

Making Sense of South Dakota's Graduation Requirements

The graduation requirements are structured in a similar way to college majors. All students pursue the same diploma but in addition to meeting the high school diploma course requirements, students may also earn advanced endorsements. These advanced endorsements are similar to college majors, signaling the coursework they have taken has a specific focus. Using that same idea, a student might have one major, or a double major or even a triple major! Let's take a look at what the high school graduation requirements might look like for some fictional South Dakota students.



Megan is a junior who spends half of her school day at a CTE academy taking finance courses. She's planning to attend the University of South Dakota (USD) for business and pre-law.

She's taken all of the advanced math, science and English courses her school offers and she's earned a gold level National Career Readiness Certificate.

What endorsements will she earn?

- Advanced
- Advanced Career
- Advanced Honors

Sam is a senior and he's planning to go to Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) to enroll in the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program. He's taken advanced math and science courses to support the technical skills he's learning in his health science classes. He's also taken a full semester's worth of dual credit at MTI and has earned a certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), which allows him to work at the local nursing home after school.

What endorsements will he earn?

- Advanced
- Advanced Career



Kylie isn't sure what she wants to do after high school yet, so she's taking a wide range of electives, including advanced science, world language, advanced math and literature to make sure keeps her options open. Right now, she thinks both Western Dakota Technical Institute (WDTI) and Black Hills State University (BHSU) sound like good fits for her.

What endorsements will she earn?

- Advanced

Eric is a senior and is a high school rodeo champion with a full ride scholarship to an out-of-state community college. He's trying to decide if he wants to go into the military or continue his rodeo career after high school. He has taken a wide range of general electives, including geometry and animal science, and he's looking forward to the next phase.

What endorsements will he earn?

- Base Diploma
- No Endorsements

