



**south dakota**  
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April 6, 2010

Zollie Stevenson, Jr., Ph.D.  
Director  
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
US Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave.  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Dr. Stevenson, Jr.,

The South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) is re-submitting its revised accountability workbook and graduation rate application for review and approval.

The department is also resubmitting its graduation rate application reflecting a goal of 85% and minimum requirement for increase in graduation rate as 2%.

The list of schools at the 10<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles has been updated to reflect the exclusion of schools with less than ten students in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and one school that focuses on students who have dropped out and are now re-enrolled in high school pursuing their GED. This process is consistent with the state's request for a waiver to exclude small schools that was submitted to ED as part of the process for determining the state's definition of Persistently Lowest Achieving schools. Inclusion of small high schools with no, or few twelfth grade students skews the outcome of the state's ranking. There are 162 high schools included in the current ranking.

The South Dakota Accountability Workbook contains the following revisions in addition to those amendments submitted earlier in February:

- 7.1 Clarifies the state's graduation goal from 80 to 85% to reflect an aggressive requirement. Also, the minimum increase needed to show continuous and substantial improvement is changed from any increase to 2% increases. These changes are based upon guidance ED provided during a phone call on April 5, 2010.

Thank you for the additional guidance provided yesterday during the phone call. We appreciate the opportunity to revise our graduation rate application and accountability workbook. If you or your staff have questions about our workbook, please contact our State Title I Director, Diane Lowery, at 605-773-6509 or [diane.lowery@state.sd.us](mailto:diane.lowery@state.sd.us).

Sincerely,

/x/

Tom Oster  
Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Education