approved courses. Career and Technical Education courses that have been approved by the Department of Education can be used by students to meet the “Approved career and technical education course,” units.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

Students can meet the initial eligibility in one two pathways. Figure 1 presents the two options by the Regents to eligible students in a more straightforward picture.

PATHWAY OPTION 1: A student meets the ACT composite or superscore and the Curriculum/GPA requirements.

- **RESIDENT STATUS:** Be a resident of South Dakota at the time of high school graduation.
- **ACT SCORE:** Have an ACT Composite or SuperScore of 24 or higher before the beginning of postsecondary education. If using a SAT score, the sum of the verbal and mathematics scores on the SAT must be at least 1090 (testing before January 2016) or 1180 (testing after March 2016).
- **CURRICULUM / GPA:** Complete the high school course requirements (see Curriculum Requirements webpage) with no final grade below a “C” (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) and a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (grade of “B”) prior to graduation (NOTE: One unit of high school credit equals one year of instruction).
- **ATTENDANCE:** Attend a university, college, or technical school accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and that provides instruction from a campus located in South Dakota.
- **TIMING:** Enter into the program within 5 years of high school graduation or within 1 year of the student’s release from active duty military service (if that release is within 5 years of the date of the student’s high school graduation). Students seeking to transfer from a regionally accredited university, college, or technical school located outside of South Dakota may do so within two years following high school graduation and be eligible to receive a partial award.

PATHWAY OPTION 2: A student scores a higher ACT composite or superscore but does not meet the curriculum/GPA requirement.

- **RESIDENT STATUS:** Be a resident of South Dakota at the time of high school graduation.
- **ACT SCORE:** Have an ACT composite or SuperScore of 28 or higher and meet the ACT college readiness benchmarks scores equaling or exceeding 18 for English, 22 for Reading, 22 for Math, and 23 for Science. If using an SAT score the sum of the verbal and mathematics scores on the SAT must be at least 1260 (testing before January 2016) or 1310 (testing after March 2016).
- **ATTENDANCE:** Attend a university, college, or technical school accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and that provides instruction from a campus located in South Dakota.
- **TIMING:** Enter into the program within 5 years of high school graduation or within 1 year of the student’s release from active-duty military service (if that release is within 5 years of the date of the student’s high school graduation). Students seeking to transfer from a regionally accredited university, college, or technical school located outside of South Dakota may do so within two years following high school graduation and be eligible to receive a partial award.

CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY

After a South Dakota high school graduate becomes an Opportunity Scholarship recipient, they must meet several continuing eligibility requirements each semester. Recipients must maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale as well as attempt and complete enough credit hours of instruction to meet the credit hour threshold for the forthcoming year (30 credit hours for the 3rd and 4th term funding, 60 credit hours for 5th and 6th term funding, and 90 credit hours for 7th and 8th term funding). Recipients failing to meet their respective credit hour benchmark each year become permanently ineligible in the scholarship program.

Any recipient who loses eligibility because the student's cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 may reestablish eligibility by raising the cumulative grade point average to 3.0 or greater. Each semester the 17 South Dakota institutions monitor recipient continuing eligibility in the Opportunity Scholarship program and upload recipient data into a database maintained by the Board of Regents. These data are carefully monitored at both the institutional and system level to ensure that all students have

met the continuing eligibility requirements specified in legislative statute that governs the scholarship program.

Campus personnel review the credit hours attempted at the start of each semester and notify students who are at risk of not meeting their respective credit hour threshold for the forthcoming year. Those students who fail to complete enough credit hours are not included in an institution's term funding request and subsequently, become permanently ineligible for further funding. As a function of South Dakota Codified Law, Administrative Rules have been developed to manage recipient continued eligibility across the following instances:

- Recipient failed to meet the credit hour threshold requirement.
- Recipient is no longer actively enrolled in the program resulting from persistence issues (stop-out without executive director exemption), transfer outside the state, and withdrawal from an institution in South Dakota.
- Recipient fell below the 3.0 cumulative grade point average.

SOUTH DAKOTA OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP
SDOS.SDBOR.EDU

The SD Opportunity Scholarship allows South Dakota's academically accomplished high school graduates to receive an affordable education right here in South Dakota.

UP TO \$7,500 OVER 4 YEARS
FOR STUDENTS ENTERING THE PROGRAM AFTER JULY 1, 2023

Be a South Dakota resident at the time of your high school graduation.

