

Proposed Graduation Requirements Public Comments

EXHIBIT #1

Date Received: May 3, 2018
(Braun, Ipswich)

I am very disappointed by the new proposed graduation requirements. I know the state is saying they are adding flexibility but what you are doing is allowing students to get out of important and worthwhile classes. I am telling you that if the highest level math class a student has to take is Algebra I, we are not preparing them for a successful future or career. Math teaches students how to think, reason, and problem solve. These skills are only in their beginning stages in Algebra I. They need higher level math to really develop these skills. With the big push for STEM, STEAM, and knowing these are the areas where jobs are available, we are taking a huge step in the wrong direction. You are asking students at around age 14 to decide if they are going to go on to higher education or not. If they decided to take the advanced career path as a freshman as a junior it is already too late to change your mind. This reminds me of a young man who was set on going back to the family farm, but halfway through his senior year decided he would go to a tech school because making it in farming is getting hard. Had he been on the career path he would be in big trouble right now. Luckily he took Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II and will have no problem at tech school. I am so surprised that the state wants to graduate unprepared students. You are doing a huge disservice to the students of South Dakota and the future job force. Please do not pass these new graduation requirements. They are bad for students and the state of South Dakota.

EXHIBIT #2

Date Received: June 7, 2018
(Shirley, Pierre)

Do not dumb down our children by requiring less of them. Creating separate graduation requirements will further restrict SD graduates from competing in a college or tech school atmosphere and limit their career opportunities. Requiring information that was on point even 10 years ago, only puts our students at a great disadvantage. If we challenge them...they do rise to the occasion. Remember, these are the people who will be caring for you as you age.

EXHIBIT #3

Date Received: June 7, 2018
(Patrick Mikkonen, Mount Vernon)

I would suggest, after being in education for 25 years, that English is also addressed like Math has been. I would recommend removing the 4 total credits for English and align them with the Math at 3 credits for the basic HS diploma. The same students struggling with Math, at least in my experience, are the same students struggling in English as well. I am not sure what the need for American Literature for those students is either. How about a technical reading in place of the Am Lit? I think the writing at 1 credit is also something to consider. While writing is pretty broad should it be more specific, such as a technical writing requirement if you are going to require 1 credit. While I believe the flexibility is a good thing overall, I do believe we are still missing the mark on a fraction of students that continue to struggle with their learning. While this maybe for a variety of reasons, the reasons I believe that are mostly out of our control as educators. These students continue to present obstacles we, as educators, have to help them overcome. I realize we want rigor for all students, but this fraction of students cares little about rigor. They want out period. Are we presenting the best path and options to do that if we don't refine the English as well. My opinion is no. Thanks for your time.

EXHIBIT #4

Date Received: June 8, 2018
(Brooklynn Gross and Megan Simonich,
Harrisburg High School)

We are students at Harrisburg High School, and as part of a course project in our pre-education class, we proposed our own graduation requirements. Please consider our recommendations.

We believed the proposed graduation requirements should include the following:

Economics cannot be taken in place of personal finance. All students need to understand how to balance their personal finances, but economics should be incorporated into social science classes.

US Government for a full year instead of a semester. Students should understand how the government works so they can be involved in civic opportunities.

Participating in three or more competitive speeches in a CTSO, debate, or oral interp should count as a speech credit. Students can participate in an area they are passionate about and discover real-world opportunities. Completing competitive speeches in CTSOs, debate, or oral interp are more difficult than speech class.

Schools should require a life skills credit, where students learn real-world skills like home maintenance, study habits, career exploration, and relationships. This will help students succeed in the real world and teach them skills for life beyond high school.

Students should be able to choose between .5 credit of PE or .5 credit of nutrition and wellness for their wellness credit. Physical wellness and nutrition are equally important. What makes one more important than the other?

We hope you will consider our suggestions. Thank you.

Brooklynn Gross and Megan Simonich

Mrs. Kern's Harrisburg Teaching of Children Class

EXHIBIT #5

Date Received: June 8, 2018
(Dorothy M. Story, Canton)

The proposed high school requirements are nothing short of a let down. According to our State Report Card, less than half of our students are Math proficient, and our ELA scores are only slightly above that, and yet, more than 91% of our students are completing high school. How are so many student completing high school without being proficient in reading or math?

Sadly, South Dakota Department of Education has yet to produce an assessment to accurately gather data about our students science understandings, and social studies is no longer assessed. However, it still stands to recognize that only a little more than half of the students that we graduate in our state are proficient in reading and math demonstrating a clear lack of preparation for a career and certainly for college.

Now that state is further distancing itself from the responsibility of creating career and college ready graduates ready to compete at a national level. Ironically, they label what was traditionally acceptable for a high school graduate as ""advanced"" (remember, only 50% of them were proficient in reading and math), and then ask much, much less from other students. There is nothing advanced about that.

Our state has put its faith and an incredibly large sum of money into standards that are well researched, supported by experience, experts in the field, and an incredible amount of national and international research. These standards outline for teachers exactly what should be taught to students at each level of their schooling. This is based on the most successful of schools, and again, research. For science, as an example, there are four levels of science to be taught, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Science, that are currently split into the three years and subjects in which our high school students are expected to take. How will teachers now teach all four years of standards in one required Biology class? And to what

standards do we hold those other optional science classes? Does My Great Aunt Elda's Theory on Why the Earth is Flat count as their optional science class? Can we teach them Texting 101 for a computer science class and count it as the other?

