

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 Am 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 faction of students that continue to struggle with their learning. While this may be 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 faction 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 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 prepared 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 through 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 careless 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.” (Hirota, 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.” (Hirota, 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

EXHIBIT #37

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

EXHIBIT #38

Date Received: June 27, 2018
(Lori Wehlander, Huron)

With the removal of the IEP teams ability to substitute courses for graduation, it will greatly affect graduation rates of students with disabilities. This should not be removed and the IEP team should have the ability to create an Individualized Education Plan that is appropriate for each student. The purpose of IDEA is to allow students to receive an education that meets the individual student's needs to prepare them for adult life that is appropriate for them. If this is removed and IEP teams can no longer develop transition plans that are individualized students will not be able to participate in a free and appropriate education.

EXHIBIT #39

Date Received: June 28, 2018
(Stacey Wiese, Brandon)

All tracks should require that students take content that follow high school standards. This will lower the ceiling for students and not progress their conceptual understanding. This goes against several statistical studies. Why are we lowering expectations for students?

EXHIBIT #40

Date Received: June 28, 2018
(Audra West, Black Hawk)

As a fourth grade teacher in South Dakota, I am concerned about the proposed Individual Education Programs in high school. As educators, we want our students to progress and be challenged enough to be successful. Students should benefit from high school education to encourage them to be proficient and responsible members of society. I do not think it is a wise idea to allow students to choose their own classes as early as Freshman year. Students should be required to take necessary classes that promote growth as students and individuals. I think students will find many doors will be closed if they make the wrong decisions regarding class choices earlier in their lives.

EXHIBIT #41

Date Received: June 28, 2018
(Rachel, Rapid City)

Raising graduation rates means raising standards and the level of education, not letting students take "easier" classes so that our state looks better. A 14 year old is not ready to make decisions that effect his or her entire life. They should not be given the option of shutting doors to their future by not insisting on Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II for all students.

EXHIBIT #42

Date Received: June 29, 2018
(Jill Keller, Mobridge)

I cannot support the new proposed graduation requirements. The proposed standards lowers the math standards and in general our students education requirements. For students to compete in today's world they need the best education we can give them. I also cannot support the use of industry certifications as part of the requirements especially if it is going to add to the cost of our students education or if we the parents have to pay for these. The Mobridge school has the NCRC certification and very few of our area businesses put a lot of importance in this certification. Yet the state of SD continues to pay for it without any industry support.

EXHIBIT #43

Date Received: June 29, 2018
(Betty Johnson, Watertown)

I have a hard time seeing how these new graduation requirements will improve my childrens education. I do not fully understand the industry credentials but if these become part of the new requirements I would hope the cost of these would not be placed on the family or their children. I do not support these new requirements.

EXHIBIT #44

Date Received: June 29, 2018
(Mary Noordsy, Sioux Falls)

I believe the new curriculum will do no good for our children. Less math is only going to put our students further behind pace than they already are with the rest of the world. Also who will be paying for these certifications? My family is fortunate enough to be able to afford them, even though my children will likely never use them. But there are many families out there less fortunate that may struggle to pay for these certifications. That doesn't seem fair, as they should be entitled to a free education without worry of fees. I also don't believe this should fall on taxpayers either, as property taxes are already high enough. This overall curriculum seems like a bad idea, and a waste of government time and money to pursue it. If this passes I will stand by and watch the education of our future generations go down the drain.

EXHIBIT #45

Date Received: June 29, 2018
(Patricia Martin, Hot Springs)

Yes! I love the concept! As a retired teacher I have seen our high school education shift to be focused so much on college bound students that the technical vocations have been overlooked and/or ignored! This is definitely a step in the right direction to encourage all students no matter what their focus. I'm sure some tweaking will be needed along the way but kudos for taking this step to bring things into the 21st century and not continuing as we have for the last 100 years!

EXHIBIT #46

Date Received: June 29, 2018
(Julie Terrell, Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire)

Dear Members of the South Dakota Board of Education Standards:

The Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire (HBASE) submits the following comments on the South Dakota Department of Education's proposal to revise the high school graduation requirements described in Articles 24:05 (Individual Education Programs) and 24:43 (Accreditation and School Improvement—Curriculum).

HBASE represents the collective interests of over 750 companies involved in the home building industry. The housing industry is critical to our national, state and local economies, and a skilled and capable workforce that is adequate to meet demand is vital to home builders. HBASE and the Workforce Development Committee have worked to address labor development issues while promoting industry-related programs to area schools in the Sioux Empire.

HBASE appreciates the efforts of the South Dakota Department of Education to bring forward long awaited updates to the current graduation requirements. Since the current high school graduation requirements were passed in 2009, the needs of students, schools, employers, and communities have dramatically changed. In the past few years, the HBASE Workforce Development Committee has advocated changes to the state's graduation requirements including a multiple pathway approach to high school graduation. This multiple pathway is comparable to what the Department of Education is proposing in the new graduation requirements and the three endorsements beyond the base graduation requirements.

HBASE is supporting the South Dakota Department of Education's proposal to revise the state's high school graduation requirements. The Department of Education is maintaining a total of 22 units for graduation as well as the required number of credits per subject area. The proposed requirements, however, allow flexibility for students in those specific subject areas. Student can determine which classes to take in the given subject areas to best meet their individual academic and career interests.

As an example, current standards for math require 3 credits consisting of 1-unit of Algebra I, 1-unit of Geometry, and 1-unit of Algebra II. The new proposed requirements would require 1-unit of Algebra I. The other two units would be left up to the student and the high school depending upon what the school may and may not offer. Under this example, the Sioux Falls Career and Technical Education Academy could potentially offer a CTE course like construction math or carpentry math to meet the math credit graduation requirements.

In addition to the base high school graduation requirements, the state has outlined three endorsements that students may earn as a signal of specialization beyond the base graduation requirements: Advanced, Advanced Career, and Advanced Honors. These stackable endorsements allow students to demonstrate to audiences – such as the state's Board of Regents institutions, an employer, or others – that they have specific preparation to embark on a chosen pathway. Students may earn none or all three; additionally, districts may add endorsements beyond the three specified in the proposal, so long as the base graduation requirements are met.

HBASE believes the proposal provides a more encompassing approach for students to explore and

prepare for post-secondary opportunities while they are still secondary students. As an example, a student who is interested in working in the building industry directly after graduation could meet the base graduation requirements and take a wide range of electives and/or pursue a state-approved recognized credential (Drafter Certificate or OSHA 10 Hour Safety Certificate). The proposed changes give schools more flexibility to assist students in meeting their individual academic and career goals for post-high school. By offering students opportunities to pursue meaningful coursework and career-related experiences, the proposed graduation requirements seek to more fully engage all students as they progress through high school.

Overall, HBASE encourages the South Dakota Board of Education Standards to adopt the proposed high school graduation requirements. HBASE recommends continuation of the workforce development dialog and interaction between the various levels of governmental (federal, state, and local) in concert with the efforts of private business/industry and associations to best equip and prepare students for future success.

On behalf of HBASE, thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,
Julie Terrell
Executive Vice President
Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire

EXHIBIT #47

Date Received: July 2, 2018
(Rob Timm, Chiesman Center for Democracy)

The success of our nation and state depends on educated, informed and active citizens and residents. However, we are not preparing our diverse residents with the civic knowledge, skills and values they need to succeed in college, career and civic life. A few sobering facts tell the story. The United States recently ranked 139th in voter participation among 172 democracies around the world, and less than half of all eligible young people ages 18-24 voted in the 2016 elections. Just 13 percent of high school seniors showed a solid understanding of U.S. History in the same year, and nearly half of Americans who participated in a 2011 Pew Research Study said that states' rights, rather than slavery was the main cause of the Civil War. South Dakota's education system plays a leading role in equitably cultivating the qualities that will enable our youth to mature and participate in our society. We've long held the view that our schools have a strong civic mission. And yet, in recent years this mission has been neglected, and now with this new proposal from the Department of Education, it will be relegated to nothing more than a semester or two of rote learning over a four-year period. We have much to gain by revitalizing civic learning, not diminishing it as recommended in these new rules. The chief benefits of civic learning are a vibrant and informed civic life and democracy and a healthy society. High-quality civic learning also helps teach students skills they need for the 21st century workplace, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, initiative and innovation. In addition, civic learning done right engages students by making what they learn at school more relevant to real life. It promotes academic achievement, as well, and prevents some students from dropping out. There has never been a better or more crucial time to revitalize civic learning in South Dakota. Voter turnout is low, especially at the local level and the demographics of our population is changing. Civic participation in clubs, organizations as well as candidates for public office is declining. We are seeing more and more immigrants and refugees who are making South Dakota their home. And, as stated earlier, we are seeing

a younger population that has become disillusioned and disengaged. Now is not the time to reduce civic learning opportunities for students. To the contrary, now is the time to enhance and expand civic instruction, starting in kindergarten and all the way through high school. Our state and country cannot afford for our schools to continue to produce students who are not ready to become active, participating members of our society. I will leave you with a quote from a teacher regarding youth civic engagement: "There is no magic power that comes down on your 18th birthday and hits you with a wand and says, 'Now you are a great citizen, go out there and do it.' You have to teach this, it has to be part of the culture of school from kindergarten through 12th grade." Its time to change the culture of South Dakota schools to ensure that our students are ready, willing and able to be great citizens. We ask respectfully that you do not minimize the need for civic education in our school systems. Rob Timm President/CEO Chiesman Center for Democracy

EXHIBIT #48

Date Received: July 2, 2018
(Karla, Spearfish)

Comments regarding the proposed changes to state graduation requirements. As a career K-12 public school educator, I have grave concerns regarding the creation of a high school "tracking" system for high school graduation. There are several valid reasons why this proposal is not good for the students of South Dakota, but the most concerning is the failure of the "powers that be" to understand and promote the number one purpose of education. That purpose is to fulfill the necessary education needed for the foundation and maintenance of a democratic society. It is NOT to fulfill labor requirements for the service industry of South Dakota employers. To totally erase any liberal arts aspect of a high school education borders on criminality.

EXHIBIT #49

Date Received: July 3, 2018
(Wyatt DeJong, Winner)

Under the Advanced Honors track, I don't see how .5 social studies electives credits will help a student to prepare them for higher education. Being a teacher the passed four years and learning about many school districts, social studies electives are some of the easiest and least preparatory for students. I think there would be two places to go with this .5 option. First, you could simply include it in general elective credits since all students are extremely restricted to electives. The second option would be to have it be required under a CTE elective as a large majority of students graduate without a realistic plan for their career focus. On a side note, due to SD's limited ability to recruit quality teachers, I would also recommend that foreign language should simply be listed under elective options and not a requirement. In addition for students not having a solid direction for their future, they are not graduating with many if any skills. Students should be required to take 2 credits of CTE, not CTE or foreign language. I'm not saying that foreign language studies are bad, I'm saying that CTE is significantly more essential for students in our society today.

