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**CONTACT:** [Mary Stadick Smith](#), 605-773-7228, or [Ruth Raveling](#), 605-773-2593

### **South Dakota public schools weather pandemic well**

PIERRE, S.D. – The Department of Education published the 2021-22 Report Card today. The online resource provides a wealth of data to help parents, educators, and community and state leaders understand how their public schools perform on select metrics.

“This year’s Report Card shows a pattern of holding steady through turbulent times,” said Secretary of Education Tiffany Sanderson. “That’s remarkable, considering the challenges schools have faced these last two years, and it’s a reflection of South Dakota’s commitment to prioritize face to face learning.”

More than 75 percent of school districts stayed on par with, or improved, proficiency rates in English language arts and math, compared to student performance in the 2018-19 school year. Eighty-eight percent of districts saw stable, or slightly improved, on-time graduation rates.

Attendance is one of the key metrics on the Report Card and an area for concern. Prior to the pandemic, South Dakota’s statewide attendance rate was 92 percent. In 2021-22, it was 86 percent. Fifty-five percent of districts experienced attendance rates in 2021-22 that were lower than their pre-pandemic rates.

“It’s pretty simple: Kids can’t learn if they are not at school,” Sanderson said. One effort the state is making to combat absenteeism is a public awareness campaign. The campaign advises students and their families on the long-term benefits of regular school attendance.

To supplement local efforts to improve student learning coming out of the pandemic, the Department of Education and Board of Regents recently launched the Dakota Dreams Online Tutoring Program. The free service provides K-12 students with individualized support outside of the school day.

“Bottom line: We’re grateful for the South Dakota educators, school leaders, and school board members who committed early on in the pandemic to do right by their students,” Sanderson said. “The experience impacted each learner differently, and we appreciate educators’ continued efforts to address each student’s individual needs.”

To learn more, visit <https://sdschools.sd.gov/>