Option 1 24 ACT **Option 2 28 ACT**

COMPLETE:
High School course requirements with no final grade below a "C" and a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) prior to graduation

ATTEND:
university, college, or technical school regionally accredited in South Dakota within 5 years from high school graduation

COMPLETE:
SD Opportunity Scholarship Application and submit, along with your final transcript, directly to the school you will be attending

Submit **DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 1ST FOR INCOMING FALL FRESHMEN**

NO CURRICULUM REQUIRED

HOW DO I QUALIFY?

APPLY HERE!!!

ONLINE APPLICATION NOW AVAILABLE
[HTTPS://SDBOR.SCHOLARSHIPS.NGWEBSOLUTIONS.COM/](https://sdbor.scholarships.ngwebsolutions.com/)

SCHOLARSHIP OUTREACH

MARKETING MATERIALS

Marketing materials provided to the high schools, informing students about the Opportunity Scholarship and eligibility requirements.

COUNSELOR OUTREACH

Information regarding the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship funding amount, new online scholarship application and the further clarification regarding the curriculum requirements was provided to high school counselors at all six of the Fall Counselor Workshops across the state in September. Additional tool kits, printables, and resources, have been provided to these counselors on the Our Dakota Dreams website.

FIRST SEMESTER ENROLLMENT HISTORY AND ESTIMATED ENROLLMENTS

Chart 1 below provides a historic enrollment review of those students enrolled in their first semester. The first semester could be either Fall or Spring depending on student academic enrollment and eligibility. This is a view of the first semester enrollments.

Continuing eligibility will impact enrollments in subsequent semesters. It can be estimated that approximately 59-60% of the students will remain eligible for the scholarship through the last semester.

CHART 1: Enrollment History and Estimates

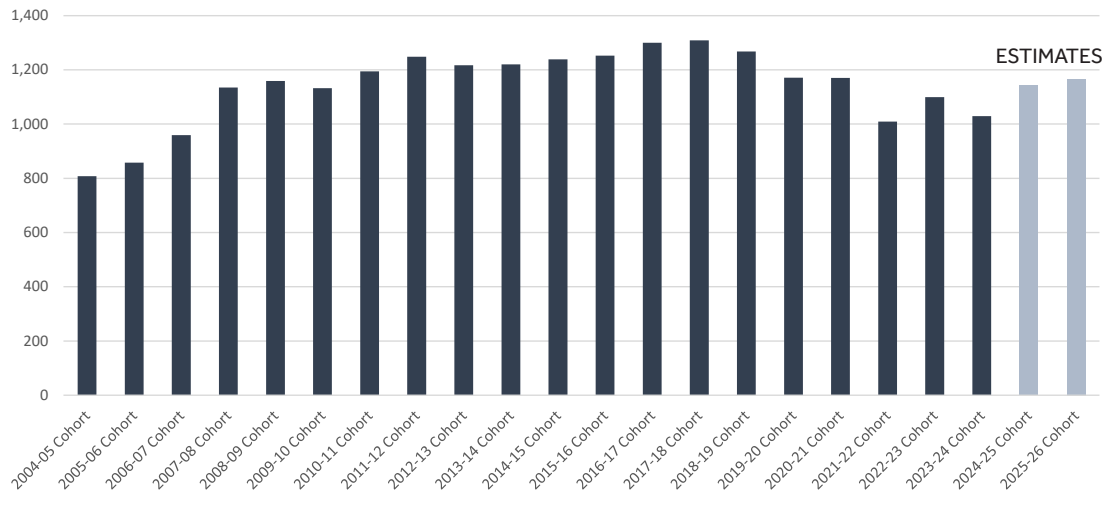
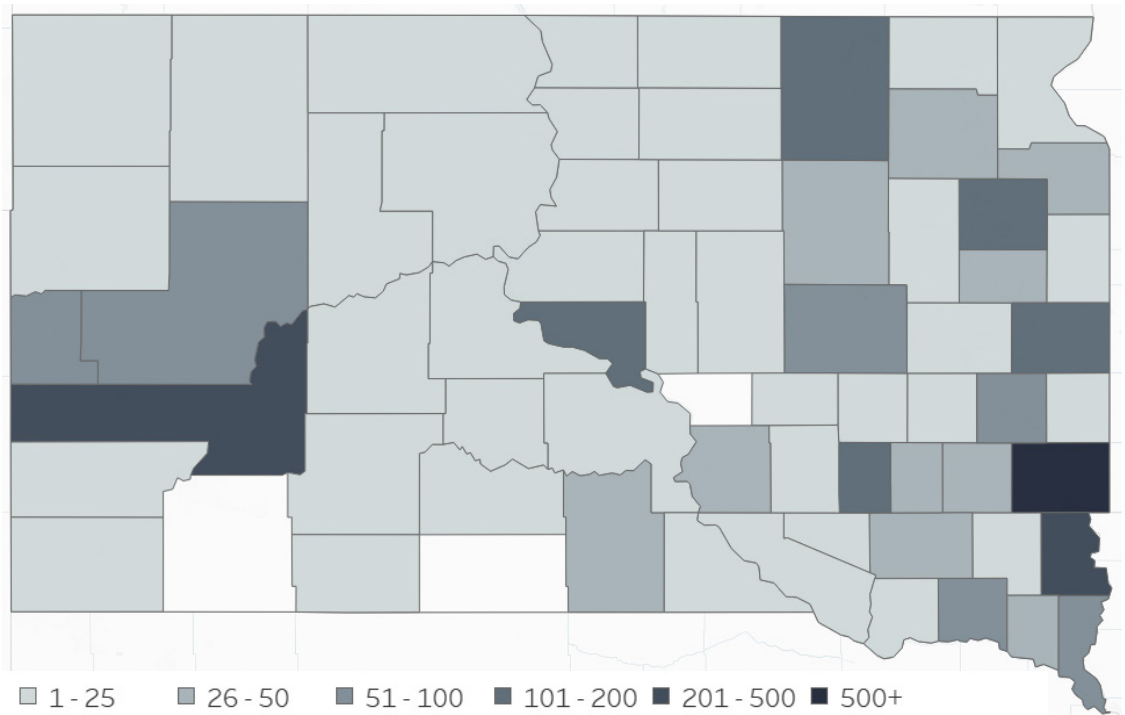