EXHIBIT #50

Date Received: July 3, 2018 & July 5, 2018
(Edward Patrick Hogan, Brookings)

I appreciate this opportunity to respond to the Draft Proposed High School Graduation Requirements

(2018). Over the years I have served as a member of both the Brookings School District Board of Education (7 years) and the Catholic Dioceses of Sioux Falls Board of Education (10 years). I understand the responsibilities and the challenges you face, and I appreciate your contributions to learning. I spent more than 50 years in higher education, the vast majority serving South Dakota State University (SDSU) as Department Head of Geography, Assoc. Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Chief Technology Officer.

On March 27, 1989, Governor George S. Mickelson named me the State Geographer of South Dakota. Part of that appointment charged me “with serving as a consultant, advisor, or resource person to educators and state officials on matters of geographic curriculum and materials.” It is this responsibility that compels me to respond to your proposed High School Graduation Requirements.

I earned my Ph.D. from Saint Louis University. In 1967, SDSU President Hilton Briggs hired me to develop a Geography curriculum and program for the students of South Dakota’s largest university. Soon after, I developed a Bachelor of Science in Geography, and SDSU established the Department of Geography and named me as the Department Head. In the 1970s, the SDSU Department of Geography was charged with developing a Master’s in Geography, in support of the then new, internationally renowned EROS Data Center in Dell Rapids, South Dakota. In the 1990s, the SDSU Department of Geography partnered with EROS to develop the Geospatial Science Center of Excellence and a PhD in Geospatial Science.

With each new charge, the SDSU Department of Geography and the geography community in South Dakota rose to exceed expectations. Today, more than seventy five of our graduates are employed among the scientists and researchers at the EROS Data Center in Garretson, SD. Our graduates have distinguished themselves by achieving major scientific and administrative positions at EROS, including Center Director and Senior Scientist.

Nearly 1500 students have graduated with majors, minors, or certificates in Geography from SDSU. Well over half are employed in South Dakota in a full range of career opportunities in agriculture, business, banking, industry, manufacturing, sales, transportation and logistics, state, local and federal government, teaching and school administration, city managers, planners, economic development and location specialists, and geotechnical specialists and scientists, and even medical doctors and SD Supreme Court Justices.

Graduates of the SDSU Geography Program are one of the largest groups of cartographers, geospatial scientists, remote sensing scientists and environmental scientists in the United States Federal Government. SDSU geographers play vital research and service roles with the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, US Department of State, and across branches of the US military.

The South Dakota Board of Education added the Geography requirement for high school graduation in response to compelling research that showed Americans were inadequately prepared to understand what was happening in the rest of the world. We were forward thinking and were among the first states to initiate the Geography graduation requirement. That evidence has not changed. Americans remain among the lowest in terms of geographic literacy, globally (<https://media.nationalgeographic.org/assets/file/NGS-Roper-2006-Report.pdf>). Lack of geographic literacy does not simply mean students cannot find the United States on a world map, it means they are not literate enough to know what observations to make or questions to ask when working with and building business with people from around the world.

South Dakota did a remarkable job of providing our students and citizens with an understanding of the enormous competition and challenges we face in today's and tomorrow's world. SDSU and the National Geographic Society jointly offered summer workshops for 2000 South Dakota teachers for over 30 years in support of our high school geography teachers.

Our high school graduates put their geographic knowledge to work for South Dakota. They have utilized it to help successfully compete in the world economy, to obtain needed resources and supports, to sell their products on the world market, and to provide jobs and wealth for themselves and fellow South Dakotans.

Today, we know that we cannot successfully compete in the world economically or militarily unless we become more knowledgeable about our competition. This is true from the highest levels of national office, to the farmer selling on the world market, to the industry seeking parts and resources for manufacturing products or competing in international sales and marketing. World Geography provides our students with an understanding of the world of competition and how we can respond. This is a truly essential level of knowledge for personal, economic, political and cultural survival. It is also why so many federal careers today require a significant level of expertise in a world region, nation, or language.

One important additional benefit of World Geography is the technical evolution that has taken place in our discipline. Today teaching geography requires that in addition to the traditional subject matter, instruction includes GPS (Global Positioning Systems), GIS (Geographic Information Systems, or computer mapping), aerial photo interpretation, remote sensing and now drone science. The understanding and utilization of these technological advances and supports are incorporated in studying today's World Geography text books and curriculum. The other social sciences, including political science, economics, and history, do not provide our students with comparable technical skill levels in world understanding.

I strongly support South Dakota's current social science requirements, which include .5 Units of geography. The proposal retains a 3 credit requirement in social studies but removes a .5 Unit requirement for Geography. I recommend, if anything, you expand the Geography requirement to 1 Unit, with .5 Units of World Geography and .5 Units of Geospatial Technologies (including GIS). AP Human Geography, the fastest growing AP course nationally, could count for 1 Unit and cover both the .5 Units of World Geography and .5 Units of Geospatial Technologies.

I urge you to retain or expand the place of Geography in all three endorsements and the High School graduation requirements for our students in South Dakota.

Edward Patrick Hogan, PhD.
State Geographer of South Dakota
Professor Emeritus, South Dakota State University

Date Received: July 3, 2018

(Kim Hefner-Hines, Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire)

Dear Members of the South Dakota Board of Education Standards:

On behalf of the Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire (HBASE), we are pleased to provide comments regarding the South Dakota Department of Education's proposal to revise the high school graduation requirements described in Articles 24:05 (Individual Education Programs) and 24:43 (Accreditation and School Improvement—Curriculum).

The housing industry is critical to our national, state and local economies, and a skilled and capable workforce that is adequate to meet demand is vital to home builders. Our association represents the collective interests of over 775 companies involved in the home building industry in the Sioux Empire. HBASE through the efforts of its Workforce Development Committee have worked to address labor development issues while promoting industry-related programs to area schools in the Sioux Empire.

In the past few years, the HBASE Workforce Development Committee has advocated changes to the state's graduation requirements including a multiple pathway approach to high school graduation. This is comparable to what the Department of Education is proposing in the new graduation requirements and the three endorsements beyond the base graduation requirements. Since the current high school graduation requirements were passed in 2009, the needs of students, schools, employers and communities have dramatically changed. HBASE appreciates the efforts of the South Dakota Department of Education to bring forward long awaited updates to the current graduation requirements.

Our association is proud to support the proposed high school graduation requirements as set by the South Dakota Department of Education. The Department of Education is maintaining 22 total units for graduation as well as the required number of credits per subject area. The proposed requirements, however, allow flexibility for students in those specific subject areas. To best meet their individual career and academic interests, students can determine which classes to take in the various subjects.

The proposed changes give schools more flexibility to assist students in meeting their individual academic and career goals for post-high school. By offering students opportunities to pursue meaningful coursework and career-related experiences, HBASE feels that the proposed graduation requirements seek to more fully engage all students as they progress through high school.

Currently, three math credits are required (one unit each of Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II). The new proposed requirements would require 1-unit of Algebra I while the other two units would be left up to the student and the high school depending upon what the school offers. For example, the Sioux Falls Career and Technical Education Academy could potentially offer a course such as carpentry or construction math to meet the graduation requirements.

As an indication of specialization, the state has outlined three endorsements that students may earn beyond the base graduation requirements: Advanced, Advanced Career and Advanced Honors. These stackable endorsements allow students to demonstrate to audiences – such as the state's Board of Regents institutions, an employer or others – that they have specific preparation to embark on a chosen pathway. Students may earn none or all three; additionally, districts may add endorsements beyond the three specified in the proposal, so long as the base graduation requirements are met.

HBASE also believes that this proposed modification allows a more well-rounded approach for our youth to explore and prepare for post-secondary opportunities while they are still secondary students. For example, students interested in working in the building industry immediately after graduation could meet the base graduation requirements while still having the ability to take other electives or even pursue a state-approved recognized credential (Drafter Certificate or OSHA 10 Hour Safety Certificate).

Overall, HBASE encourages the South Dakota Board of Education Standards to adopt the proposed high school graduation requirements. HBASE recommends continuation of the workforce development dialog and interaction between the various levels of governmental (federal, state, and local) in concert with the efforts of private business/industry and associations to best equip and prepare students for future success. On behalf of HBASE, thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

Kim Hefner-Hines
President
Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire

EXHIBIT #52

Date Received: July 3, 2018
(Garet Wyatt, Showplace Cabinetry)

Hello,

I am a Human Resources manager at Showplace Cabinetry.

I would like to commend the work being done on the new graduation requirements. I like the direction that you are taking in modifying the graduation requirements so that individuals who may not be bound for college are not required to take the higher levels of math and science that are currently required.

I have long believed that we need to provide a path for employment for individuals who do not desire or who may not succeed in college. This is a good move for South Dakota DOE.

Secondly, I am a homeschool father and I also support these new requirements on a personal level. For the same reasons listed above, all homeschool children are not necessarily bound for college and I have felt that the upper level science and math requirements needed to be re-evaluated.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Thank you,

Garet Wyatt

Human Resources

(605) 743-5970

garet.wyatt@showplacecabinetry.com



EXHIBIT #53

Date Received: July 5, 2018

(Shanna Smidt, Menno)

I think that World Language should not be in the same endorsement category for choice as CTE and Capstone experiences or internships. World Language learning uses a different part of the brain than applied education experiences like CTE and Capstone projects or internships. That's the point; World Languages are not mastered in the same way as CTE courses, Capstone experience or internships. I believe that 2 whole units of a World Language should be a requirement in the Advanced Endorsement and Advanced Honors Endorsement and separate from CTE courses, Capstone experiences and internships.

EXHIBIT #54

Date Received: July 5, 2018
(Julie Mueller, Garretson)

First, let me say that I am both AFNR certified and certified to teach 5-8th grade science, secondary advanced biology, chemistry, physics, advanced physical science, and advance earth science. I am currently teaching 6 & 8th grade science and 7th grade Agri-science. I feel that the "endorsements" are actually another name for what we use to call "tracks" when we were tracking students. I can see both positive and negative to proposed package. Dependent on the endorsement a student selects, the proposed changes would open the student up to taking more electives or CTE courses. That would be a positive for many students who find their niche in the CTE programs or in the arts. There is great demand for the skills students can learn in CTE courses. If my understanding of proposed package is correct, I am concerned with geometry not being part of the required math for all. I feel that the skills learned in geometry have a higher application rate in the work force than those skills learned in algebra. Having said that, though, there is a strong relationship between the two subjects and they could be taught showing this connection. Is it possible to look at a semester of Algebra 1 and a semester of Geometry as a requirement? Thank you to those who have worked to put this package together and for the opportunity to comment.

