

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, Sept. 18, 2017

CONTACT: Mary Stadick Smith, South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-7228,

mary.stadicksmith@state.sd.us or

Ruth Raveling, South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-2593, ruth.raveling@state.sd.us

2017 South Dakota Report Card to be released

ABERDEEN, S.D. – At its meeting earlier today, the South Dakota Board of Education Standards heard state-level results from the 2017 Report Card. The Report Card uses several indicators to measure how schools are performing.

“With the advent of the Every Student Succeeds Act, states have the opportunity to broaden the measures they use to review school performance,” said Laura Scheibe, deputy director of accountability systems for the Department of Education. “In South Dakota, we are working toward an accountability system that supports our aspiration that all students leave the K-12 system college, career and life ready.” She expects that, in coming years, the indicators that make up the state’s accountability system will continue to grow.

This year’s Report Card encompasses indicators such as student achievement, academic growth, attendance rates, high school completion, and college and career readiness. “From a big-picture perspective, we are on the right trajectory,” Scheibe said. Many of the indicators of performance from the 2016-17 school year remained steady or increased.

For example, the percentage of students scoring proficient (at or above Level 3) on the state math test increased by two percentage points in 2017. Another bright spot is the performance of the state’s English learners. This group of students saw a significant increase in proficiency rates on the state test – moving more than three percentage points in both math and English language arts.

In recent months, educators and lawmakers around the state have been engaging in conversations about how to better connect K-12 education with the world of work, and how to engage students early on in career exploration. The annual Report Card encompasses certain indicators designed to measure some of these connections.

According to the Report Card, 25 percent more students took the National Career Readiness Certificate assessment in 2017 than 2016. This test focuses on skills necessary for success in the workforce. Even with these additional students, performance on the NCRC remained strong. Just over 94 percent earned a “Bronze” certification, compared to 92 percent last year. “The fact that we have more students taking the NCRC, which is voluntary, indicates that our schools are interested in making connections between students and the workforce,” Scheibe said.

Finally, while the college readiness indicator showed a decline, more students are being incorporated into this measurement than ever before. Previously, this indicator was based solely on ACT scores; this year, it includes ACT, Accuplacer and Smarter Balanced scores. “Using ACT alone was limiting in terms of the information it was providing, since not all students take the ACT. This new measure more accurately reflects how our schools are doing in preparing students for that next step, whether that’s a four-year college, a technical school or an industry-based certification program,” Scheibe said.

Beginning tomorrow morning, the 2017 Report Card can be accessed by visiting www.doe.sd.gov and clicking on the “2017 Report Card” banner.