These new graduation requirements no longer allow teachers to reach to research based standards in which to teach the classes, and opens the doors to easy filler classes that no longer ensure that our students are prepared to enter the workforce, become educated voters, nor are they prepared for college. Additionally, these new graduation requirements make it impossible to hold districts, teachers, and students accountable for their learning through assessment. With these new requirements, students are not required to take classes that are specifically tailored to meet their standards in which our state tests (except for science) are tailored to assess. I can imagine that our score of 50% of our students being proficient in reading and math will quickly drop.

What will these new proposed graduation requirements accomplish? Perhaps the other 9% of students that our state report card states did not complete high school will complete high school. Or perhaps the missing 16% of students who are not graduating will graduate. But at what cost? Do we really want to give our students a diploma for participation? Or do we want to ensure that the students are releasing to the world are prepared to make educated decisions, participate in a career, and become educated citizens that will further the progress and prosperity of our state?

This document is full of repeals. I think these new high school requirements that are hidden within it need to be repealed as well.

EXHIBIT #6

Date Received: June 8, 2018
(Deann Kertzmann, Summerset)

This comment is in regards to the proposed changes to the state graduation requirements. I understand the proposed change would require the passing of algebra and "two other math classes" to earn the first level of HS diploma. I would be more comfortable if the "two other math classes" included descriptors of the level of rigor required. These classes should teach to high school (HS) level standards. If they teach to lower standards, such as the middle school standards, they would not be considered high school coursework. I think this needs to be clearly explained in the proposed changes. Clear language in the proposed changes would encourage schools and teachers to offer class which supported HS standards. As a parent and taxpayer, I would like to have confidence that our SD high school math classes are encouraging learning at the HS level. It is a HS diploma.

EXHIBIT #7

Date Received: June 8, 2018
(Dr. Greg Gaden, Rapid City Area Schools)

I wanted to touch base with you after learning more about the new graduation requirements. Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) and its community are deeply concerned about how students with moderate to severe disabilities will meet the basic diploma requirements with new requirements in place like completing Algebra I by all students. We are concerned about students receiving EL services as well. Newcomers with two years of time in country will be hard pressed to meet these requirements either. Your expectations for these students are unrealistic.

In terms of our graduation requirement concerns, we are mostly talking about our students with significant cognitive disabilities and those with moderate cognitive needs. The Algebra I requirement is only one of the many requirements that would be difficult for students with significant to moderate disabilities to meet. Please understand our concerns and we would support drafting Rule 24 language saying, ""that students assessed using alternant standards/assessment, and who will meet their IEP goals as determined by the IEP team will graduate with a basic diploma.""

We would also like your ideas on what the track history in SD has been in regard to the criteria to meet graduation requirements for students with disabilities. If I recall, IDEA allowed for states to allow for the following criteria in regard to graduation for students on an IEP.

Regular Diploma:

- Meet the school districts credit hour requirement (22 hours in RC)
- IEP team determines the IEP goals have been reached by the student and if the districts policy covers this a diploma is granted. New Regs in SD will not allow this option.

Regular Diploma with language on it saying ""Modified Curriculum""

- IEP team determines the IEP goals have been reached by the student and ""modified curriculum"" is added to the diploma.

Certificate of Attendance or Completion:

- Typically awarded to students with significant disabilities that may not be able to attend school regularly but have participated enough the district wants to recognize them with peers. Very rarely given.

Thanks for taking the time to review and consider these ideas and concerns. Your help is appreciated and we understand this is hard work for the staff that implement the requirements.

Dr. Gregory G. Gaden
Rapid City Area Schools

EXHIBIT #8

Date Received: June 11, 2018
(Rebecca A. Redetzke, Sioux Falls)

The proposed graduation requirements undermine the new science standards set by the State of South Dakota only two years ago. Under these requirements the majority of students would graduate without having met the minimum standards for science education our state mandates. This will result in fewer and fewer of our schools meeting standardized testing standards and reflect poorly on education in this state. The new graduation requirements seem to represent a step backwards in expectations and opportunities for students. They would have students graduate without basic concepts of chemistry and physics that are essential for navigating the modern world. It also shortchanges students of valuable problem solving instruction and practice as it essentially strips all science requirements from the curriculum other than basic biology. I applaud the efforts to encourage students to pursue technical education. However, this proposal does so at a heavy cost to students future choices and opportunities. There has to be a better option to prepare students for work, technical school, and college without it costing them educational opportunities. As a high school teacher I can guarantee that if students perceive that there is an easier path to graduation many who would not be best served by taking it will take in none-the-less as these are young people with still developing reasoning, problem solving, and planning skills. Further even if a student plans to go directly to work or to trade skill shouldn't we be preparing them for any option so doors remain open to them if they change their mind at a future date? Basically the science requirements in the new graduation requirements are inadequate, and the different pathways require students to cut off available options before they've even had a chance to fully explore each choice. Please do not adopt these proposed changes to the state graduation requirements.

EXHIBIT #9

Date Received: June 11, 2018
(Lois Johnson, Harrisburg)

Dr. Milgram, Ph.D., and Dr. Stotsky were the only Ph.D.'s on the development of Common Core. Dr. Milgram wouldn't sign off on the math and Dr. Stotsky wouldn't sign off on the English. The rest were governors. Now you want to decrease the math skills even further. You really aren't for the "education" of the child, you are for the dumbing down of the child. What Common Core has done to the educational system in SD is

not only a disgrace but Melanie Schopp should have faced a hearing over Gearup. You all have fallen from the criteria of a good education and it is sickening to see what you are doing to the minds of children. Thank God for private schools where my grandchildren are going and the next generation will go as well. I come from a family of teachers and Ph.D's in education and your criteria has already created math students below the bar as well as the literary aspect. Your sex education is disgusting. You don't really care about the students, you only care about the agenda. Teaching Sharia law in textbooks - what are you thinking? History books changed to accommodate a belief system. You all will stand before God and give an account of what you put your hand to and will not escape. Shame on you!