EXHIBIT #55

Date Received: July 5, 2018
(Summer Schultz, Dell Rapids School District)

I am writing in support of the Proposed High School Graduation Requirements. Being a member of the Large School Group I was fortunate to be included in this discussion from initiation. After serving on the work committee, I feel confident that I understand the proposal along with the areas that seem to be contentious with educators. Although I believe it will take a state-wide effort to see the benefits of this proposal, I feel the changes provide an avenue for school districts to define individual student success, while still adhering to district-approved regulations and school defined, non-negotiables. I would acknowledge that at face-value if you simply look at the proposed base graduation requirements, you could argue South Dakota is lowering the requirements needed to graduate. Unfortunately, many individuals are stopping there with their argument and the benefits of the proposal gets lost. Providing flexibility does not mean the state or individual school districts will lower their standards. Graduation requirements still need to be approved at the district level, along with specific electives, internships, capstones, etc. Each South Dakota district has the opportunity to make their curriculum offerings unique, and each student may have the opportunity to have an individualized path to graduation. This is not watering down the curriculum as the base is only created to make sure core requirements are

similar state-wide. Unlike the previous attempt to create multiple pathways to graduation, students realistically wouldn't need to declare an endorsement path until the start of their junior year. This provides opportunities for each student to have a better understanding of their ideal pathway. Districts will have an obligation to educate stakeholders about the intended outcome of each endorsement. When this happens, better decisions can be made and conversations between students, parents, and counselors will provide direction for each student's plan of study. Although staff and administrators at Dell Rapids are still eager to understand additional logistics associated with this proposal, I have complete confidence that my staff would work within the parameters of the proposal to create learning opportunities that better meet the needs of individual learners within my district.

EXHIBIT #56

**Date Received: July 6, 2018
(Debra Bienert, Rapid City)**

It is with great concern that I offer my thoughts on the proposed changes to the graduation requirements for the State of South Dakota. I understand that you want to offer flexibility to students to pursue a variety of careers but to presume that they, as young teenagers, are ready to make those decisions which impact the rest of their lives, is naïve. Very few of them will make a career of what they believe they want to do, and to structure their education based on their very limited knowledge of the world is not responsible. Our children must be taught the fundamentals of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies to assure that they have every opportunity to make good decisions regarding their future. These courses will teach them to be critical thinkers and decision makers, not just related to their careers, but to their lives. I have taught in a number of high schools and colleges, and so many of the students I see are poorly prepared for what lies ahead of them. They are young and inexperienced, and it is the job of the state and the educators to expose them to those tools that will be so vital to their lives. I believed that the Math I taught them was important, to every one of them, and I believe I was able to convey that message to them. It is not our responsibility to let them decide what is relevant in their high school years but rather to give them as many tools as we can, so they can go forward with skills and confidence to pursue whatever they want, whenever they want. We are competing in a global economy where many of the other industrialized nations are beating us in academics, productivity, innovation, and aptitude. Let's prepare our students for what lies ahead and give them as many options as we can, so they too have options. I am very opposed to what is being proposed and very discouraged by this direction from what I always felt, was a state that made sensible decisions.

EXHIBIT #57

**Date Received: July 6, 2018
(Jess Wood, Rapid City)**

We just moved here from Colorado and these new graduation requirements sound very much like what they did in Colorado especially with the industry certifications. I oppose these new graduation requirements because of this. The industry certifications didn't work in Colorado and they won't work here also. These are very expensive to implement and it isn't fair to low income families or school districts that are struggling financially. These certifications did not make my children any better prepared for college or the workforce. We need stronger math, science and english courses. If you want to require something look at requiring a course that teaches how to write resumes and prepare for an interview and good work habits. Sincerely Jess Wood

EXHIBIT #58

Date Received: July 9, 2018
(Dr. Erin Lehmann, Rapid City)

I am fearful for all South Dakota students. With the new proposal of math requirements, we could potentially graduate students who have mathematical knowledge no higher than 9th grade math. The SD standards guides our teaching, but this new requirement completely disregards this amazing document. We will be the state that is setting up our students to fail in the 'real world'. I remember being a teenager and I would have chosen the easiest path possible to graduate. Let's be real - I see only 10% of students taking advanced math. 10%, and I believe I am right. Please, do not send our South Dakota youth into a world in which they will fail in college. Students need three years of rigorous mathematics, whether they are going to college or not. With the new proposal, we are creating a system where we are failing our children.

EXHIBIT #59

Date Received: July 9, 2018
(Martha Gregg, Sioux Falls)

24:43:11:02(4) specifies that to satisfy the "general requirements" for HS graduation a student must complete one unit of science, including biology. The descriptor 'laboratory' has been struck through. Would the wording of the proposed new rules allow a student to earn a HS diploma without taking a lab science? That is, could a local school district offer a non-lab version of their biology course to satisfy this requirement? I would encourage the Board of Education Standards to ensure that each HS student takes at least one laboratory science. Include language to require that the biology class referred to in this portion of the rule includes a lab. Our students learn about the scientific method in elementary school; their secondary school experience with science should include participation in that process.

EXHIBIT #60

Date Received: July 9, 2018
(Stephenie Rittberger, Hermosa)

I am very uncertain about the proposed changes. It seems like a step backward to allow students to take less mathematics and English. I would like to see the standard in alignment so all students have options after graduation that would allow them to attend post secondary institutions. I do not think some of the students would be allowed to enter the School of Mines or Black Hills State with the required units unless the child chose to be tracked college ready as a freshman. I am concerned that students who only do the minimum and later on decide they would like to improve their educational situation will not meet standards to attend college or technical schools. I also feel that 22 credits for graduation is a low standard. When we set the expectation higher people will meet the expectation.

EXHIBIT #61

Date Received: July 10, 2018
(Lisa Anson, Miller)

I do not believe that a world language and CTE courses are equal in rigor or in preparation for post secondary studies. Please reconsider this, as the classroom expectations are very different, as are the grading requirements (speaking from my experience of 27 years in the classroom and teaching students

who have taken both at the same time). In education, we need to stop lower our expectations and rigor-
-there are areas and awards that we should have to work harder for, and this is one of those areas.

EXHIBIT #62

Date Received: July 10, 2018
(January Johnson, Sioux Falls)

Please reconsider the graduation requirement for 2 units of CTE OR world language for the Advanced Honors Endorsement. The proposed changes already have an endorsement for Career/CTE units, and adding it as an option for Advanced Honors is a duplication favoring CTE. It is possible, therefore, that students may be able to earn multiple endorsements via CTE courses. If your plan is to diversify student options, please revise the Advanced Honors Endorsement to include 2 years of modern/classical language study to distinguish it from other paths and endorsements. Thank you.

EXHIBIT #63

Date Received: July 10, 2018
(Megan, Scotland)

The advanced honors endorsement has the following language: 2 units of either of the following or a combination of the two: • Approved CTE courses OR • Modern or Classical Language (including U.S. Sign Language); units must be in the same language I feel the advanced honors endorsement should change the language of OR to AND. CTE courses and Modern/Classic Language courses are not interchangeable and both help our students to be career and college ready by providing them distinct opportunities and language specific to each area. Another option is requiring the 2 units of world language instead of optional CTE courses as there is already an Career/CTE endorsement and students are able to receive more than one endorsement.

EXHIBIT #64

Date Received: July 10, 2018
(Debra Jensen, Black Hawk)

More emphasis should be given to communication - reading, thinking, writing, speaking. I recommend 5 credits total. 5 credits total for math and science. Either 2.5 for each or 2 each with the 5th credit the students choice of either math or science. Social Studies should be 4 credits with the inclusion of government/civics. Personal finance and or economics should be 1 full credit. Debt and personal responsibility are key elements to success. This model would reduce the number of electives slightly but ensure that students will have communication skills, understand the basics of money and budgeting, have a working knowledge of how government closest to them works. I am a former radio/tv broadcaster and small business owner educated in SD. I am proud of my early education which was in a 4 room school house with 4 teachers and 8 grades!

EXHIBIT #65

Date Received: July 10, 2018
(Alyssa Krogstrand, South Dakota School Counselor Association)

July 10, 2018

South Dakota Board of Education Standards
c/o Susan Aguilar, President
800 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 57501

President Aguilar & Board Members:

Greetings! I am Alyssa Krogstrand, President of the South Dakota School Counseling Association (SDSCA), and it is my pleasure to write you on behalf of our organization, with over 300 members working daily with students across our great state.

My reason for reaching out to you today is to state our organization's full support of the proposed graduation requirements as proposed for your consideration at your upcoming July 16th meeting. We feel that the current graduation requirements are a "One Size Fits All" approach, which simply does not best serve the needs of each individual student. The new, proposed, graduation requirements instead offer allowances for districts to help integrate programming that is perhaps more appropriate for their students on a case by case basis. Whether it be geography, resources, or the simple ability to fill teaching positions for different courses, the proposed model allows our school districts, school counselors, parents and students to have more flexibility in plotting a course towards college & career readiness upon graduation.

In conjunction with the changes and flexibility offered, we also feel that the proposed requirements allow for major gains for the State of South Dakota as a whole, such as:

- School Boards to make more determinations on a local level as to what is best for their specific students, returning some local control to districts, while remaining in a state-standards model,
- Students now are afforded more flexibility to actively pursue a diploma within their own individual educational plan rather than being forced into some courses that are currently required in the "One Size Fits All" type of approach,
- Opportunities for students to be challenged by the endorsement concept, and perhaps allow students to explore an area through endorsement opportunity that might have otherwise not been an option previously

Finally, we would also like to express our gratitude that school counselors from across the state were invited to be part of the process as these new standards were developed. Representatives from our organization included those from schools large and small, as well as representation from BIE institutions. These individuals helped draft the standards as proposed, and we are very appreciative of their work, as well as that of everyone involved in the process.

Thank you again for keeping the students of South Dakota a priority – and we would appreciate your support on these Graduation Requirement proposals that make a path to graduation more individualized, reflective of, and appropriate for the needs of all students across our state!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of our membership,
Alyssa Krogstrand, President
South Dakota School Counseling Association

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Dr. Brian Maher, Sioux Falls School District)

To Whom it May Concern:

The Sioux Falls School District, SFSD, is supportive of the framework of the SD DOE Graduation Requirement changes. The changes offer more flexibility to many students depending on their academic and career interests. However, the proposed changes have decreased the flexibility for students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency skills. Both groups of students bring a wide variety of instructional needs as well as the potential to play an active role in the workforce in communities and without a high school diploma their opportunities for employment may be limited.

Throughout the last few months the SFSD presented the proposed graduation requirements to the School Board, Curriculum Council, administration, teacher, and counselor's groups to seek feedback on the changes and the impact it would have on our students. Below are the recommendations for the State Board of Education's consideration listed in order of importance from the stakeholders in the SFSD:

Students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency: Within the proposed Administrative Rules of South Dakota (ARSD) recommendations to two specific rules relate to students with disabilities (24:05:27:12) and youth with limited English proficiency (24:43:11:01). These proposed changes have the potential to decrease flexibility for these two groups of students. Recognizing that all students should be challenged with academic content and achievement standards, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) makes clear that the authority to set and/or modify graduation standards rests solely with the State while the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) holds the State and local districts accountable to provide a free and appropriate public education based on the individual needs of each student with a disability thus limiting the course options to receive a diploma for this group of students and may prevent some youth from experiencing a wider variety of course options during high school. The rule change for students with limited English proficiency creates the same risks. Both groups of students will play an active role in the workforce in communities and without a high school diploma their opportunities for employment may be limited.

