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2020-21 Report Card confirms COVID Impact Report findings

Pierre, SD – The 2020-21 Report Card is now available at sdschools.sd.gov. The Report Card is produced by the South Dakota Department of Education and provides information on how students and schools across the state performed.

“As we look at the 2020-21 Report Card, one of the things we need to recognize is that South Dakota public schools were committed to providing in-person instruction in a year full of disruptions, and they managed those challenges successfully,” said Secretary of Education Tiffany Sanderson. “While other parts of the country struggled to return to in-person instruction, South Dakota schools understood the importance of tending to a child’s full development – physical, academic, social, and emotional.”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some data from this year’s Report Card are incomplete. Far fewer students took the state assessments in English language arts and math than previous years, for example. This change provides an incomplete picture of overall performance, especially when considering subgroups of students. For that reason, Secretary Sanderson cautioned that this report should be viewed within the scope of the individual school year.

Attendance data from the 2020-21 Report Card reiterate the department’s findings from last summer’s [COVID-19 Impact Report](#), which suggests that COVID-19 impacted school attendance, and those absences impacted student learning.

Statewide, 88 percent of students during the 2020-21 school year attended at least 90 percent of school days. Annual attendance typically averages about 92 percent.

Data from the COVID-19 Impact Report indicated that reduced attendance due to COVID-19 occurred most frequently among economically disadvantaged students. Of the students who missed 30 or more days of school, 72 percent were considered economically disadvantaged.

“If students don’t show up, we know that’s going to impact their learning. At the state level, we’re taking steps to educate students and parents about the importance of simply showing up,” Sanderson said. This fall, the department launched an attendance awareness campaign aimed at encouraging consistent school attendance as a factor in long-term success.

Several indicators, including per-pupil spending, will be added to the Report Card later.