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Two new schools to offer Jobs for America’s Graduates in 2023-24

PIERRE, S.D. – Huron High School and St. Francis Indian School will join the ranks of schools offering the Jobs for America’s Graduates-South Dakota (JAG-SD) program next year, bringing the total number of programs in South Dakota to 13.

“JAG-SD has proven very effective in helping students persist in their education and make it through to high school graduation, and often these are young people who face significant barriers,” said South Dakota Secretary of Education Joseph Graves. “I commend the districts who are bringing this valuable opportunity to their students, and I commend the students who are growing their skills and capabilities.”

JAG-SD boasts impressive results. Throughout the program’s history in South Dakota, 100 percent of students have graduated high school. At the end of the 2021-22 school year, 100 percent of JAG-SD students maintained full-time employment 12 months after high school. “That’s a remarkable testament to the program’s impact on the lives of our youth,” Graves said.

In recent years, the state has made concerted efforts to grow the program statewide. In 2020, Gov. Kristi Noem asked the South Dakota Legislature to commit to the program. The Legislature provided funding for a full-time state director to support and assist participating schools across the state.

In the 2022-23 school year, JAG-SD programs were launched at Jefferson, Lincoln, and Washington high schools in Sioux Falls. Andes Central Middle and High School, Bennett County High School, Lyman County High School, Roosevelt High School (Sioux Falls), Todd County High School, Wagner Middle and High School also run JAG-SD programs. Together, the current programs serve about 335 students.

JAG is a state-based, national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving graduation rates and academic achievement for students. The program is implemented at the school level through the work of teachers called JAG specialists, who work with students to develop leadership and employability skills.

The deadline for districts to provide notice of intent to participate in the program in school year 2023-24 is April 28.