Suggestion: The SFSD recognizes and is committed to all students taking high school courses that challenge their individual skills and expand their awareness and understanding of a variety of content. We strongly suggest the State Board of Education diversify the base requirements to expand student options to achieve a high school diploma. The opportunity for students to obtain a diploma increases job opportunities and supports workforce development.

Propose name changes: To provide clarity and distinction between the endorsements for students, parents, and academic institution audiences; Our suggestions are as follows:

- South Dakota High School Diploma
- Career and Technical Endorsement
- Post-Secondary Endorsement
- Advanced Post-Secondary Endorsement

Academic Requirements:

Social Studies – The groups we met with felt strongly about requiring World History or Geography recognizing we are citizens in a global society and our students need to think beyond the national

borders as we live in an interconnected world.

English – Replace the American Literature requirement with a Literature requirement (not specific to any culture) to increase flexibility for students while maintaining academic rigor.

Clear communication to parents regarding the changes in graduation requirements will be essential and the SFSD will work to ensure that parents and students understand how their high school coursework impacts their opportunities for college and career.

EXHIBIT #67

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Amy Policky, Rapid City Area Schools Board of Education)

Pros Flexibility in course selection. This will be a great help to many families and students as they navigate high school pathways. Will there be funding for district to develop these alternative courses and distinct paths to encourage student engagement and academic rigor? More emphasis on the choice to take CTE courses and participation in Capstone and work-based learning experiences. The increase in choice, should push more students and parents to seek counseling advice when creating a path for their high school course work. While this could be a positive result, currently there is a lack of adequate counseling staff to fulfill this need as well as the mental health needs of students. Will districts be given additional funding for school counseling services?

Cons Resources to offer flexibility in courses are lacking. Teachers will have multiple planning periods, because they will be teaching multiple courses. Are we compensating teachers to meet this potential increase in their work load? Would districts meet state salary accountabilities if we hired multiple part time teachers to fill this need? It will not matter if students can choose electives if those electives are not offered. I understand the availability of online courses, but for many students this method of learning is not viable. They need the mentoring and interaction of a teacher in close proximity. If we are going to rely on online classes to fulfil the need for choice in education, the online experience needs to come from a location closer to home. The process to change high school graduation requirements is complex and needs to be comprehensive. Has enough time been spent working with local school districts and school boards to assure this process has had adequate discussion and the changes will meet the needs of the students within those districts? The timeframe seems to be rushed, as the comment period has mainly been during the summer when districts are out of school. I would like to see additional comment periods and an additional public hearing scheduled for next fall, after districts and staff are able to come together to discuss these changes and receive feedback from their local communities. I would also request that all public comments and all other materials be sent to every board member prior to the public hearing and that these comments are entered into the official record kept for this process.

Comments The Names of the endorsements are not fitting and will be confusing to parents and students, as well as out of state entities students are applying to in both the workforce and post high school education. The word advanced is not descriptive of either the “advance endorsement” or the “advanced career endorsement”. They are not advanced, but Standard. The only endorsement which is advance is the Honors endorsement and it is lacking credit hours. It needs to have a minimum of 24 credit hours required and would ideally have 28 (7 classes for 4 years of high school) credit hours required. I understand districts can individually choose to require more courses for graduation. If

districts are encouraged to have local control to develop distinct paths to encourage student engagement and academic rigor will they be compensated beyond 22 credit hours for students who enroll in 23-28 credits during the course of their high school career? Districts are currently not compensated beyond 22 credit/student. While I like the flexibility and choice in adding multiple endorsements to the high school diplomas, I question the need for a base diploma versus the current method of offering personal waivers to individual students. The waiver process meets the flexibility needs of individual students who would benefit from the base graduation requirements. Will waivers still be available as an option? In regards to assessments, will students be more prepared to pass state standardized assessments or will these change to offer flexible levels also? If students in our state cannot pass these exams at the basic level now how will flexibility in course work allow them to pass these exams in the future? If school districts are held accountable for students achieving a proficient level of learning based on state established standards, yet graduation requirements do not allow for proficiency to be obtained, will accountabilities change also? What will happen if a student changes course during their junior year, yet has not taken the math, science and ELA courses to prepare them to pass college entrance exams such as the ACT, SAT and Accuplacer? At this point the flexibility in the basic diploma will require this student to pay for remedial post high school work and additional years of study to accomplish their career goals. If a student need an ACT score of 18 or above in math to be admitted to a 4 year degree offering institution and most of the questions are above algebra! how will they obtain this score? I worry about students and parents ability choose the correct path as a freshman. Counseling services can help, but as noted above are inadequately staffed at this time due to budget constraints. The lure of the easy road will be high for many families as they balance the offerings and peer pressure associated with extra-curricular activities and the demands of life. I would like to see a comparison of these proposed graduation requirements to those of the states within our region. Within the rules, there is an exception to earn a fine arts credit via extracurricular participation. This needs to be expanded to include a speech and debate credit for extracurricular programs who meet the standards requirements. Many districts have been forced to move these programs to the extra-curricular venue forcing students to carry an increased course load to meet graduation requirement. Many speech and debate programs are still rigorous programs taught by certified teachers and would quality for a credit. Flexibility needs to extend to these situations. Extra-curricular PE credit should also be afforded flexibility. Will the base diploma requirements meet the requiting requirements of the military for students who choose this path in their senior year? Computer Science is more in line with math curriculum and learning than a traditional science class and should not be offered as an alternative to science but to math courses. Please research this option and receive input from teachers and professors in this subject area.

EXHIBIT #68

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Joseph, Sioux Falls)

I encourage the Board to establish a language requirement of at least two courses for any student planning to complete post-secondary study, since further language study will likely be required at the institution they attend. Adjusting to college level language courses can be demanding even for students who have studied the language for years in high school. Those who are true beginners are at a distinct disadvantage.

EXHIBIT #69

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Florence Thompson, Caputa)

The Advanced Honors Endorsement description is unclear. What is it?

EXHIBIT #70

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Eric Toft, Brookings)

Dear Board,

Should the U.S. intervene further in Syria? What about the Yemeni Civil War or the persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar? Can you find these countries on a map? Does it really matter if you can? Researchers from Dartmouth, Harvard, and Princeton surveyed 2,066 Americans in 2014 about the then in-the-news Ukrainian conflict. They were asked to click where they thought the Ukraine was located on an interactive, unlabeled, map of the world. The results yielded a 95% confidence interval between the respondent's distance from the Ukraine and their stance toward policy options. Strikingly, the evidence showed that the farther the placement was off, the greater they supported the use of military force. Consider this with the fact that only one in six of the surveyed correctly located Ukraine. The median respondent was 1,800 miles off, the equivalent of misplacing Pierre within the Arctic Circle. Some even placed the Ukraine in the Midwest! Contemplate the implications. If someone can't locate a country in conflict what are the chances that they are abreast of the situation on the ground? How about the historical background, pertinent geopolitical players, potential economic impacts or the critical cultural factors? The preceding illuminates the troubling lack of geographic knowledge within our nation and that it matters. Currently only one half credit of geography, a one semester class, is required to graduate high school in South Dakota. One would think that our students need more. But I'm not writing to push for more geography, I'm writing to save the meager amount we have. Geographic education is essential to understanding the world around us. Do you want to know where to open a small business? See a geographer about Threshold and Range Theory. Do you want to know why this past winter seemed like it wouldn't end? Ask a geographer about Koppen Climate Regions. Want to increase your crop yields? Email a geographer about agricultural applications for Global Imaging Systems. Do you want to better understand the past election? Invite a geographer to explain using maps of Congressional Districts, the Electoral College and political attitude surveys. I could go on and on but the point is that Geography teaches children how to synthesize information from a multitude of sources and disciplines in order to better understand our complex world. South Dakota was the first state in the union to institute geography as a graduation requirement. This was due in large part to the efforts of SDSU Distinguished Professors Emeritus Charles "Fritz" Gritzner and Ed Hogan. The resulting exposure to geography has benefited the students of South Dakota. It has set many towards a fruitful career path in the field itself and has provided many more with the tools to become well informed citizens. Erasing geography as a graduation requirement would be a step backward and a great shame. The decisions we make today matter. Remember the Ukraine? Geography matters. I implore you to retain geography as a high school graduation requirement. Submitted by Mr. Eric Toft Brookings, SD 1. Kyle Dropp, Joshua D. Kertzer and Thomas Zeitzoff, The less Americans know about Ukraine's location, the more they want U.S. to intervene. The Washington Post. April 7, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/04/07/the-less-americans-know-about-ukraines-location-the-more-they-want-u-s-to-intervene/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.26542f8c9f6a

EXHIBIT #71

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Patricia Cordell-Kramer, Ft. Pierre)

Hello. My name is Patricia Cordell-Kramer and I am a Spanish teacher in the Pierre ISchool District. I am writing in regard to the proposed changes in high school graduation requirements. I do not think that CTE credits should be replacing world language credits.. World language classes are on a totally different track than CTE classes and should not be considered interchangeable. While they are both important, one should not replace the other. Most students will tell you that world languages make them stronger students in other areas such as English, history and geography. Rather than regressing, we should be requiring more world language requirements as the need for bilingual employees is ever-increasing in the U.S. Also, there is research to support that students who study world language get higher ACT and SAT test scores. This also speaks to the fact that CTE and world language tracks should not be interchangeable. Allowing this to happen, would be a disservice to those students who are on a totally different career path than CTE students. Changing the requirements, is a step backwards and we are already so far behind other countries in world language acquisition. Thank you for your time and I hope that you reconsider changing this requirement!

EXHIBIT #72

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Sara Odden, Rapid City)

I am not in favor of the proposed SD High School Diploma Requirements. I am a SD registered Professional Engineer and I feel that allowing for more choice within math, science, and English courses does a disservice to students. First math, sure, Algebra is the most commonly used math in most professions and life in general, but to allow students the freedom to choose other math courses will have a great impact on understanding of other subject matters. Math is part of most other subject matters (chemistry, physics, physical science, art, photography, computer science, home economics, finance, etc.) Math is a basic life skill that needs to be required. Secondly science, only requiring biology and not chemistry as well is not something I can support. Finally, English, this is a basic subject that everyone uses. Personally, the younger generation needs more instruction in English - and not speaking it, but in writing and comprehension of it. With the onset of text messaging and Facebook, it is apparent that many people do not understand the simple English rules that I expect my soon to be 3rd grader to know. Limiting the requirements and opting for a broader education will negatively impact their lifelong skills of communicating in the work force. I have always thought that the goal of a high school diploma is to set the graduate up for success in the path that they choose for themselves. I think that proposed changes will allow for more students to 'slack' off and it will not push those that want to succeed. I do not wish these requirements on my 8 year old and 4 year old children.