EXHIBIT #10

Date Received: June 12, 2018
(Niki, Flandreau)

The proposed graduation standards are great for general education students, but does not take our Special Education students into consideration. For example, I have students who will NEVER pass Algebra 1 because they have significant learning gaps that impede their ability to ever work at that level. How do I tell a parent that even though we know his/her child has those significant learning challenges and cannot successfully complete a traditional curriculum, I still have to force them to take these classes without modifying the curriculum, and they have zero chance of ever obtaining a diploma? What about my kids who will be able to join the workforce in some capacity after high school; am I damning them to a lifetime without gainful employment because they have a learning disability that impedes their abilities to learn the same material as their general education peers? When I have to tell my students and their parents this when they come in as a Freshmen, what's to keep them enrolled in school? What's to keep them from withdrawing and going to home school or just becoming a dropout? Everything about this is in direct contradiction of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. Please consider ALL of our students before enacting these standards.

EXHIBIT #11

Date Received: June 12, 2018
(Tanya Bjerke, Sioux Falls)

I like to see that the state is incorporating graduation requirements that allow for the students that have plans to just work for after high school. I work with a lot of students who won't go on to a post-secondary institution, and just want to get the knowledge they need for the field they want to be in. Giving them the option to get a high school diploma that allows them to take classes that focus on a skill set is valuable in a world where everyone feels that they need a college education to be successful. The flip side to this would be I hope the state maintains the rigors for whatever road a student should decide to take. I don't want them to coast through high school, but to still get some value out of their education, so that we have individuals who are well prepare to be functioning members of society. I hope that many high schools see the value in pushing students to succeed in whatever their desired outcome may be, our world is a diverse place, and education needs to change to meet this diverse world we live in.

EXHIBIT #12

Date Received: June 12, 2018
(Chrissy Peterson, Meade School District)

I have reviewed section 24:05:27:12, the Individual Education Program proposals for Special Education. I feel they are adequate for students with disabilities. With this proposal, it demonstrates that an earned diploma has some rigor which is important. Chrissy Peterson Special Services Director Meade School District Sturgis, SD

EXHIBIT #13

Date Received: June 12, 2018
(Neil Goter, Wagner)

CTE Under the advance career endorsement where they ask for 2 units from the same career cluster, we offer this amendment: In high schools with enrollment under 500 (Or whatever the small school factor might be), 1.0 CTE unit from the same career cluster AND: 1.0 CTE unit from any other approved cluster OR 1.0 of World Language We have a problem with the NCRC certificate of Silver or above – we had 12 Bronze and two not completed – in those bronze were really good workers that are going to tech schools, but wouldn't qualify for this. There are still a number of schools that don't do the NCRC. Why should they be punished for that? According to CTE Newsweek over 25% of the students received a Bronze or no certificate at all across South Dakota. Industry recognized certificates would require additional training/certification for instructors, plus the cost of the exams themselves. This is coming after our Perkins funding requests were due. Isn't high school supposed to be a time of exploration? This restricts students too much. SOCIAL STUDIES World Geography should be kept as a requirement as students will benefit from understanding how the United States relates to other areas of the world and from exposure to people's beliefs and customs. In addition, students learn how people affect the environment and how the environment forces people to adapt. World History should be kept as a required class to provide students with exposure to historical events that have shaped the world in which we live and to provide development in learning skills such as cause and effect as well as critical thinking.

EXHIBIT #14

Date Received: June 13, 2018
(Melissa Miller Kincart, Rapid City Area Schools)

As district leaders our biggest concern stems from the fact that it wasn't until mid-April that the proposed requirements were posted for review and that they have not been thoroughly studied or developed with local districts' input. Additionally, that the public comment period and deliberation time by the SD BOE is very condensed (when school is out of session) and does not allow for proper and thoughtful vetting to consider all policy implications for South Dakota large or small and/or rural or urban districts. The bulleted list below are a number of questions and/or concerns from our RCAS Senior Leadership Members, all our high school principals and counselors, as well as our secondary math and science teachers.

