

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb. 12, 2024

CONTACT: [Mary Stadick Smith](#), South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-7228
[Nancy Van Der Weide](#), South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-2593

JAG-SD students to “Continue the Conversation” in Pierre

PIERRE, S.D. – Student leaders from Jobs for America’s Graduates-South Dakota (JAG-SD) program will gather in Pierre on Feb. 13 to meet with legislators and other government officials as part of a larger statewide project called Capitol Conversations. These students represent Andes Central High School, Bennett County High School, Lyman High School, Todd County High School, Wagner High School, Wakpala High School, and three Sioux Falls high schools (Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Washington). JAG-SD is a leadership development and career exploration program for middle and high school students.

“JAG is a proven model of helping at-risk students become better prepared for their future. These kids are completing high school, going to college, and achieving the career of their dreams,” said Gov. Kristi Noem. “We welcome these bright young leaders to our State Capitol and hope that they can help us celebrate the program’s success. Together, we will make sure that JAG is available in more schools and more communities across South Dakota.”

During this event, students will attend committee meetings, visit the House and Senate floors, learn about the judicial branch, gain an understanding of lobbying, and tour the Capitol.

“Educational research supports the idea that students better remember information learned through hands-on activities,” said JAG-SD State Director Beth Schneider. “Our efforts also focus on helping students understand their roles as informed citizens, as well as the responsibilities of leadership. That’s why JAG-SD developed Capitol Conversations.”

As part of Capitol Conversations, JAG-SD students first met during the October 2023 Leadership Development Conference, where they learned about leadership and what it means to represent their peers.

Throughout the fall, the Capitol Conversations project brought local JAG-SD Career Associations together with a variety of government leaders from their communities. The Career Association is the extracurricular component of JAG.

The culminating piece of Capitol Conversations involves students reconnecting with government leaders from their communities after the legislative session to understand the impact of bills that were brought forward and laws that were passed.

JAG has more than 400 student members in South Dakota and 68,000 members nationally. To learn more about starting a JAG program, please contact JAG-SD State Director [Beth Schneider](#).