EXHIBIT #73

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Jim, Rapid City)

Disagree with graduation requirement changes. Students need more English composition, US History from beginning to present, and sciences. Lowering requirements for graduation and adding some unknown criteria is not appropriate in my view. More US History is definitely needed as most graduates today can not explain our beginnings or how we got to where we are at as a nation. Students need all of the good and bad of our US heritage has to offer and less diversity training in modern political social

correctness subjects. Only after students understand what United States is all about can they be well versed in how to proceed in life's challenges.

EXHIBIT #74

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Jennifer Johnke, Yankton)

The proposed changes to graduation requirements are a benefit to all students of South Dakota. These changes give students options and choice in their education. The students are allowed to hone in on their strengths and interests, rather than trying to fit into a "one size fits all" graduation path. Under the proposed graduation requirements, students in South Dakota will be allowed to flourish in areas where they excel, while still gaining new knowledge in all areas of curriculum. The options to pursue areas of interest will also benefit the state of South Dakota. The students will come out of high school ready to enter the workforce, enter the military, or pursue a two- or four-year degree with the skills necessary to make them successful. The flexibility within requirements will allow the students to learn industry-level skills in all areas. Students will have the opportunity to be proud of the endorsements that they have earned at the completion of their high school career. I foresee many students striving to achieve all three of the endorsements and to be recognized for such an accomplishment. Furthermore, the attainment of industry certification and the NCRC can be taken with them from high school to aid in securing a meaningful and successful career. These are powerful tools for each student to have the opportunity to earn. Thank you for considering these proposed graduation requirements.

EXHIBIT #75

Date Received: July 11, 2018
(Paul Nelsen, Paul Nelsen Construction, Inc.)

I'm in support of the new department of education high school requirements. The more options we can give all students the better it is for all of us.

EXHIBIT #76

Date Received: July 12, 2018
(Charles F. Gritzner, Brookings)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Draft Proposed High School Graduation Requirements (2018). I am writing specifically to address the recommended deletion of the secondary level geography requirement. Considering the increasingly intertwined global community and the growing importance of numerous and complex global issues (e.g., migration, climate change, trade and commerce), I believe that it is absolutely imperative that our students have at least a rudimentary "mental map" of the world and its conditions. By way of background, I taught geography at the college level for 50 years, the last 30 at South Dakota State University. Throughout my career, I was deeply involved in geographic education at the local, state, and national level, including having served as both President and Executive Director of the National Council for Geographic Education. In the early 1980s, working closely with then State Social Studies Coordinator, Wyland Borth, we successfully lobbied for what became the nation's first high school geography requirement. In so doing, South Dakota became the "model" and nationally recognized leader in this aspect of geographic education. Following the South Dakota model, approximately a dozen other states (including Minnesota) subsequently adopted a geography

requirement for graduation. The requirement was implemented in 1984 and, of course, very few teachers had any background whatsoever in geography. Beginning that year my colleagues at SDSU and geographers from other colleges throughout the state began a very active program of offering summer and weekend short courses for teachers. In the early 1990s, our mission was greatly facilitated by National Geographic Society financial support of the South Dakota Geographic Alliance, a program I directed for 25-years. Over the years, some 2,000 South Dakota K-12 educators enrolled in geography courses offered by SDSU alone. More than 30 state teachers earned a Master of Science degree in Geography, more than nearly any other state. It is widely recognized that South Dakota ranks #1 in the nation in the geographic literacy of our K-12 educators. Finally, spatial sciences (of which geography is one) rank among the leading fields of employment opportunity. The placement rate for SDSU geography graduates in jobs that employ their geographic knowledge and skills is extremely high. A point on which I believe we all can agree is that a knowledge of history is extremely important. But it can be said that a society that lives a good geography will leave a good history. I urge you to retain the geography requirement that will allow our secondary level graduates to enter the increasingly complex global community with at least some knowledge of its nature, spatial patterns, challenges, and opportunities.

Thank you, Charles F. Gritzner, PhD Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Geography South Dakota State University

EXHIBIT #77

Date Received: July 12, 2018
(Tim Neyhart, Disability Rights South Dakota, Pierre)

Disability Rights South Dakota is a non-profit law firm that receives Federal Grants to provide advocacy services to people with disabilities in South Dakota. DRSD applauds the concept of a stringent curriculum and high standards for all students, including those students with disabilities receiving special education services, but believes that these changes are unwarranted and discriminatory based upon the inherent nature of special education services.

Our concern is both philosophical and substantive. In *Hendrick Hudson School District v. Rowley* in 1982, the United States Supreme Court held that the free appropriate public education described in the Act is not designed to maximize a student with disabilities' education. Despite the Court's ruling that it was not setting a standard applicable to all students with disabilities, States, school districts, and courts incorrectly latched onto language in the *Rowley* decision, concluding that "some benefit" was the legal standard of an appropriate education. Thirty-five years later, the Court determined that schools/States/courts had misinterpreted *Rowley*. In *Endrew F.*, the Court held that a free appropriate public education is "an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances." The Court made it clear that this substantive standard must be considered based on the unique circumstances of each child. It was a higher standard than how many schools and courts had been interpreting *Rowley*, but it still was not a standard of maximization. It was not a standard requiring that children with disabilities be provided opportunities to achieve academic success, attain self-sufficiency, and contribute to society that are substantially equal to children without disabilities. Therein lies the inherent problem with the proposed change in graduation requirements.

The proposed rule treats children with disabilities the same in terms of graduation requirements. While *Endrew F.* set out a higher (yet still vague) standard of what constitutes an appropriate education, the education required under IDEA is still not designed to put children with disabilities on equal footing with

their peers without disabilities. The proposed rule change ups the graduation requirements for students with disabilities because it does not allow for IEP Teams to modify specific units of credit. However, the proposed rule changes nothing in terms of the level of education these students will receive so that they can become proficient enough in the courses that would have been otherwise considered for modification so that they may graduate. By raising the bar at the end of a student with a disability's public school journey to be equal to that of children without disabilities, yet failing to correspondingly raise the bar as to the education the student with a disability receives, it does not provide students with disabilities an equal chance to succeed (graduate). The proposed rule will have the effect of making graduation unattainable for many students with disabilities who would be able to graduate with course modification, thus having a discriminatory impact on students with disabilities. The proposed rule also takes away current federally-created authority of the IEP Team to tailor a student's special education program to the student's unique needs in terms of modification to specific units of credit.

If 24:05:27:12 passes, we believe the proposed new rule, 24:15:27.01, is somewhat confusing in application and fails to encompass enough students. In the course of developing a student's transition services, there is, or should be, planning occurring that will map out the student's high school courses. If modification to the specific units of credit is contemplated for one or more classes, it is possible those substituted classes could be planned for a student's senior year, junior year, or maybe sophomore year. IEPs, on the other hand, must be written/revised annually. If the current IEP failed to include the anticipated modification because it was not going to occur until the following year, it would not be fair to spring a new set of course graduation requirements on a student whose team planned, but did not yet include, the modification in the IEP.

Simply put, students with disabilities in high school are too far along in the educational process to change their graduation requirements. Rather than attempt to take into consideration individual circumstances, to simplify and fairly implement 24:05:27:12, current high school students should be grandfathered in under the existing rule. That would prevent potential disputes regarding whether a modification was included in an IEP, was supposed to have been included in the IEP, or was going to be included in an IEP the following year. The new rule should apply to all students who will be 8th grade students during the 2019-20 school year. That way, the students would know in advance of stepping foot in high school what the graduation requirements will be and the IEP teams can better plan accordingly.

EXHIBIT #78

Date Received: July 12, 2018
(Oliver Hasse, Rapid City)

1) Effective date: p 62: "Effective July 1, 2020 advanced endorsement(s) earned must be listed on the high school transcript." - If this is implement in the 2018-19 school year, current students (sophomores /2021 graduates) will have two years to fulfill the new requirements. Recommendation: adjust the date to 1 July 2022 since this years incoming freshman (2022) have set their schedule and they were not developed with these proposed changes.

2) Common phraseology "Modern or Classic Language" vs "World Language": p 69 (5) Two units or more.... (b) "Modern or Classic Language" is not reflected in the definition pages, only "world language" is written in the definitions on page 60. - Recommendation: Replace "Modern or Classic Language" with "World Language"

3) 22 hours for Honors Endorsement: Honors endorsement should require more than 22 hours p 68-69 If we are wanting this to be an "honors endorsement" than the requirement should exceed 22 hours (or the hours required by the two other tracks). Most competitive universities do not want students to reduce the course load their junior and senior year, and the "honors endorsement" allows students to take rigorous courses but still have their work viewed as subpar since they do not exceed 22 hours.

Recommendation: Change Honors Endorsement requirement to 24 or greater hours

4) Honors endorsement - world language - The world language (written as "modern or classic language" on page 68) requirement should be a stand alone requirement since most universities outside of South Dakota require two years of a foreign language to be accepted.

5) Honors endorsement (p68): Physical Science requirement is not defined in the document: It is also currently not required for the SD opportunity scholarship (<https://sdos.sdbor.edu/require/require.html>). Recommendation: Physical science should be removed from the requirement or define physical science. Four units of science should remain but allow students to take more advance science. This is an example on why the effective date of July 1, 2020 should change or the science requirement should change to be less specific.

6) Better alignment with the SD opportunity scholarship if that is part of the intended goal for the honors endorsement. These two requirements not being aligned will only create more confusion on the part of students and parents thinking they met a requirement but may meet it for one requirement but not the other. Personal thoughts: The world language should not be nested with "approved career and technical education courses and the capstone experience." Ideally the world language requirement would be separate.

EXHIBIT #79

Date Received: July 12, 2018
(Jennifer Bergan Gabor, Sioux Falls)

After reviewing the proposed graduation requirements, I am very concerned as an educator and a parent that those who choose the least restrictive route to a diploma will not be prepared to be informed members of the global world we have. By eliminating the World History requirement, I believe that it will breed ignorance of issues that affect our state daily. When I ask my students what major events are happening and they give me the "deer in the headlights look," I have to ask why they don't know and if and how they get to know. They inform me that the news is "boring," "doesn't have to do with them," "they are not 18 yet," etc. If we don't require them to look beyond their nose and the latest video game, then we are not doing our job. I am also very concerned that the requirements for writing can be completed by the end of the sophomore year. This is problematic in that so many of our students can not effectively communicate in written form. Again, this leads to a more ignorant population. Writing is integral to be able to advance in careers and as a society. I do like that students are giving more leeway in the higher levels of math and science, but believe that algebra and geometry should be required of all. They are basic skills that are used in most careers and in life. It is our responsibility to challenge students to think beyond themselves. Having taught at large and small schools, I know that it is not always easy to find qualified candidates, but there are ways to support those students. Currently, students can get waivers for classes and it is my understanding that if this new system of graduation requirements is put in place that waivers will no longer be allowed. This seems to be less intuitive for

the students who want or need the flexibility. I appreciate that CTE is becoming more of a focus, as there are great things happening that have been missed in the past as we pushed to make all students "college ready." However, this should have been discussed at a table where teachers from CTE, ELA, math and science we're all represented. To the best of my knowledge, no teachers were involved in the discussions leading up to the proposed changes to the graduation requirements. Let's go to the table together and collaborate to give all of our students the best we have to offer to give them better futures. Then let's ask teachers to submit input during the school year when they are available to have professional discussions and give more thought-filled feedback. This MUST be a team effort if it is to be successful.