- The challenge is that a student at an early age could choose a course load that could make it difficult to get into a post-secondary education program since they will have very little math or science. Students may not begin on the right graduation track due to behavior/maturity issues (not academic reasons), and cannot easily change routes later on.
- The new Base Diploma seems contrary to SD ESSA Plan. "Students graduate high school ready for postsecondary and the workforce. Also recognizing that the job market increasingly demands some sort of postsecondary or industry-recognized credential, South Dakota is committed to providing multiple pathways for students to achieve and demonstrate readiness for life after high school."
<http://doe.sd.gov/secretary/documents/011218-SD-Plan.pdf> SEE PAGE 33 The Advanced Diploma or Advanced Honors are the only "College Ready" Diplomas.
- The new Base Diploma is open to everybody. Students will need MORE remedial classes at the college level. Algebra 1/Math 1 is not rigorous enough. Colleges say students are not prepared when they currently graduate from high school, and now we are lowering the standards required to graduate. The fear of "dumbing down" the expectations is real.
- The students that are typically falling in the proficiency range on SBAC are already on the Advanced or Advanced Honors endorsement track. SBAC and ACT scores will suffer over time without the introduction to the math concepts found in Math 2 and Math 3 courses.
- If students are no longer required to learn the state standards, how will the assessments change? What does this do for proficiency? How do we, as schools, get to be proficient on the assessments, when we know those students taking the Base diploma are not exposed to a large amount of the assessed standards?
- Will there be money available to do the research on new math/science course creation/adoption?
- Students interested in pursuing athletics or activities governed though NCAA or NAII might not meet course requirements for those colleges with some of the diploma options offered.
- Advanced Endorsement: We can/will influence the science courses students will take for this endorsement since we have specific rigorous classes already developed for students to select. Though we have many students who could benefit from flexibility of an alternative path to graduation given credit deficiencies, we are very concerned if the new proposed base diploma is adopted more of our students will choose to pursue the base diploma rather than the more rigorous endorsement options. Thank you for consideration of these concerns and questions.

EXHIBIT #15

Date Received: June 13, 2018
(Eric, Spearfish)

Who is going to pay for the industry credentials the schools or the students? In researching many of the existing SD credentials many of them cost over \$100. As a parent I cannot afford to pay this for my student, and at the same time I don't want my taxes going up because these are extra expenses to the school district. Is my child really going to be better prepared for post secondary education or employment by receiving these? When I went to work my employer paid for the training that I needed. I feel these are a waist of taxpayers money because many students may get these and never end up being employed where industry requires these.

EXHIBIT #16

Date Received: June 13, 2018
(Julie Olson, Mitchell)

My comments concern the graduation requirements specifically those related to science credits. I do not agree with letting computer science courses take the place of science. Science deals with the material world and trying to figure out how it works and functions whereas computer "science" is actually a math (based on a binary system) language (several coding languages) and would fall into the category of engineering when it is used as a tool to solve a problem. It is a contrived world where humans make the rules and design the systems to fulfill our needs. The state proposes to have the requirements for CS to equate to a science course be that the Practices of science and Engineering (as listed in the beginning documents of the new state science standards) be covered and just a few of the cross-cutting concepts. This poses several problems. We are still in the process of training present science teachers about them. I question when will computer science teachers be trained in their use? Are the computer science (CS) teachers literate in other science domains so they can adequately connect other science topics and ideas to those they are using in their classes? For example: when studying patterns in programming a robot to complete a course, how would they connect that to the patterns bees move in to locate food or the patterns electrons move in the different energy levels of an atom? The use of the cross-cutting concepts is based on cognitive learning evidence that learning is enhanced when there are connections between learning. It is also desirable to have the skills to make these cross cutting connections to enable the learner to recognize and apply the skill to novel situations. For the Practices in Science, I would have many of the same arguments dealing with training and use in the science domains. If students on a technical or workforce pathway only have to take Biology, they will be at a great disadvantage in knowledge necessary for being a literate citizen. I believe there is a fear of taking chemistry and physics by the general population. Do we need to perpetuate that fear? - I think not. With the new standards, the focus is on a more narrow set of core ideas and going more in depth, understanding, and use geared at not just college but career and workforce readiness. Chances are you will read in the newspaper or hear on the news about scientific advances (e.g. new drugs, self driving cars) or happenings (e.g. volcanic action, lake pollution). These all involve not just Biology but Chemistry and Physical Sciences. Chemistry and Physics can be approached from conceptual views and utilize basic algebra which all students have to take. Chemistry is necessary for such things as reading a label for a cleaner or medicine, is the heart of cooking, energy production, cellular phones, and recycling to name a few. Physics is what all modern technology is based on. It also is the application of math skills as well as the understanding of music and art (e.g. light and sound waves). We will do our students a serious disservice with allowing them to substitute computer science as well as CTE courses for chemistry and physics. If you check the course material for technical school electronics courses, they do require knowledge of the structure and function of the atom. They require knowledge about magnetic and electrical forces. I would recommend that students be required to take either a physical science course or a combination of courses in physics and chemistry. If students take just life science CTE courses for all of their science, they will not be considered scientifically will have a very heavy emphasis on the human body systems but will not have adequate knowledge as a citizen to know about issues such as recycling, lake pollution, mining, deforestation, invasive species, etc. if you check the alignment of CTE courses with the state adopted standards, you will find that there are many gaps. When we let students only study what they are most familiar with - the life sciences - we limit their experiences and thus limit the possible areas of interest they may develop. High school is the place to give students novel experiences before they decide what their future path takes them. We need all

of our students to have basic knowledge and experiences in all science areas because they will have to be able to have the skills to synthesize and evaluate basic scientific information, as presented in the news, so they can make informed decisions.

EXHIBIT #17

Date Received: June 13, 2018
(Gaalswyk, Brookings)

I believe we do NOT need to change graduation requirements. Students are expected to do more and more at school on top of other things like jobs and athletics. College courses should be left for college. I'm not a supporter of high school students doing college coursework. These kids are being pushed to grow up too fast. Situations like this prompt kids into doing other things they aren't ready for as well. It's not developmentally appropriate to continue to do this to public school students. Education had gotten me up all the way down to the kindergarten level. We expect kids to know so much coming into kindergarten! Kindergarten is supposed to be a child's first experience in the classroom, and for many it still is. Did to the constant push for more sooner, students are missing out on the real this of education that you are pushing schools to move away from. As an educator, and parent, please stop!

