



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA AND **SAMPLE** SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, this Memorandum of Understanding, entered into between the South Dakota Department of Education as “JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA” and **Sample** School District outlines the elements of a partnership to successfully implement and sustain JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA Programs.

WHEREAS, JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA’s mission is to empower South Dakota's young people with the skills and support to succeed in education, employment, and life. JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA creates business, industry and education partnerships committed to achieve this mission. The Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) program provides resources so that youth facing multiple challenges to graduation remain in high school, attain employability skills through classroom and work-based learning experiences during middle and/or high school, graduate and receive 12 months of follow-up services by the JAG Specialist. In the follow-up period, JAG participants are successfully transitioned into postsecondary education, the workforce and/or the military.

WHEREAS, the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA Program is based on the [JAG Model](#). The **Multi-Year Program** serves high school students during one or more years in high school (9th through 12th grades) plus an additional 12 months of post-senior year follow-up services. The **Middle School Program** serves middle school students during one or more years in middle school (6th, 7th and 8th grades) plus additional transition and follow-up support services during the 9th grade year.

WHEREAS, the eight primary performance goals of the JAG Multi-Year Model in serving students are results-oriented and measurable at the conclusion of the academic year and the 12-month follow-up period:

- a 90% graduation or GED attainment rate;
- an 80% improvement in attendance rate;
- an 80% improvement in academics/grades;
- 60% of graduates are employed;
- 60% of employed graduates are in full-time jobs leading to careers;
- 75% of the graduates are engaged in full-time positive outcomes (employment, military, post-secondary enrollment, and/or are part-time work with part-time post-secondary enrollment); and
- 35% of participants are enrolled in post-secondary education, including non-degreed (credential) training; or have attained a credential
- a 95% connectivity rate of participants

WHEREAS, the five primary performance goals of the JAG Middle School Model in serving students are results-oriented and measurable at the conclusion of the transition/follow-up stage – 9th grade:

- 100% of participants are promoted to next grade;
- a 70% improvement in attendance rate;
- a 90% improvement in academics;
- 60% of applicable participants reduce discipline referrals; and
- a 70% reduction in one or more barriers.

Goals are measured in grades 9-12 or grades 6-8, respectively, through daily recording of information using an electronic data management system to ensure consistency and accuracy. Specialists will achieve the 135 or 80 minimum* number of contact hours per school year for 80% of participants

**with adjustments possible for unforeseen circumstances.*

Measurable goals include:

- reduction in the number of absences compared with the prior year;
- improvement in GPA compared with prior year;
- improvement in State Standardized Test score compared with prior testing year;
- reduction in the number of suspensions and expulsions compared with prior year;
- reduction in disciplinary actions;
- participation in the student-led Career Association;
- involvement in no less than 10 hours of community service per year, which may be conducted virtually;
- enrollment in summer school, where possible, to overcome any deficiencies;
- a return to school rate of 80% (as measured in September of each year);
- reduction in the number of barriers

WHEREAS, an electronic data management system provides tracking of students served, services delivered, and outcomes achieved. Statewide and school performance outcomes are used in JAG's National Accreditation Process. JAG-State Organizations and JAG-Local Affiliates must receive standard accreditation to remain in good standing. It is understood that it may be the third year of operation before performance goals are achieved.

WHEREAS, the school district, middle school(s), high school(s), and JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA are fully committed to delivering a high-impact program that equips students with the skills and support to succeed in education, employment, and life; and

WHEREAS, a structured process of continuous improvement will be established and sustained to ensure the long-term success and integrity of the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA accredited program.

WHEREAS, the responsibilities of the state organization, **JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA**, include:

1. Establish Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc. (JAG) accredited Multi-Year and/or Middle School Program(s) at school(s) through a mutually beneficial partnership between JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA and the school district and the school(s) committed to achieving the performance goals previously stated.
2. Maintain an active, involved oversight body to provide leadership in the implementation, operation and continuous improvement of programs in South Dakota which satisfy the accreditation standards of the JAG Model Program.
3. Develop a positive working relationship within local communities, including employers, high schools, postsecondary schools, and community service organizations for the purpose of promoting and establishing local JAG programs in accordance with the JAG Model Program.
4. Provide technical assistance and training to JAG Specialists and other key staff of the participating school on the successful implementation and operation of a JAG program.
5. Provide access to electronic JAG Model Books (including a SPECIALIST HANDBOOK, CAREER ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK, and NATIONAL PROJECT-BASED LEARNING CURRICULUM) and other program materials, publications and national communications, and electronic resources to the participating school. These materials include virtual materials and delivery tools that are interchangeable with traditional, hybrid, and virtual classroom requirements.

6. Provide staff development experiences for JAG Specialists to ensure understanding of the JAG Model and Program Application(s). Share best practices through planned local and state staff development activities and by participating in annual JAG training.
7. Provide staff support and conduct periodic school quality assurance reviews and consulting visits to give encouragement, support, and feedback to JAG Specialists. Provide a periodic review of documentation required of a JAG program committed to tracking students, services, and outcomes throughout one to four years and 12-month follow-up period.
8. Sponsor the Career Association events, utilizing input from students, Specialists and members of the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA oversight body.

