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### **JAG-SD students to attend Career Development Conference**

PIERRE, S.D. – Approximately 180 students from Jobs for America’s Graduates – South Dakota (JAG-SD) will attend the 2024 JAG-SD Career Development Conference March 5 on the campus of Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU) in Mitchell.

Students from 13 JAG-SD programs will compete in six events: Employability Skills, Financial Literacy, Knowledge Bowl, Prepared Speaking, Project-Based Learning, and Middle School Career Exploration. Students will demonstrate skills based upon realistic scenarios, such as interviewing for jobs, presenting information, and demonstrating soft skills.

Volunteers from the surrounding communities and the Department of Education will be on hand to judge the competitions and to provide feedback to the students.

The events are based off the six JAG core skills that form the backbone of the JAG program: career development, job attainment, job survival, basic skills, leadership and self-development, and personal skills.

“These students work hard throughout the school year to develop skills that will serve them in the workforce and in life,” said Beth Schneider, JAG-SD state director. “The conference is a great opportunity for them to show how much they have learned, and to network with other JAG-SD students from throughout the state.”

The event is sponsored by the DOE, DWU, and the Wellmark Foundation.

“The Wellmark Foundation is proud to support the great work being done by JAG-SD to empower our youth to thrive,” shared Laura Jackson, executive vice president of Health Equity, Access and Improvement with Wellmark. “JAG gets students on a path to successfully complete high school and pursue further education and employment opportunities, all of which are paramount to living a long, healthy life.”

After the competitions, JAG-SD students will tour DWU’s campus, take part in career association activities, and select their 2024 Career Association State Officers. Winners of the competitive events will advance to the JAG National Career Development Conference in St. Louis, Mo., April 18-20.

JAG-SD currently operates 14 programs across the state at Andes Central High School, Lake Andes; Bennett County High School, Martin; Huron High School, Huron; Lyman Middle and High School, Presho; St. Francis Indian School, St. Francis; Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Washington high schools, Sioux Falls; Todd County High School, Mission; Wagner High School and Middle School, Wagner; and Wakpala High School, Wakpala.

**About The Wellmark Foundation**

*The Wellmark Foundation funds initiatives that positively impact the health of Iowans and South Dakotans. The Wellmark Foundation seeks creative solutions to address the barriers that residents face to living long and healthy lives.*

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