EXHIBIT #18

Date Received: June 14, 2018
(Cindy Kroon, Hartford)

Parents (and others) will probably be confused about this change. Significant outreach efforts will be needed to ensure that stakeholders understand the options, and the impact of choosing the "easiest path." I am concerned that students will make decisions when they are 14 years old, that will significantly impact their options after high school. Students who choose to end their math coursework without geometry and algebra 2 will not be prepared for college. What happens if they change their minds at age 17 and want to go to college? It will then be too late to recover those classes in a course sequence.

EXHIBIT #19

Date Received: June 15, 2018
(Lynn Thomason, Sioux Falls)

These comments concern the proposed high school graduation requirements. My first concern is the make up of the group who worked on these requirements. It seems heavily slanted to workforce and industry leaders, not education leaders. While I appreciate the emphasis that these leaders would want to place on having a larger pool of high school graduates, I am not certain graduates with these requirements will be the best employees. These requirements lower the bar. The research on the effect on society by lowering the bar is clear. <https://www.npr.org/2013/01/10/169055052/op-ed-to-close-the-achievement-gap-dont-lower-the-bar>. I am not certain this research has been accessed in the new requirement process. High school students are somewhat prone by developmental age to take the easy way out. Four years later they might then find out that college is not an option as college requirements are not met. Employment options might also be a struggle. Think of the healthcare orientation class where right angles are referred to in making a hospital corners with sheets and the new employee has no idea what a right angle is because he did not take geometry. Think of the discussion at the newspaper office about a summit in Singapore and the employee has no idea where or what Singapore is because she didn't take geography. Think of the student years from now when their child has to do a project on Pompeii and the parent can't help at all because he didn't take world history. These standards set up students to struggle miserably in life and in employment as they will not have had the content to function well and to solve problems, let alone pursue higher education. Revisiting standards that have not been reviewed is laudable. However, they do not provide any more flexibility as school leaders have had waivers to use. These new requirements lower the bar and send students out into the world with a severe handicap. Why would we do that?

EXHIBIT #20

Date Received: June 18, 2018
(Sarah Burkett, Harrisburg)

I strongly oppose the changes to graduation requirements. We need to educate our students for a global world. We cannot remove geography, world history, and government courses and expect students to be prepared as global citizens. South Dakota needs to include requirements for world history, world geography, and government to best prepare all of our students for society.

EXHIBIT #21

Date Received: June 18, 2018
(John Anderson, Sioux Falls)

Concerning the proposed changes to South Dakota's [high school] graduation requirements, I hereby formally submit the following comments for consideration. Can a non-endorsed, secondary-school graduate subsequently matriculate into [in-state] postsecondary education (including technical institutes, private colleges, or public universities) without remediation? In other words, how does "Every Student Succeed" when you potentially predetermine and solidify imminent or future opportunities based largely upon a 15-year-old's curricular decisions? According to the SD Board of Regents' FY2017 Fact Book, its 4-year/6-year Graduation Rates are 27% and 50% respectively; additionally, the BOR's Remediation Rate is 27%. How might these endorsements (or lack thereof) impact future high school graduates' College and Career Readiness? How did the South Dakota Department of Education determine a Silver-level score on the National Career Readiness Certificate (i.e., WorkKeys) or an OSHA 10 Certification has equitable rigor and relevance [for the Advanced Career Endorsement] to some of the approved industry-recognized credentials such as Certified Welder, EMT-Basic, or Pharmacy Tech? What return on investment has the SD Department of Education quantified or qualified concerning heretofore resources expended upon NCRC testing in the high schools [since 2013/2014]? In other words, with 10,000+ SD high-school students having taken WorkKeys, what merits this "credential" as a key component of the proposed Advanced Career Endorsement? With these proposed endorsements, what [if any] are the potential ramifications for South Dakota's primary High School Equivalency (i.e., General Educational Development credential) and how it is evaluated, approved, and recognized? For example, the GED currently has a "Passing" subtest score-range (145-164), a "College Ready" range (165-174), and a "College Ready + Credit" range (175-200). Could these GED scores potentially align with the proposed endorsements? While SD DOE considers how to report students' endorsements and industry credentials within the Infinite Campus system and on transcripts, what plans exist to inform and educate businesses, employers, industry-sectors, job trainers, and postsecondary education on these endorsements and their relevance? Furthermore, have any businesses or employers specifically requested such distinctions to inform their hiring practices? From which sectors do you find the most interest? With regard to local schools having the ability to create and offer new endorsements, what is the potential for an employer to develop targeted endorsements beneficial to their specific business? Should our public schools become the recruitment-grounds for corporations? How can small businesses (locally operated or family-owned) compete with corporate capacities for such outreach and engagement? Could high school's Career and Technical Education programming potentially become synonymous with "Corporate Recruitment & Training" of our minor-aged children? Moreover, should public education [further] subsidize business and industry's job-training obligations?

EXHIBIT #22

Date Received: June 19, 2018
(Denise Hoffman, Mitchell)

As to Article 24:43, I support the changes in the math requirements. As a former CTE Director, I have seen many high school students who excel in the CTE courses and yet struggle in the advanced math courses. Offering them the option to choose upper level math courses other than Geometry and Algebra II will provide them with better success.