WHEREAS, the responsibilities of **Sample School District's High School(s) and/or Middle School(s)** include:

1. Employ a full-time certified teacher(s) qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of the JAG Specialist. The JAG Specialist is responsible for students with a goal of no less than 35 and no more than 50 students who are facing multiple challenges to graduation remain in high school, attain employability skills, and successfully transition into postsecondary education, the workforce and/or the military. JAG Specialists should be dedicated 100% to the JAG program. To achieve high quality results, it is recommended that specialists not be responsible for teaching additional classes, bus duty, cafeteria duty, or other similar activities.
2. Provide the JAG Model Program in a regularly scheduled class or classes for credit. Use titled course: Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) - High School and course code: 22991 and Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) - Middle School and course code: 22990. Class sizes should not exceed 12-15 students per class to provide for the smaller learning community. The JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA learner-centered instructional model requires small class sizes to be successful. Follow-up services will be provided to each graduate including employer marketing, job development and placement services for 12 months post-graduation. Out-of-school non-graduates will receive follow-up services that will result in completion of requirements for a high school diploma or a GED certificate. **JAG Specialists should have time during the contracted day for scheduled class time as well as planning/open periods to support students and engage in required JAG activities.**
3. Establish a school-level or district-level Advisory Committee to assist the JAG Specialist in recruiting, screening and selecting students most in need of services delivered in a program application and provide on-going support for students and the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA program. An effective committee includes representatives from administration, counseling staff, faculty and JAG Specialists. Advisory Committee and Specialists are mutually responsible for recruiting, screening and selecting students who satisfy JAG criteria to receive the in-school and follow-up services of the program. *Note: An existing committee may be used if it will also perform the additional functions of the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA Advisory Committee.*
4. Provide scheduled time for JAG Specialists access to student cumulative records for the purpose of identifying, screening, selecting and enrolling qualified students in the JAG Model Program. JAG Specialists should have access to students' records including transcripts, grades, disciplinary records, free and reduced lunch status, IEP, parent/guardian contact information, WIOA eligibility, etc. to maintain participating baseline and progress reports.
5. Provide release time for JAG Specialists to perform mandatory off campus employer marketing, job development, and placement responsibilities. Active face-to-face contacts with employers are essential to successful JAG Programs. **The school will also facilitate attendance at state meetings, trainings, the annual JAG National trainings.** Make transportation available (or reimbursement for travel) to JAG Specialists for mandatory attendance at state meetings, training and off-campus

employer marketing, job development and placement activities. JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA will provide ample notice for state and national activities.

6. Provide adequate school-based support to ensure that the JAG Specialist fulfills the responsibilities of this Memorandum of Understanding and achieves full compliance to the JAG Model Program standards. Work with JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA to achieve the performance standards of the JAG Model Program and requirements of any funding sources.
7. Support bi-annual meetings between building administration, JAG Specialist and JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA staff to review data, current projects and events, and the impact being made in the school.
8. Enable students to attend statewide Leadership and Career Development Conferences held in-state and provide transportation for students to attend these events in accordance with district policy. When possible, allow other staff to serve as chaperones and activity judges at these events. Provide transportation, with prior approval of building administration, to other JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA program related activities (Career Association events), such as quality work-based learning experiences (WBL) to employers in the community, college visits and community service activities. It is the responsibility of the Specialist to assure that travel arrangements have been made in advance of the event and in accordance with district policy.
9. Support JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA's efforts to involve parents, guardians, family, employers, and community to meet the needs of JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA students that will keep them in school through graduation and ensure full cooperation and participation during the post-senior year follow-up period.
10. Provide funding and support necessary to make this program successful. Provide compensation for JAG Specialists, direct or in-kind contributions such as support services including the use of appropriate classroom space, classroom materials and supplies, furnished office space, computer with internet connectivity, utilities, telephone, printer, copier, etc. The school will also provide the use of other school facilities and equipment necessary to deliver the services of a JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA program.
11. Provide feedback to JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA that will result in the continuous improvement of the program to maintain accreditation by Jobs for America's Graduates.

WHEREAS, the responsibilities of **Jobs for America's Graduates** (JAG) include:

1. Provide onsite or virtual technical assistance and training for the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA State Director, Program Managers, and Specialists upon request.
2. Provide full access to copyrighted JAG Model books and curriculum, operational guides, administrative manuals, electronic data management system, etc. Network members can access electronic files of all JAG documents through the Private Documentation System behind the firewall at the JAG web site— www.jag.org.
3. Provide Specialists with professional development opportunities through attendance at the annual JAG National trainings at a reasonable registration fee.
4. Assist the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA State Director, Program Managers, and Specialists with full implementation of JAG's electronic database system (JAG Force) designed to track students, services and outcomes for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of the program based on

specific performance standards. The JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA State Organization and JAG-SD local programs have access to the electronic database that produces management information for decision-making and program/staff evaluation purposes.