EXHIBIT #80

Date Received: July 12, 2018
(Jack, Martin)

The current graduation requirements are working fine. Why down grade them now. Also having industry certifications is somebodys dream. Most students have no idea what career they are looking at in high school until their senior year. Save the certifications for college or industry. There is a lot of poverty in Martin and our susurrounding area and it wouldnt be fair to ask families to pay for them.

EXHIBIT #81

Date Received: July 12, 2018
(Judy Naatjes, Sioux Falls)

I am disappointed to see the reduction in rigor in our high school graduation requirements. I attended a symposium this summer that said that the mathematics rigor required for the ACT is needed to also be successful as a carpenter, plumber, electrician - etc. in our highly technical world. It is very disappointing to see that the new proposal only requires Algebra I. At a minimum Algebra I and Geometry should be required. All jobs use the thinking and application skills learned - what situation (problem) do I have, what rules do I know, or need to learn that can be applied to this problem, and how can I go about solving it step by step. The other two areas that I am concerned with is the reduction in writing and removing World History as a requirement. In today's world, most communication is done through e-mail. Workers need to be able to clearly and concisely communicate their ideas or instructions through writing. It is also important to be a well-rounded person, and learning about our world's history is definitely a part of that.

EXHIBIT #82

Date Received: July 12, 2018 and July 13, 2018
(Michelle R. While, Rapid City)

South Dakota Board of Education
Address

Board Members,

After a review of the proposed graduation requirement changes, three areas of concern presented themselves: mathematics, science and social sciences. The first two areas should be determined by brain development. In particular, consideration for the limitations of the adolescent (ages 10-24) (Arain, 2013) brain should be managed such that required classes assist in the development of abstract thought and

are not predicated upon mastery of abstract thought. Additionally, it has been widely acknowledged that current South Dakota high school requirements fall short of the demands of higher education, therefore, a different approach might be in order.

While Algebra I assists in the development of abstract thought (Susac, 2014), there are other classes that bridge the gap more effectively -- proof-based geometry, trigonometry and linear algebra are examples of such classes. **Proof-based geometry** introduces a new spin on problem solving, namely, they know the answer, but must prove it. For example, an isosceles triangle has three equal angles between three connected lengths, therefore, each length is equal. Using axioms and theorems the student presents their argument (proof). It is easy to see how this method of thinking invades other areas of their lives, immediately **improving their debate skills in speech, but equally their ability to analyze information from various sources from the internet to the evening news.** Geometry is a gentle transition from concrete thinking to abstract thinking involving many connections. The more connections made with respect to math, the easier mathematics becomes (Evans, 19 August 2015). Proof based geometry pairs well with **trigonometry**, which one must understand to complete any entry level calculus class, but is extremely helpful when planning to re-floor your home or design a water-mill fixture for the back garden, etc. It is frequently the first introduction to **coordinates and provides the framework for frames of reference.** Since trigonometry is frequently just a semester course, **linear algebra** would be an excellent pairing. Linear algebra presents algebra in a series of equations that can be solved simultaneously, presented in matrix form and manipulated together to **improve solving power.** Simply put, it is the bridge between mathematics and computer science. Anyone who has used an Excel spreadsheet has used linear algebra. Additionally, linear algebra is the doorway into classical mechanics (Newtonian Physics), quantum mechanics, computer science and algebra. **Placing these suggestions as requirements meets the need of every student, those planning to join the untrained work force, those planning to join the trades and those planning to obtain a degree from a university.** Each of these courses (introductory level) can be taught in a semester. It provides sufficient practice in abstract thought to set a student up for success in Algebra I and II later in their high school careers. Additionally, students who have had geometry, trigonometry and linear algebra are well prepared for the mathematics we use daily. This is like training a person to use a screwdriver. **In K-8 they used a hammer for everything. In high school they learn there is not just a screw driver but there are at least three different kinds of screw drivers:** a standard (geometry), Philips (trigonometry) and hex head (linear algebra). Please consider requiring Geometry (0.5 units), Trigonometry (0.5 units), Linear Algebra (0.5 Units) and Algebra I (1 unit) for graduation.

The proposed science requirement of biology is contrary to the adolescent developmental state. Without the addition of statistics, algebra and calculus, biology and chemistry are mostly focused on fact acquisition (memorization) which is contrary to where they are developmentally, transitioning from concrete thinking to abstract thinking. A more productive science requirement would be **physics** (classical Newtonian physics). Understanding how daily actions are described mathematically leads to understanding these **actions can be predicted with good accuracy.** Finally, the last vestiges of childhood fall away as **magical thinking** is replaced by analytical thought. When a javelin is thrown, do we know where it will land? Of course we do, we just need to know the force with which it was thrown, its weight and the angle at which it was thrown. The process of applying Newton's Law, gravity and vector addition will give us the precise apex height and the distance traveled. Students with a rudimentary understanding of trigonometry can easily manage this level of mathematics and this **problem-solving practice** will follow them as they face life's greatest challenges, "will the sofa fit through that door, or slide down the stairs and crush us all?" Please consider requiring Physics 1 unit instead of either biology or chemistry.

Finally, the decrease in social science requirements greatly concerns me. Perhaps we are at cross purposes and my suggestions will not meet the desired outcome. With that possibility in mind, what does a diploma mean?

A person who earns a diploma is prepared to be a complete citizen of the United States of America. They understand state, local and federal laws and have familiarity with those laws that most affect them. They understand US history and how the United States became a nation comprised of indigenous people and immigrants. They can speak to the civil justice/injustice of the last 100 years and relate it to the present. They are capable of reasoning, deduction, and critical analysis of information. They are able to distinguish between facts, faith and rhetoric. They are able to manage their finances. They can discuss interest, how it impacts their income and understand the concept of guaranteed versus unguaranteed loans. They are familiar with federal laws concerning taxes, income tax and legal financial behavior versus Ponzi schemes and money laundering (illegal behavior). They are able to civilly and properly express themselves in writing and orally. They make reasonable cause and effect pairs. They are able to discuss how they govern as citizens in a republic. They can explain the difference between a democracy and a republic. They can describe how the three branches of government perform checks and balances on each other and how this differs from governments of our allies and competitors. They demonstrate healthy and effective communication practices. They demonstrate the ability to manage zero-tolerance for bullying, incivility and personal attacks in a civil, respectful and gracious manner. They understand the difference between disagreeing with an assertion and an emotional response to the person with whom they are disagreeing.

Finally, the diploma means they were placed in an educational environment that facilitated civility, respect, compromise, good work relationships and healthy communication practices.

How do we accomplish all that with just a unit of US history and half a unit of government?

Unfortunately, these final comments invade curriculum. I apologize for that. Perhaps you would be able to integrate these expectations into the requirements much better than I.

Highly recommend 1 unit of US history, 1 unit of government and 1 unit of world history. We are making citizens here, not drones.

US history should include:

1. Revolutionary War
2. War of 1812
3. Indian Removal Act of 1830 – Trail of Tears
4. Oregon Trail – settlement of the west
5. Mexican American War 1845-1856
6. Whig party and the emergence of the Know Nothing Party
7. Civil War
8. Indian Wars and Treaties within the Dakotas – War strategies of the Native Americans are studied today at West Point – they are worthy of study here.
9. Great Tribal Leaders

10. Great Civil Rights Leaders

11. WWI

12. WWII

Both WWI and WWII lead nicely into world history. The focus should go back at least 100 years if not 150 years so that students understand how relationships have evolved and matured. They will also come to understand why certain people groups migrated to the United States when they did and why they settled in the regions they did. They will also come to understand that the United States was not always comprised of 50 states and several territories but several states were purchased or seized from foreign powers most notably from the French, the Spanish/Mexicans and Russians.

Following this foundation, a thorough examination of American Government should be implemented. Emphasizing US government structure. The responsibilities of each branch of government. How laws are made. How policy is determined. What has worked and what has not worked since our founding. How world events affected our policies and how our policies have affected world events.

Please remember we are making the citizens of next year.

Thank you,
Michelle R. While

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EXHIBIT #83

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Tami Brown, Sioux Falls)

Dear Board Members: As a South Dakota high school English teacher entering my 25th year of teaching, I find it disheartening that I have to write this letter asking you to reconsider changing the current graduation requirements as proposed earlier this year. I certainly appreciate the Board Members' willingness to serve and to try to improve the educational experiences of our students. However, as someone who is actually working with about 120 English students each year, I am compelled to offer some insight on the difference between what might look good on paper and sound like a good idea for the employers of the state and what is actually happening in our schools and students' basic skills.

1. THE PROPOSED REDUCTION IN REQUIRED ENGLISH COURSES (WITH OPENINGS FOR MORE "CHOICE") WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT STUDENTS. It sounds good to give students choice in their courses, but this is taking a step backwards. I teach Advanced Placement English composition -- supposedly to the best and

brightest students we have -- but I can tell you that our students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, and basic writing skills are deteriorating rapidly. Students come to 9th grade not knowing parts of speech or proper sentence structure. That is equivalent to students coming to 9th grade not knowing their basic multiplication facts. They cannot do any math without that knowledge, nor do we expect them to. However, that same emphasis is not placed on students knowing the basic building blocks of language. Just because the curriculum says something is taught does not mean it is consistently evaluated and required by every teacher. Thus, we have many 9th graders coming in who, quite honestly, cannot write very well. Our high school teachers have to almost start over from scratch teaching the foundations of sentence structure. If the students do not know the basic terminology and parts of speech, how can the teachers ever expect to raise the students' writing levels when required, more traditional writing classes will no longer be required? Of course classes like creative writing, journalism, etc. have merit, but they are not designed to teach basic writing. Those classes assume the basics are already mastered. Now that the world communicates via texting and messaging, even our upper level students do not use capital letters or punctuation with consistency. Taking out required writing classes with prescribed grammar and writing structure is a HUGE mistake. No matter what jobs students have in the future, they will need to write a letter of application, fill out an application, compose a resume, or submit a writing sample. I am honestly telling you that many of our students today would not even make it to the interview part of a job search because the poor writing skills would eliminate them from consideration. I urge you to reach out to business owners and managers in our state. They will likely agree that communication skills are getting worse, and taking away rigorous writing requirements is not going to help that situation. I know the Board believes no rigor will be lost, but that is simply not true. I urge you to strongly reconsider this proposal that will, in effect, promote loss of basic writing skills.

