

Frequently Asked Questions

My district is currently AdvancEd accredited. Do I still need to host an accreditation review?

Yes, every district must host a review. If a district is currently accredited by an external accrediting agency, such as AdvancEd, the district must still host a visit from the state.

How did the accreditation and School Improvement process come about?

During the 1995 legislature, over 500 rules and statutes governing public education were repealed. Many of these rules gave districts “more flexibility” and local control. Many of the standards specific to school accreditation were repealed, and accreditation became a process of simply submitting a yearly online set of data regarding staffing, graduation requirements, and school safety. As NCLB came into place, additional requirements were added to the list of “assurances”.

The 2004 legislature charged DOE with the responsibility to review the current accreditation system and to implement a more rigorous model beyond the current submission of yearly data. An advisory group met and discussed the basis of the changes made to administrative rule in 2005: 1) The need for a district improvement plan, 2) The reinstatement of onsite visits to districts, and 3) Allowing districts to use outside accrediting agencies/improvement plans to obtain accreditation.

Current accreditation is still under the authority of:

13-3-47. Classification and accreditation of schools. The secretary of the Department of Education shall be responsible for the classification and accreditation of all public and nonpublic schools under the rules established by the South Dakota Board of Education pursuant to chapter 1- 26.

What happens if we don't comply?

Districts that do not comply could lose federal funding. This is in statute:

13-1-12.1. Rules and standards for classification and accreditation of schools, for preparation of certified personnel, procedures to determine eligibility to receive state foundation aid, vocation-technical education, minimum curriculum requirements. The South Dakota Board of Education shall promulgate rules pursuant to chapter 1-26 to establish standards for the classification and accreditation of schools within this state, to establish standards for preparation of certified personnel, to set forth procedures for determining the eligibility of school districts to receive state foundation aid effective January 1, 1997, to adopt policies and rules necessary to establish standards and procedures for vocation-technical education and to establish curriculum requirements for both a basic high school program and for a recommended high school program for all public and nonpublic schools within the state.

Are we required to turn any report information in to the state?

Districts are required to submit their Personnel Record Forms and Student Information Management System information online in the fall of each year. Administrative rule relating to the school improvement plans is copied below.

[24:43:02:03](#). Eligibility for state accreditation -- Compliance with regulations and district improvement plan. To be eligible for state accreditation, the school board of a public school district shall:

1. Submit annual regulatory reports and assurances as required by the Department of Education, and in compliance with timelines set and made known by the department; and
2. Establish, implement, and annually review an approved five-year district improvement plan. The contents and format of a district improvement plan, and the timelines for submission, shall be specified and made known by the Department of Education, and shall include all schools, attendance centers, and programs in the district that are registered with the department and counted in the district's annual ADM calculations.

Source: 31 SDR 178, adopted May 24, 2005, effective July 1, 2005

General Authority: SDCL

- [1-45-13](#)
- [13-1-12.1](#)
- [13-3-1.4](#)
- [13-3-47](#)

Law Implemented: SDCL

- [13-1-12.1](#)

What are the acceptable improvement options in lieu of the State School Improvement model?

If a school district uses or wishes to use a school improvement model that is not yet approved by the Department, they may request approval from the Department of Education. Use the form "Request for Approval" under "Documents", to the right.

When will a review occur at my school district?

The state will contact the district ahead of time when they are due to host a review.

If you are currently part of an approved accrediting agency or have an approved school improvement option that conducts onsite visits, districts may request the state visit coordinate with their current school improvement cycle.

Check [SD K-12 Accredited Districts Schools](#) for current status.