EXHIBIT #23

Date Received: June 20, 2018
(Travis Ehrisman, Sioux Falls)

Why wouldn't you add a Physical Science requirement to the Advanced Endorsement pathway so it would read "1 unit Biology, 1 unit any Physical Science, 1 unit any lab science"? This would keep students from taking 3 life science courses for graduation, open up more classes to be considered science course for the Opportunity Scholarship and broaden their science background.

EXHIBIT #24

Date Received: June 20, 2018
(Susan Hoover, Sioux Falls)

I oppose the proposed changes to the graduation requirements. High school is a student's last opportunity to get a balanced, well rounded education that prepares him or her to be an adult citizen. I do not think it benefits students to encourage specialization so early in life. Thank you for your consideration.

EXHIBIT #25

Date Received: June 20, 2018
(Ken, Aberdeen)

I have reviewed the list of industry certifications, a lot of these certifications are not that easy to get and are very expensive. I work in the welding industry and very much understand what it takes to get an AWS weld certification in a weld. It isn't an easy or cheap process and most students couldn't do it in their school because to get this certification you need to go to an AWS certified testing facility and there are only a few in the state and for one weld certification will cost over \$200. Some of the other certifications that I found prices for are ADDA \$155, OSHA 10 \$25, ASK Business Institute exams \$65, Medical Administration Assistant \$109, Registered Parlinmentarian \$150, Para Pro \$55. A+ Certification \$211, Servsafe Food Safety \$150 to \$200, ASE student certification \$35. These are not cheap, who is going to pay for them the school district or the parent? I can't afford to pay these for my child, especially when they may never get used. For instance in the welding industry the businesses would rather qualify their employees on the welds that they will be performing they could care less about an AWS welding certification unless you are a certified welding inspector. These new requirements seem to be misguided.

EXHIBIT #26

Date Received: June 20, 2018
(Angela Giffin, Rapid City)

World language learning should be a 1 unit requirement for all graduates (except special education students). (It should be taught starting in elementary school). It is not comparable to CTE courses or internships. It utilizes a different part of the brain, and had different benefits and results. 1) Second language is increasingly required to be accepted to college. 2) More jobs prefer (and require) knowledge of a second language. 3) Even in South Dakota, we are not isolated from the world at large, and its cultural and language diversity. Learning in high school will help prepare children better for their reality. 4) Learning a language takes time. The younger they start, the better they'll be. 5) Learning a second language has a profound positive effect on brain development.

EXHIBIT #27

Date Received: June 21, 2018
(Laura Vidler, Vermillion)

World language learning should be a 1 unit requirement for all graduates (except special education students). (It really should be taught starting in elementary school). It is not comparable to CTE courses or internships. It utilizes a different part of the brain, and has different benefits and results. 1) Second language is increasingly

required to be accepted to college. 2) More jobs prefer (and require) knowledge of a second language. 3) Even in South Dakota, we are not isolated from the world at large, and its cultural and language diversity. Learning in high school will help prepare children better for their reality. 4) Learning a language takes time. The younger they start, the better they'll be. 5) Learning a second language has a profound positive effect on brain development. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages advocates the study of BOTH world languages and computer science. Both are essential skills in a world that is connected across borders and through technology. Both provide specific skills and a way of thinking; however, the perspectives and skills gained are not equivalent. A computer coding course is not equivalent to a world language course for the following reasons: The study of computer coding does not allow students to gain the intercultural skills, insight, and perspectives to know how, when, and why to express what to whom. In other words, computer coding does not meet the standards outlined in the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Computer coding cannot be used by people to interact and negotiate meaning with other people. Computer coding cannot be used to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of a particular culture through the language. Languages provide an historical connection to society and culture and have been around for centuries, gathering the elements of culture, preserving stories, and being used for human communication. In comparison to most world languages with about 10,000 vocabulary words and grammatical structures, computer coding does not utilize large numbers of words, nor does it use them in the same ways. A "typical computing language has a vocabulary of about 100 words, and the real work is learning how to put these words together." (Hirotaka, 2014) Merriam-Webster provides the following "simple" definition of language: the system of words or signs that people use to express thoughts and feelings to each other. Computer coding does not express thoughts or feelings. Colleges and universities vary in their policies for accepting computer coding as fulfilling students' foreign language entry requirements. Computer coding is part of the larger field of computer science, which is a critical 21st century subject and deserves its own graduation requirement. Computer science is much more related to mathematics and science than to languages.

EXHIBIT #28

Date Received: June 21, 2018
(Gayla Mertens, Aberdeen)

World language learning should be a 1 unit requirement for all graduates (except special education students). A computer coding course is not equivalent to a world language course. A world language class is not comparable to CTE courses or internships.

EXHIBIT #29

Date Received: June 21, 2018
(Melissa Miller Kincart, Rapid City Area Schools)

This article has prompted some additional concerns and frustrations I did not previously submit. <https://amp.argusleader.com/amp/696023002> First, I am continually surprised that Department of Education staff believe that students will choose to pursue the higher more rigorous endorsement tracks. At least half our graduates currently have no plans to pursue any training beyond high school, and those our graduates not our students we lose along the way. The rigor of the base diploma (default diploma) simple can't be compared to be seen as rigorous as the states in our region. Our students who have caring adults in their lives, engaged parents and college and career goals beyond high school schools are already achieving the elements in the three endorsement tracks. However, our students who come from families where they believe there is already no value in graduating from high school will choose the base diploma which is really setting them up for limited opportunities beyond high school. If the base diploma is adopted I would like to see the addition of parent/guardian signature and mandatory advising session with a school counselor or administrator being required for students pursuing that option as they need to be aware the limited math/science etc. requirements will significantly limit their child's chances of being successful in postsecondary education. (NCAA compliance will not be achieved, Must attend open access institution, will likely not be placed in credit bearing courses as ACT and SBAC scores will be too low, academic scholarships

will be unlikely, etc.). Further, I echo this articles frustration about district administration, teachers, all ranks of educators on the ground not being included in the deliberation and development of this proposal. There were some limited conversations at the Superintendent level around desired flexibility or alternative track for a high school credential for our students who are largely credit deficient. However, there was not a transparent effort to engage larger stakeholders in this process. There were just a few webinars for curriculum directors and counselors (they weren't even recoded for future viewing) to share the proposals after they had been outlined. The process has been rushed and not thoroughly vetted. Thank you for the considerations of these concerns.