2. WE NEED ALL STUDENTS TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF WORLD HISTORY. More and more people today are buying into the dangerous, isolationist ideology that is sweeping the nation right now. Do you really want to turn out thousands of high school graduates of voting age who know nothing about how today's society has been shaped? Does it worry you that even some of my advanced students cannot make the connection between WWII, the Cold War, and the current situation with Russian President Putin? Will taking out world history classes help our citizens in any way? No. It will not. I have spent my career defending why math and science cannot be the only "important" courses for students, and this group of watered-down requirements shows the need more than ever. My brother did not graduate from high school, but even he left our school with an understanding of history and government that would likely rival many of today's graduates. He is a voting citizen, and he, like ALL of our graduates, should have and implement basic historical knowledge.

3. SCHOOL DISTRICTS NEED TO HAVE LOCAL CONTROL. As long as I can remember, our state leaders have prided themselves on keeping local control at the forefront. However, this proposal flies in the face of local control. Sioux Falls already has an option for discretionary exemptions from some high-level courses that some students simply cannot handle. These are used when needed. Other districts could do the same if they chose to. What is wrong with keeping the bar set high and making exemptions when needed? Again, I know the Board is going on the belief that these new standards are not "watered down," but they actually are.

4. THIS REEKS OF THE "WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT" INITIATIVES THAT ARE POPULAR RIGHT NOW. I am all for more technical education, but ALL students, even those going through CTE programs or other vocational courses, need a well-rounded education. What happens if a student pursues the minimal diploma or even the career-endorsed diploma and then a few years later decides to go to a four-year

school to further his or her education? That student will likely struggle to get enrolled or succeed because of decisions made at an early age. I appreciate the efforts to bring more jobs to the state and the schools' role in preparing students for those jobs. However, we must prepare students for more than one path. As you can see, I am very passionate about this. I do want you to know I understand the nuances of the proposals. I take this very seriously. Again, I have "boots on the ground" every day, and I can safely say that these proposed changes will not help students. We do not need another fancy document that is handed down with little or no teacher input and unrealistic expectations. Before your Board starts implementing these kinds of changes, let's focus on basic reading, writing, and math skills for ALL of our students. This is just another veiled way to increase the graduation rate. If we soften the kinds of classes students can take, our graduation rates will raise. I am not anti-CTE or anything like that. However, those classes and programs should be IN ADDITION to basic literacy and math skills, not in place of them. I welcome any questions you have for me. Thank you, Tami Brown Sioux Falls Washington High School

EXHIBIT #84

**Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Sue Hegland, Brandon)**

I served for six years on the Brandon Valley Board of Education and also served six years on the Board of Directors for the Upper Midwest Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. I am an advocate for effective education for all students, including those who may not be interested in college after high school. And I understand and appreciate the goal of allowing students to explore career options in high school and to provide alternative pathways into skilled work for students who do not wish to attend college. But these proposed high school graduation guidelines will reduce the rigor of a high school degree for most students, and will reduce options for many students too early in their lives. The reduction in rigor is a concern for three reasons:

1. Students who are not sure what they want to do as freshmen could easily find themselves unprepared for college if they decided they wanted to go that route as juniors. We should not be tracking 14 year olds and eliminating options for them at that young age.
2. The elimination of the requirement for world history and geography for many students will result in a huge cohort of students graduating from high school unprepared to be educated voters and citizens. The required study right now is really a bare minimum. We live in a globally connected world, and whether you are a welder, a farmer or a construction worker, understanding at least something of the world we live in should be part of a basic education. The same could be argued for the removal of study in literature, basic mathematics and other subjects that are critical for a high school education.
3. The purpose of high school is to provide the students we serve with the education they need—not to provide a pipeline of workers for industry. Industry should never be put in a position where they need to provide remedial education to graduates in areas of basic education: math, literacy, an understanding of the world and the ability to work with technology, collaborate and problem solve. That's the job of public education. And this has actually been a problem in some cases. Any revision of high school requirements should address that problem where it exists. However, providing in-depth training, apprenticeships and preparing workers for specific jobs would be better conceived in other ways, rather than by replacing core elements of the foundational high school education that we owe to our students. One model might be as a focused internship in the 12 months post-high school, but there could be many

others. Diluting and weakening the K-12 education we provide for our students is not necessary and is unfair to the students we serve. To make our education system meet the needs of students, we should think creatively and work on alternatives for students who need them, but we should be enhancing rigor, not reducing it. Sincerely, Sue Hegland

EXHIBIT #85

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Becky Bundy, Lead)

Though the South Dakota graduation rate will be positively impacted, I fear that the negative consequences of the proposal will far outweigh any benefits to our graduation rate. First of all, our 11th graders will still be held accountable for all state science standards, and yet many will be testing on physical science and earth/space science standards that they will not have encountered for a minimum of 3 years. This will increase the importance of science in the K-8 grades at a time when there is dwindling funding for science teacher training, support, and supplies. Secondly, how will our high school juniors and seniors who suddenly realize they want to attend a liberal arts college "catch up" on the english, math, science and social studies classes required for post-secondary entrance after following a regimen required for the base diploma for 2-3 years? And finally, it is our responsibility to teach our children (tomorrow's voters) the bare minimum required for making informed, logical choices in our representative democracy... and though many of the choices that they will make in life will require a biological background, there will be even more requiring experience beyond biology. As you can see, I am alarmed by the proposed changes to each of the core subjects. Yet, it is the proposed changes to the science requirements that alarm me the most. Thank you.

EXHIBIT #86

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Michael Cohen, Achieve, Washington, D.C.)

July 12, 2018

Dear Members of the South Dakota Board of Education, I am writing to express concern about the proposed reduction in expectations of South Dakota's high school graduates, specifically the requirements in mathematics and science. Currently, all South Dakota students are required under the South Dakota High School Diploma to take three years of mathematics, including Algebra II, and three years of science, including biology, one unit of chemistry or physics, and a third physical science course. These requirements help ensure all students have the option to pursue the careers and postsecondary education of their choice. However, the proposed set of course requirements before the Board of Education Standards reduces the rigor of what is needed to graduate from high school, such that the South Dakota High School Diploma would only require students to take Algebra I and Biology in high school. Students can, but are not required to, choose one of three endorsements on top of that diploma: the Advanced, Advanced Career, and Advanced Honors Endorsements. Among those, only the Advanced and Advanced Honors Endorsements require students to take mathematics at a higher level than Algebra I or science in addition to Biology. Weakening this requirement would place South Dakota among a minority of states that only require students take Algebra I or less to graduate and would also remove South Dakota from among the 17 states that require students take more than just Biology to earn a diploma. As a result, many South Dakota graduates will be ill prepared to pursue many 21st century careers. Requiring that students only take Algebra I and Biology, as the proposed default South Dakota High School Diploma and the Advanced Career Endorsement do, has the potential to create

barriers for students and limit their future opportunities. Leaving high school only having learned Algebra I and Biology content will not prepare students to enter credit-bearing courses at many postsecondary institutions, workforce certification programs, or jobs that require additional mathematics and science skills, limiting students' prospects after graduation. Creating more options for students in the name of greater freedom or flexibility need not come at the expense of strong academic content, or vice versa. Many states have joined South Dakota in recent years in considering additional options for students to graduate, including pathways intended to signal readiness for postsecondary education or to begin a career after high school. Providing more options for students, which can mean developing and offering educational experiences tailored to students' interests and goals, is not in and of itself the issue. However, creating diploma options that do not require students to take sufficiently rigorous mathematics and science courses does them a disservice. All courses of study available to students need to ensure that they graduate with a meaningful credential, prepared for their next steps in a way that does not limit their prospects for a career or to enter postsecondary education. There has been a convergence of the skills needed to succeed in the workforce and in postsecondary education. Eight-five percent of the fastest growing jobs will require some postsecondary education or training (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm>. Formal postsecondary education or training defined as a bachelor's degree, associate's degree, or vocational training certificate.). This includes bachelor's and associate's degrees, workforce certifications, apprenticeships, and other credentials. Good jobs are no longer readily available for those with only a high school diploma or less. What's more, South Dakota's demand for middle- and high-skilled workers is outpacing the state's supply of workers educated and experienced at that level. Fifty-five percent of available jobs in South Dakota require at least an associate's degree, while just 34 percent of the state's workforce meets those qualifications (Job openings data from Burning Glass Technologies, July 2014-June 2015. Educational attainment data from U.S. Census 2013 American Community Survey). Maintaining rigorous high school graduation requirements is a critical part of ensuring all students are prepared for college and careers. South Dakota has taken important steps in recent years to become a leader in helping students be prepared and make the transition to college and careers. In 2009, South Dakota adopted college- and career-ready graduation requirements for all students. Today, 20 states — Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and the District of Columbia — have elevated their high school diploma requirements to this rigorous level. Establishing statewide college- and career-ready graduation requirements is a critical lever for addressing the long-standing inequities in which low-income students and students of color are systematically given a less challenging set of requirements. Recommendations The current graduation requirements are laudable because they specify the courses needed to graduate, and not simply the number of credits, in a way that is likely to prepare a student to enter postsecondary education or training, the workforce, or the military after high school. This kind of college- and career-ready course of study that is currently the default for all students places South Dakota in a position to compete with neighboring states of Minnesota and Nebraska, who have similarly rigorous expectations for their high school graduates. We recognize that some students arrive in high school unprepared. Establishing an opt-out provision or personal modification option — as South Dakota has had in place for years — provides a safety valve for students. South Dakota's personal modification option provides flexibility for students to opt out of the mathematics and science requirements, with parental approval, or exceed the current requirements. Students may only opt out of Geometry or Algebra II, but not both. The same is true for Chemistry or Physics. Still, students should be defaulted into a course of study that requires they take a rigorous set of mathematics and science requirements; this is in line with the state's academic content standards and what students should know to transition smoothly into postsecondary education. All too often, students graduate from high school thinking they are prepared, only to be surprised when they are

placed in remedial classes or cannot gain access to entry-level jobs. By failing to adequately prepare all students, we are closing doors and limiting students post-high school options and opportunities. South Dakota's existing high school course requirements are designed to provide students with the core foundational knowledge and skills they need to succeed in any and all post-high school endeavors. Now is the time to sustain your commitment to preparing all students for the jobs of tomorrow and ensure all doors are left open for students when they leave high school. Even if the state chooses to create new pathways for students, no available pathway should limit the opportunities students can access beyond high school by lowering the level of rigor needed to earn a diploma. Sincerely, Michael Cohen President, Achieve

EXHIBIT #87

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Kristen Rooks, Rapid City)

I do not support a change in graduation requirements. There are many reasons a student may be 'derailed' from reaching their academic potential, at any given time. A death, serious illness, emotional problems, social issues, and learning challenges. The list is endless. Receiving a diploma should be a moment of great achievement for high school students. Not one that singles some out as better than or less. Some students reach their academic potential in college. Setting standards that the state is proposing may inhibit them from even thinking about college because they didn't receive what would be considered a more advanced diploma. This would be detrimental to our students having a fair and equal opportunity to further their education and reach their potential academically.

