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Students visit Pierre for CTSO Legislative Shadow Day

PIERRE, S.D. – February is National Career and Technical Education Month. As part of the celebration, 30 student leaders came to Pierre Feb. 6-7, for the South Dakota Career and Technical Student Organizations' Legislative Shadow Day.

Activities began with an evening social Feb. 6 for students, legislators, cabinet members and state agency staff. Throughout the day on Feb. 7, students shadowed legislators at committee meetings and then observed House and Senate floor sessions.

"CTSO Legislative Shadow Day is a great learning opportunity for everyone involved," said Laura Scheibe, director of career and technical education for the South Dakota Department of Education. "Our state's student leaders learn valuable civics lessons by observing the legislative process. And by interacting with these ambitious students, our state legislators hear firsthand about the tremendous value of career and technical education in our state."

Five CTSOs are active in South Dakota: DECA, an association of marketing students; Future Business Leaders of America; Family, Career and Community Leaders of America; FFA; and SkillsUSA, an association of trade, technology and health occupation students.

By participating in CTSOs, students can apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom through competitive events; develop leadership and employability skills; and serve their communities.

Career and technical education seeks to equip students with core academic skills and the ability to apply those skills for careers and life. CTE emphasizes employability skills like critical thinking, responsibility and technical skills related to specific career pathways.