EXHIBIT #30

**Date Received: June 21, 2018 and June 26, 2018
(Stephanie Higdon, Rapid City Area Schools)**

I am writing to state my concerns about the proposed graduation requirements. I have taught both middle school and high school math for fourteen years, and am currently a Teaching and Learning Specialist for the Rapid City School District. I truly believe the proposed graduation requirements have a positive internet for the future of high school students. The proposal gives students voice in choosing their diploma option, the pathway they will take, and ultimately the courses they take to fulfill the needed requirements. This proposal gives students the purpose and relevance so many high school students do not have at this stage in their education. With this being said, I have strong concerns for the graduation requirements presented in this proposal. South Dakota Department of Education has taken great strides recently in adopting the new teaching standards in ELA, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies that are closely aligned with the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. South Dakota DOE also has taken a step in the right direction by implementing the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium assessment to determine student proficiency on these standards. Both the standards and the assessment hold all students in the state to a high level of rigor, ensuring students are not just learning required content, but also teaching students to be lifelong learners and problem solvers. My primary concern with the proposal on the high school diploma requirements is in the core content areas. The proposed high school diploma does not require all students in the state to learn the assessed standards, therefore holding students at a lower level of accountability for learning. For example, the current math requirements for a high school diploma are Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II. By completing all of these courses, students will have been taught all of the assessed South Dakota Mathematics Standards prior to graduating from high school. However, with the proposed change to the high school diploma, students are only required to take Algebra 1, causing these students to learn essentiality only one-third of the math standards. In addition to missing the majority of the content taught in the South Dakota Mathematics Standards, students who take only Algebra 1 will sacrifice the instruction of crucial problem-solving skills all students need regardless of their future. Both the South Dakota Math and Science standards celebrate the need to teach students skills beyond the content. In both of these State Standards students learn valuable 21st century skills that cause them to collaborate with peers, thinking deeply and having rich conversations around real world problems, and developing solutions to these problems that require them to explain their thinking and justify why their solution is sound. By limiting the diploma requirements as they currently stand, students will take elective courses to fulfill math requirements, taking away the guarantee that students will be taught South Dakota Standards or 21st century skills, in turn, doing our students a disservice of preparation to be college or career ready. With the diploma requirements as they currently stand, we are preventing students who are currently considered minors to attaining the goals they may one day strive to achieve as adults. In the area of mathematics, my recommendation is to require students to take a minimum of two courses in which the high school standards are currently taught, allowing for students to then take one elective to fulfil their diploma requirements. This same premise must be applied to all the core content areas. By requiring students to take two courses where the standards are taught, ensures a greater level of consistency of students learning the South Dakota Standards and 21st century skills, a higher level of demand of all students, and the fidelity needed to guarantee all students are college and career ready.

EXHIBIT #31

Date Received: June 21, 2018
(Jeff Lyle, Brookings)

I do not support the new graduation requirements at all. They seem to be making education easier for our students by lowering math standards. The importance of mathematical education can not be understated going into the future. There is a reason the United States is getting left behind the rest of the world when it comes to education, it is because of lowering standards that do not challenge our children. With industry certifications who will be responsible to pay for these? The school district? As a parent of two I will not pay for certifications I know my children will not use going forward. If the school pays for these certifications it will be a waste of tax payer money. Instead of weakening our education we should be challenging students and encouraging them to strive to improve themselves. Someday they may face a tough job market where little education will not be in their favor.

EXHIBIT #32

Date Received: June 22, 2018
(Jack Kitxhen, Yankton)

I oppose the new education requirements as it will lesson the quality of my childs education. Also I do not see the benefit of industry certifications. This is not a fair cost burden on the families. These certifications should be earned in college.

EXHIBIT #33

Date Received: June 22, 2018
(Christi Garst-Santos, Brookings)

World language learning should be a 1 unit requirement for all high school graduates (except special education students) and, ideally, it should be taught starting in elementary school. It is not comparable to CTE courses or internships. Although I advocate the study of both world languages and computer science, the perspectives and skills gained in each discipline are not equivalent. A computer coding course is not equivalent to a world language course for the following reasons: 1. The study of computer coding does not allow students to gain the intercultural skills, insight, and perspectives to know how, when, and why to express what to whom. In other words, computer coding does not meet the standards outlined in the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). 2. Computer coding cannot be used by people to interact and negotiate meaning with other people. 3. Computer coding cannot be used to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of a particular culture through the language. Languages provide an historical connection to society and culture and have been around for centuries, gathering the elements of culture, preserving stories, and being used for human communication. 4. In comparison to most world languages with about 10,000 vocabulary words and grammatical structures, computer coding does not utilize large numbers of words, nor does it use them in the same ways. A "typical computing language has a vocabulary of about 100 words, and the real work is learning how to put these words together." (Hirotaka, 2014) "While computer coding is a vital skill for modern times, it should never be at the expense of foreign languages. I had the opportunity to study in Switzerland for a year on a Fulbright Scholarship at the Université de Neuchâtel and became fluent in French. I couldn't agree more with you about the critical thinking skills inherent in learning a foreign language and the necessity of doing so in our increasingly connected linguistically diverse global community. We need computer skills and foreign-language skills. Both are critical to our modern world." Delegate Mark Levine, Virginia House of Delegates, serving Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax Please do not eliminate the world language requirement. Thank you, Christine Garst-Santos