EXHIBIT #88

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Jennifer Lowery, Tea)

July 12, 2018

Re: Graduation Requirements

To: South Dakota State Board of Education

The purpose of this letter is to provide support to the proposed graduation requirements except for the adjustment to graduation requirements for students on an IEP. As Superintendent of Schools, I am supportive of the proposed graduation. The badge requirements provide a clear indication for all stakeholders (parents, patrons, students, and educators) the foundational coursework required for the identified desired outcomes. The ability to differentiate a student's coursework based on desired outcomes is helpful in facilitating discussion with our students and families as they begin to plan their coursework as young as 7th grade. Just as CTE course recommendations for particular pathways support a student's planning, this proposed graduation structure provides a foundation and common language. This plan supplements workforce development as each of us strive to meet the differentiated needs of all students. All South Dakota students need to earn a high school diploma, but desired outcomes range from workforce entry to post-secondary education; therefore, the preparatory coursework must mirror those desired outcomes.

The District does not support the change to the graduation requirements affecting students on Individual Education Plans (IEP). A student's IEP team is best suited to make decisions for a child who has a disability. Please do not make changes to the administrative rule concerning students on an IEP. This

administrative rule edit is on page 51 and 52 of the original draft rules.

Respectfully, Dr. Jennifer Nebelsick Lowery Superintendent of Schools

EXHIBIT #89

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce)

The Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce received feedback from a few of our member businesses that we would like to share regarding the proposed High School Graduation requirement changes.

- The new standards provide a greater level of flexibility in the coursework and more options
- If the type of coursework that would fill in the elective/optional credits would truly be aimed at making high school grads more job ready for the types of jobs we have available, it would be beneficial.
- The changes provide more options for students to select the courses that align with their future goals and to explore other opportunities.
- The specialized endorsements provide additional ways to illustrate to colleges, employers, or other institutions that the student completed coursework or obtained additional experience.
- All kids are not the same so having the multiple options is great.
- Appreciate a realistic pathway to employment for students of all skills and goals.

Concerns include:

- Individual schools districts may have significantly varying requirements/standards.
- If a student chooses later in life to attend college, they may require remedial coursework if they took more of the career track curriculum.
- Would it be consistent across the numerous school districts in the state?
- We need 4 years of math for college bound.
- Need for STEM workers so we need to fill those requirements.
- The basic requirements for college bound do not meet the basic requirements for our local universities.
- Concerns that we are dummying down the requirement for math and English.
- Our test results in math are already below average and by lowering the math requirements they may go even lower.
- We need to ensure the different tracks meet the needs/standards of the intended goal. For example, if a student chooses a workforce bound track there should be a focus on internships and apprenticeships. Whereas, the college bound track should meet the standards of college entrance to avoid the cost of remedial classes.
- The timeline for implementation is concerning. There seems to be a short turnout for schools to implement the changes. Will this diminish impact? We should ensure the process is well thought out and embraced, giving schools the opportunity to evaluate local impact, develop a plan for implementation and conduct thorough input sessions with teachers and parents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

EXHIBIT #90

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Florence K. Thompson, Caputa)

There is currently a culture war going on in the United States which is threatening to break into serious unrest and division. The schools have been increasingly co-opted into promoting an Anti-American or Globalist agenda. American students are being robbed of their cultural heritage, independence and national pride. Anyone who doesn't see this either very unaware or willfully ignorant. We are constantly being told that the Common Core Compliant Standards (recycled as State Standards) and curriculum are preparing students to compete in the Global economy. However, some key courses, which students need, in order to have an understanding of the world around them, are being lost or deemphasized. True knowledge of World History is an obvious need for citizens who must vote wisely to preserve their rights and freedoms. People with no knowledge of history, are easily fooled by propagandist lies and distortions which seek to portray the United States as a villain on the world stage. Geography is also important, due to its relevance to historical, political, cultural and economic knowledge. Economics seems to have disappeared from the requirements. Knowledge of Economics is vital for the same reasons as above stated. Most importantly, the battle between Socialism/Communism and Free Market Economics (often mislabeled as Capitalism) continues to rage on through the centuries. Students need to have a basic understanding of why freedom and individual self-interest produces superior economic and cultural results and, conversely, why central control and forced conformity always fail, eventually. All American students need to have this basic knowledge.

On a side note, the three different diplomas are confusing. Perhaps they need to be renamed so that the titles are self-descriptive to employers and to the public. Additionally, the public was not well-served by the format used by the SD Department of Education to elicit comments. The Draft of changes to the Graduation Requirements should have been provided on the website with one click; instead people had to search and search to find it. I'm sure many people gave up searching and decided not to comment.
Florence K. Thompson President, South Dakota Parents Involved in Education

EXHIBIT #91

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Christine Stephenson, Rapid City)

I'm concerned that these new graduation requirements give the impression that our high schools are becoming less rigorous and our graduates are less prepared for the workforce and college. Heather Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force, was recently quoted in the Rapid City Journal that the quality of public education in a state will influence the department's decisions on which bases to keep open and which to close. If we give the impression that we are lowering our graduation requirements to increase graduation rates, this may not be looked upon favorably by those outside the state. I'm also concerned about the title of the diplomas, and the order in which they are presented. I suggest that you present first the diploma with career endorsement, then the diploma with the pre-collegiate endorsement, then an additional advance scholar endorsement for Opportunity Scholarship eligibility. At the end, you can show the requirements for the basic diploma, and state clearly that this requires an opt-in that is approved both by the district and by parents. I'm hearing from district administrators that more time is needed to fully review these requirements to ensure they align with our high school pathways work. Please consider another public comment period after revisions.

EXHIBIT #92

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Jay Berglund, Gettysburg)

I am a high school math teacher. To me, the new graduation requirements appear to be "dumbing down" graduation requirements. If anything, I feel the requirements for graduation should be more rigorous not less.

EXHIBIT #93

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Jodi Penn, Sioux Falls)

As a current high school math teacher I would like to see a requirement of Algebra 1 and Geometry for all students, and allow Algebra 2 and higher courses to be assigned to those seeking higher education. Our job in education is to prepare students to succeed in a world beyond the school. That includes teaching them problem solving/ critical thinking skills. Geometry tends to be thought of a class with lots of "useless" theorems and proofs that no one is going to need in real life. However, it is the first (and potentially only) math class that pushes students in to more abstract ideas to foster those critical thinking skills we need to be developing. Removing this requirement limits many students to basic problem solving skills without much value in justification and reasoning. Beyond that, many student who would be receiving the basic diploma are likely to fulfill the much needed trade jobs, which includes construction in which they will need some background in shapes and problem solving. Beyond the math requirements, I also am concerned with the elimination of world geography and/or world history. Our students are going up in a egocentric world and it our responsibility to expose and teach them about other countries, cultures, and histories so that we can continue to be global citizens. While I don't believe tracking students is the best approach to education, I do understand the thoughts behind the different levels being presented. I firmly believe that we have placed too much emphasis on all students going to college and need to be encouraging more students to pursue careers in technical/trade areas that are in high demand. However, we do so without losing sight of the basic goal of education - to prepare students to succeed in a changing world. Please continue to look at the proposed changes and think about what the future could look like if we do not educate all students to be global citizens.

EXHIBIT #94

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Ruth Conway, Rapid City)

I am writing to express concern about the proposed graduation requirements. As a high school mathematics teacher in Rapid City for the past 15 years, I believe the proposed requirement of only completing Math 1 (or Algebra 1) is far from sufficient. In addition to teaching at a high school level, I have also been a Pre-College Algebra teacher through BHSU at the University Center in Rapid City. Students taking the course received no credit toward their degree, but took it to prepare for College Algebra which their degree required. There I saw students struggle with concepts in mathematics that were at an Algebra 2 level of difficulty. These students were high school graduates and had taken the currently required Math 1,2,3 or Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 – but still needed the course as a refresher. If the current proposal is adopted, MANY, MANY more students will need to enroll in these no-credit remedial college courses, and with only Algebra I experience they would likely need to take several remedial mathematics courses before they could consider College Algebra. We would like our students, and our children, to have many options as they grow and learn throughout high school. I am

very concerned that with only 1 mandatory, standards aligned course under their belt, students choosing the “Advanced Career Endorsement” will be dreadfully unprepared for ANY further educational steps. Without the mathematical skills that further courses offer, ACT and SAT scores as well as Smarter Balanced scores will undoubtedly be lower. Many students do not decide on a career path until late in high school, or even in college. For this reason it seems pre-mature to ask them at 15-16 years old to commit to a path which potentially limits them so severely. As others have suggested, I would recommend requiring students to take a minimum of two mathematics courses in which the high school standards are currently taught. I also have concerns about the effects this new proposal will have on students with special needs. If a student has an IEP, the professionals working with that student need to be allowed discretion in determining proper course placement and alternate graduation requirement options for students should be available. Thank you for your consideration. Ruth Conway Rapid City Area Schools Stevens High School Mathematics, NBCT 2013

EXHIBIT #95

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Crystal McMahan, Rapid City)

I would like to make some comments about the proposed graduation requirements. First, I would like to commend the writers for wanting to make more choices for students. A one-style-fits all pathway is not conducive for all learners. With the ever-changing world, students need to be prepared for about anything. Pathways will help achieve this. Although I am excited to see different pathways for students, the basic graduation requirements give me pause. I am concerned that the minimum requirements in mathematics will leave many students without the skills necessary to live a successful life after high school. With only naming Algebra I, the door is opened for students to take a less rigorous course load that does not expose them to mathematical and problem-solving skills that would be beneficial in adult life. I understand that only naming Algebra I gives students a greater chance of graduating from high school. However, is the goal of high school to give a student a piece of paper that says diploma or to give them the ability to achieve in life? I am also concerned for a certain population of students, the ones who will take the path of least resistance. If told they do not need to take Geometry or Algebra II to graduate, why would they? These students will take the easy way out unless they are given the proper guidance. How are we going to ensure that students receive this guidance? How do we make sure these capable students are prepared with the necessary skills needed for college, if or when they decide they want to go? How was lowering the graduation requirements in their best interest? I understand the challenges students have with learning mathematics, but I also believe all students can learn mathematics when given time and support. Our children are just as capable as any other children in the nation. Why would we lower the expectations for ours? The teaching of mathematics is a complex issue, but I don't believe the solution is to lesson our expectations for the students of South Dakota. This seems like the easy way out. Please consider revising the basic graduation requirements to include wording that would require students to be exposed to higher level mathematical content than just Algebra I. Thanks for considering, Crystal McMahan 2014 recipient of the Presidential Award of Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching National Board Certified Teacher in Early Adolescent Mathematics

EXHIBIT #96

Date Received: July 13, 2018
(Adriane Cox, Rapid City)

I am adamantly opposed to changing diplomas for graduating students. I believe this proposed change will create more difficulty for graduating students who have struggled with academics due to learning disabilities, serious medical issues or other factors that impact their academic success. Many people struggle in high school, but perform well in college. Graduating from high school is a major achievement for young people - why create a system that diminishes their accomplishments?