5. Conduct accreditation of the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA State Organization to ensure conformity with process and performance standards as promulgated by JAG. Every 3 years, JAG will conduct a random site review and prepare an accreditation report for review by the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA oversight body, funding sources, management team and participating schools and Specialists.
6. Make available the protected trademark, "Jobs for America's Graduates," and associated emblem and copyrighted materials directly related to and limited to the periods in which the program is delivered in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the JAG Model Program and terms of this Memorandum of Understanding.

COMMITMENT

This Memorandum of Understanding is for the 2025-26 school year and twelve months follow-up services for students on the senior roster.

The signatories mutually agree that the JAG Model Program will operate within the principles, policies, procedures and JAG standards as outlined in this document and agreed to by the participating school, JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA, and Jobs for America's Graduates.

It is mutually agreed that efforts will be made to continue the JAG accredited program in subsequent school years based on:

- an adequate number of students to make the program cost-effective
- attainment of JAG Model performance goals
- mutual satisfaction with the program based on this Memorandum of Understanding.

Should areas of non-compliance with the JAG Model arise, and all efforts to reach agreement have failed, either party reserves the right to terminate this contract with 30 days written notice.

In agreement with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, the partners affix their signatures in the spaces provided.

Sample School District

Superintendent

Date_____

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Authorized Representative

Date_____

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advisory Committee – A designated group—new or existing—that works with the JAG Specialist to recruit, screen, and select students who meet JAG criteria and are most in need of program services. The committee also provides ongoing support to students and the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA program. An effective committee includes representatives from school administration, counseling staff, faculty, and the JAG Specialist. Together, the committee and the Specialist share responsibility for student selection and ensuring access to in-school and follow-up services.

Career Association (CA) – a student-led organization for career-minded students who are interested in preparing themselves to enter the work force and are enrolled in a program that is affiliated with the Jobs for America's Graduates National Network. Each student enrolled in the local JAG program is automatically a member of the Career Association. Three levels exist in the Career Association – national, state, and local chapter (the JAG program in a school). The Career Association offers a chance for students to practice being leaders. The exact roles and responsibilities can be shaped to meet the unique needs of individual programs. The important thing is to put the power in the hands of the students. Leadership roles give students the opportunity to bring their skills to life.

Career Development Conference (CDC) – a conference held in the spring (regional or statewide) to provide competitive events (individual and team), awards and recognition, along with career and leadership workshops. During the CDC students develop a competitive spirit and build a higher level of self-esteem. The event brings employers and students together to provide a showcase for prospective employees to demonstrate their skills.

JAG Force – a unique tracking systems used to collect, report, and analyze data. Capturing critical data and information in a complete, accurate and timely database cannot be overstated. Specialists provide information daily, documenting all interactions with JAG students.

JAG – Jobs for America's Graduates - a state-based national non-profit organization dedicated to supporting young people of great promise. JAG serves youth who face significant challenges, to help them reach economic and academic success.

JAG-South Dakota (JAG-SD) – a state affiliate of national Jobs for America's Graduates organization. JAG-SD is a program supervised by the South Dakota Department of Education and is proven to help students persist through graduation

JAG Model – a comprehensive set of services designed to keep young people in school through graduation and improve their success rates in education and career. These services include classroom instruction, competency-based instruction, project-based learning, advice and support, employer engagement, and accountability. There are ten (10) common elements of the JAG Model. These elements are adapted to the audience served in each program.

JAG Model Program – a JAG program at the local/school level. There are five model program applications designed to deliver JAG Model services designed to serve an exclusive student/participant population. The program applications which are conducted by the JAG National Network are:

- Middle School Program Application (6th to 8th graders)

- Multi-Year Program Application (9th to 12th graders)
- Alternative Education Program Application (6th to 12th graders)
- Senior Program Application (12th graders only)
- Out-of-School Program Application (opportunity youth)

Leadership Development Conference (LDC) – a conference held in the fall (regional or statewide) to train and empower newly elected JAG Career Association leaders. During the LDC students work on team building and general leadership development. They may also develop the Plan of Work for his/her local program.

Program Manager - The JAG Program Manager provides leadership, oversight, and support for the implementation of the JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA program within assigned schools. This role ensures program fidelity, monitors performance outcomes, and supports Specialists through coaching, training, and collaboration with school leadership. The Program Manager serves as the primary liaison between JAG-SOUTH DAKOTA and local schools, ensuring alignment with national standards and contributing to continuous program improvement.

Specialist – a front-line staff member, the JAG teacher, who receives specialized training, support and technical assistance to implement the JAG Model Program. A dedicated person who:

- Recruits students
- Provides instruction
- Advocates for students and JAG
- Is the Career Association advisor
- Enters data into national database daily
- Follows up on graduated and non-graduated seniors for an additional 12 months
- Builds opportunities for employer engagement/community outreach