



# News Release

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## **Rapid City, Mitchell Tech Institutes Reach Agreement with Regents**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents has reached agreements with technical institutes at Rapid City and Mitchell, in a move aimed at opening up more postsecondary education opportunities to students across the state.

The agreements with Western Dakota Technical Institute and Mitchell Technical Institute mean their students will benefit from program-specific transfers to the public universities, while the university system assumes ultimate responsibility for the college transfer general education foundation courses those students take. Last month, the regents reached a similar agreement with Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown.

Terms of the agreement were reached by officials representing the two technical institutes; the local boards of education at Rapid City and Mitchell, which govern the two institutes; the Board of Regents as the constitutional governing board for the six public universities in South Dakota; and the South Dakota Board of Education, which oversees postsecondary technical education in the state. The last of the official actions finalizing the pact are expected by the Mitchell school board Monday night and the state education board Tuesday.

“This historical agreement addresses ongoing issues between the two systems over curriculum delivery,” said Regents Executive Director Robert T. Tad Perry. “We welcome this collaborative relationship with three technical schools, which is focused on respecting our unique institutional missions and eliminating unwarranted course duplication.”

Under the agreement, the respective missions of each institution are more precisely defined and maintained. Local governance of the technical institutes—including educational, financial, supervisory, and management control—is specifically reaffirmed under the pact.

As with the Lake Area agreement, both Western Dakota and Mitchell Tech will continue to offer associate of applied science (AAS) degrees in technical fields. “This agreement strengthens and reaffirms our mission, which is to deliver technical education leading to direct entry into the job market,” said Western Dakota Tech Director Rich Gross. Chris Paustian, director at Mitchell Technical Institute, said, “We appreciate the advantages this agreement offers to our students, if they choose to pursue a four-year or advanced degree.”

With the addition of program-to-program agreements, course credits in certain Western Dakota and Mitchell Tech programs may be applied to specific bachelor’s degrees at a public university.

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Most of Western Dakota's program-to-program agreements are expected to be with nearby Black Hills State University, although agreements on specific programs transferable to other public universities could be pursued. At Mitchell Tech, the primary partners will be Dakota State University, Northern State University, and South Dakota State University.

In exchange, the public universities' distinct mission to provide education leading to bachelor or advanced degrees is reaffirmed. Under the agreement, the universities assume responsibility for teaching all transferable general education courses at Western Dakota and Mitchell Tech. These are courses such as algebra, English composition, and speech, which would normally apply toward any four-year college degree.

Currently approved staff at both technical institutes will continue to teach such courses, and joint faculty assignments in the future are anticipated. By invitation, the public universities will establish a presence at the host sites in Rapid City and Mitchell to deliver courses or undergraduate- and graduate-level programs.