Figure 1 displays location by South Dakota County all Fall Semester recipients.

FIGURE 1: Number of Recipients by South Dakota County, Fall 2023

This chart reflects how SD Opportunity continues to support all of South Dakota. As a student gears up for their high school course registration, high school counselors, parents, and students statewide are arriving at core curriculum requirements to meet the eligibility. Recipients are shown by color based on the number of awarded scholarships based on their school district/county of attendance.



TOP 15 MAJORS FOR FIRST TERM RECIPIENTS

For reporting purposes, an unduplicated major enrollment report was developed to represent the recipient's primary major at his/her institution. An analysis of data reveal that SDOS recipients are more likely to enroll in majors resulting in career areas such as medicine, science, mathematics, engineering, teaching, and business. Table 1 provides the top fifteen (15) majors selected by recipients in their first term who attended a Regental university.

TABLE 1: Fifteen Most Common Majors for First Term Recipients*

MAJOR (CLASSIFICATION OF INSTRUCTION CODE CIP) DESCRIPTION	CIP CODE	# OF STUDENTS
Biology, General	26.01	554
Health/Medical Preparatory Programs	51.11	510
Business Administration, Management and Operations	52.02	297
Mechanical Engineering	14.19	270
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities	24.01	261
Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing	51.38	246
Computer and Information Sciences, General	11.01	196
Sports, Kinesiology, and Physical Education/Fitness	31.05	174
Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods	13.12	145
Civil Engineering	14.08	120
Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas	13.13	118
Psychology, General	42.01	110
Electrical, Electronics, and Communications Engineering	14.10	96
Computer/Information Technology Administration and Management	11.10	96
Mathematics	27.01	93

*It is not uncommon for students to begin their college undergraduate career in one major and move to another. For example, note that the top graduating major is nursing from Table 2. It is likely that students started in one of the science fields.

TOP 10 MAJORS FOR RECIPIENTS GRADUATING

Similar major enrollment trends existed for those recipients who were able to maintain eligibility throughout the duration of the scholarship program. Table 2 provides the number of students graduating and the majors/degrees conferred in the Regental system. Biological science represents programs where students admitted into these majors are likely to continue their postsecondary education. Note, this table represents only Regental university students.

TABLE 2: Top 10 Majors of Recipients Who Graduated*

MAJOR	# OF UNIQUE GRADUATES
Nursing	998
Biology	522
Mechanical Engineering	411
Psychology	397
Pharmaceutical Sciences	309
Elementary Education	313
Computer Science	267
Mathematics	259
Civil Engineering	233
Medical Biology	236

*Tables represent Board of Regents University data.