EXHIBIT #34

Date Received: June 22, 2018
(June Apaza, Spearfish)

This comment is in reference to new graduation requirements for both mathematics and science. The proposed graduation requirements in both science and mathematics provide no guidelines for districts regarding acceptable math or science classes beyond the one required class for each subject. I would like to see a guideline added for each of these content area that stipulates that the additional math and science classes must be aligned with high school math or science standards. This one small change would ensure that all math and science classes offered to South Dakota students in our high schools would be directly addressing content that has been identified as important content for students to know and understand.

EXHIBIT #35

Date Received: June 22, 2018
(Ann Bolman, Western Dakota Technical Institute)

I am concerned with the high school graduation plan that reduces the math requirements for students seeking technical education. This reduction in math requirements sends the message that technical education is not as challenging as other forms of higher education, which is certainly not the case. Quite the contrary--employer expectations for students' technical competencies increases every year. Math is a foundational skill in the majority of technical programs, and college algebra will not provide enough foundation for students to succeed. Currently, 85% of the students who enroll at Western Dakota Tech are not "college ready" based on their Accuplacer math scores. If this new degree plan passes, it will require more students to enroll in remedial math courses, which they will have to pay for out of pocket. This will add an additional barrier for students, especially for those coming from an impoverished or first-generation background, which is a very large percentage of students enrolling at WDT. A low math competency level severely restricts the options a student has for which programs they will realistically be able to complete in a reasonable amount of time (defined in higher education as 150% of the time to degree). Finally, I am concerned about the fact that the changes are being presented too quickly to allow for adequate school district input. Changes this sweeping definitely need to allow for plenty of time for large districts to study the changes and understand the impact on their student population. In Rapid City, Western Dakota Tech is working with the RCAS on pathways programming. Curriculum staff and district leadership need adequate time to review this proposal in light of the changes they are working towards with the district's strategic plan. Thank you very much for considering my concerns. I firmly believe that South Dakota high school students are capable of rising to the level of expectations that we set before them. With skilled high school math teachers and a supportive high school environment, students can exceed expectations. I feel like this proposed high school diploma plan institutionalizes lower expectations, and that's not the direction we need to head in as a community.

EXHIBIT #36

Date Received: June 25, 2018
(JoAnne Bohl, Humboldt)

I am strongly opposed to the elimination of both World Geography and World History credit requirements for high school graduation. Global awareness is a critical piece of public education for all 21st Century students but especially for students in South Dakota schools who often come from backgrounds with limited global diversity exposure. I find it ironic that one of the arguments in favor of the new graduation requirements is to prepare a better trained workforce. With the highly interdependent global economy of which we are all part, the removal of global education requirements definitely does NOT move South Dakota students forward with their career readiness but rather takes them multiple steps backwards, making them significantly less competitive in the jobs market. Please reconsider requiring at least 1 global education credit to the new requirements for ALL South Dakota high school graduates. The South Dakota Department of Education should take the lead on this and not leave this minimal requirement to local district control. Please contact me if you would like more information. Thank you, JoAnne Bohl

**Date Received: June 26, 2018
(Lance Schroeder, Rapid City Area
Schools)**

To whom it may concern, I teach high school students in Rapid City, and I am strongly not in favor of the proposed changes to the state's graduation requirements. Lowering the rigor of classes required to graduate threatens to disadvantage those students who take the easiest pathway of coursework. These students will have less broad experience in skills that are essential in a 21st century workplace, where skills developed in math and upper-level sciences are critical. Putting students at a disadvantage later in life, in the name of choice, or because they struggle in a subject, is not the answer. Also, our education system was founded in the principle that a broad exposure to many different, critical subject areas will benefit the citizenry as a whole. Students take classes like World History, Geography, and Chemistry, because we know that these help students understand more about the true nature of the world, and thus make them richer as people and more able to make informed decisions as members of a democratic republic. By requiring exposure to these classes in high school, students who might never have had an interest previously are many times enlightened to the point that they redirect their future plans. Our responsibility as educators and decision-makers is to foster better people, not to simply create a more streamlined pathway into the labor market. Next, in my experience, the majority of students will take the path of least resistance, foregoing more difficult classes like these in favor of the easiest route to a diploma. Resilience is a quality students develop only through overcoming challenges. Lowering the required rigor of graduation requirements, which this proposal does, will leave our students even less prepared and resilient to the realities of daily life than they already are, whether that life is in a college lecture hall or on the job site. Finally, college professors who I have spoken to at both SDSM&T and BHSU unanimously share that incoming college freshmen are not academically ready for college rigor. Lowering the required high school rigor level will make that situation worse. We should be increasing the requirements, with more specific, named classes, rather than doing the exact opposite as in this proposal. Please, do the right thing and reject the proposed changes to the state's graduation requirements. Sincerely, Lance Schroeder