COST ALLOCATION SCHOLARSHIP COVERAGE

In 2004-05, the scholarship program funded eligible students \$500 each fall and spring semester during the first three years, and then \$1,000 during the final two terms. In 2015-16, the amount was increased to 1,300 each fall and spring semester during the first three years, and then \$1,000 during the final two terms. During the 2023 legislative session the award amount increased to:

- \$1,500 – First Year of Attendance
- \$1,500 – Second Year of Attendance
- \$1,500 – Third Year of Attendance
- \$3,000 – Fourth Year of Attendance

Table 3 shows the cost of the Regental mandatory tuition and fees as compared to the value of the four year value of the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarships. When this scholarship was first initiated, the value of the opportunity scholarship was approximately 25% of the mandatory Regental tuition and fees. Currently, that value is approximately 17% of the mandatory Regental tuition and fees.

TABLE 3: Cost/Percentage of Coverage within Regental Universities

ACADEMIC YEAR	MANDATORY TUITION AND FEES 4-YEAR TOTAL	SDOS 4-YEAR VALUE	PERCENT OF SDOS 4-YEAR TOTAL
2004-05	\$ 20,030.36	\$ 5,000.00	25%
2015-16	\$ 30,785.40	\$ 6,500.00	20%
2022-23	\$ 37,338.36	\$ 6,500.00	17%
2023-24	\$ 37,338.36	\$ 7,500.00	20%

AWARD TOTALS FOR FALL SEMESTER 2023

Table 4 below reveals the student totals and award amounts for the Fall Semester of academic year 2023-2024. The chart includes all participating South Dakota colleges and universities.

TABLE 4: SD Opportunity Scholarship, Merit-Based for Fall Semester 2023

	NEW FALL 2023 STUDENTS	CONTINUING STUDENTS	TOTAL STUDENTS	TOTAL
Black Hills State University	34	74	108	\$91,900
Dakota State University	63	155	218	\$182,450
Northern State University	50	106	156	\$131,750
South Dakota Mines	104	204	308	\$256,200
South Dakota State University	383	880	1,263	\$1,067,250
University of South Dakota	192	495	687	\$606,800
Augustana University	94	306	400	\$322,850
Dakota Wesleyan University	15	58	73	\$72,450
Lake Area Technical College	13	20	33	\$22,750
Mitchell Technical College	18	28	46	\$37,550
Mount Marty University	6	23	29	\$19,450
Southeast Technical College	26	27	53	\$37,700
University of Sioux Falls	30	106	136	\$118,700
Western Dakota Technical College	1	4	5	\$3,350
TOTAL	1,029	2,486	3,515	\$2,971,150

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EXEMPTIONS

State statute and administrative rules permits the Executive Director of the Board of Regents the authority to grant exceptions to continuous eligibility requirements when good cause is shown. As a result, when a situation arises that hinders a student from meeting the eligibility requirements for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, he/she can request an exemption waiver from the Executive Director.

Exemption waivers can be granted for student inability to meet Credit Hour Threshold, or Persistence requirements. Furthermore, instances have and will continue to occur that represent unique situations where the Executive Director has granted a waiver to ensure that the intent of the scholarship program is best served. In these situations, the classification of other has been assigned.

In addition to these three waiver classifications, six justifications have been attributed to student appeals for exemptions from the Executive Director that include:

- Situations where Medical Hardship has hindered a student's progress;
- Student participation in an approved Exchange Program through their institution;
- Conflict with Program of Study Requirements that dictate student credit hours;
- Instances where Administrative Error has occurred;
- Participation in an institution approved Internship program;
- Military Deferral for National Guard or military service;

CURRENT EXEMPTIONS

2022-2023 Exemptions:

20 Exemption requests, 4 pending

2023-2024 Exemptions:

9 Exemption requests, 5 pending

SOUTH DAKOTA OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP GOVERNING RULES

Legislative Statutes | 13-55-30 — 13-55-36 Opportunity scholarship program established. There is established the South Dakota opportunity scholarship program to be administered by the Board of Regents. The purpose of the program is to allow South Dakota's most academically accomplished high school graduates to receive an affordable education at any university, college, or technical school that is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and that provides instruction from a campus located in South Dakota.

Administrative Rules | 24:40:13:01 — 24:40:13:20



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