

Synopsis: The Legislature authorized the Regents Scholarship Program in 2003 to allow South Dakota’s most academically accomplished high school graduates to receive an affordable education at any university, college, or technical school in South Dakota accredited by the North Central Association (NCA). In 2004, the Legislature renamed the scholarship the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship and authorized funding from the Education Enhancement Trust Fund, beginning with high school graduating classes in 2004. In its first year, 826 South Dakota students received the scholarship.

The South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship provides up to \$5,000 over four years to a qualifying student who attends an eligible higher education institution in South Dakota. The aim is two-fold: encourage students to take a more rigorous high school curriculum and remain in South Dakota for their higher education.

South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship Fall 2004 Recipient Summary by Participating Institution	
Participating Institutions	Number of Recipients
Augustana College	81
Black Hills State University	29
Colorado Technical Institute	2
Dakota State University	23
Dakota Wesleyan University	9
Kilian Community College	0
Lake Area Technical Institute	1
Mitchell Technical Institute	1
Mount Marty College	16
National American University	2
Northern State University	31
Presentation College	3
SD School of Mines and Technology	67
South Dakota State University	354
Southeast Technical Institute	4
University of Sioux Falls	28
University of South Dakota	174
Western Dakota Technical Institute	1
Total	826
<p>The 826 South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship recipients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had an average ACT composite score of 25.94 • Attempted an average of 16.26 credit hours in Fall 2004 semester 	

Response to the new scholarship has exceeded all expectations. In its first year, Opportunity Scholarships were awarded to 7.7 percent of all graduating seniors in South Dakota—nearly 33 percent of those who scored at least a 24 ACT. The Board of Regents projects continued growth in this scholarship program:

- Class of 2004 – 826
- Class of 2005 – 1,029
- Class of 2006 – 1,220

As many as 50 percent of South Dakota students scoring a 24 or higher on their ACT could be participating in the Opportunity Scholarship program by FY07.

Data reported to the Board of Regents show a 5.9 percent increase in the number of South Dakota students with ACTs of 24-36 who entered South Dakota institutions last fall. The following table compares the number of students in those ACT score ranges who entered South Dakota's six public universities between fall 2003 and fall 2004.

Comparison of South Dakota Students with 24-36 ACT Scores Entering South Dakota's Six Public Universities — 2003 and 2004			
ACT Composite Score	Number Fall 03 Entering SD Public Universities	Number Fall 04 Entering SD Public Universities	Difference in Fall 03 & Fall 04 Entering
36	0	0	0
35	4	1	-3
34	7	5	-2
33	7	6	-1
32	20	25	5
31	31	36	5
30	42	55	13
29	79	62	-17
28	100	104	4
27	133	160	27
26	192	192	0
25	224	249	25
24	289	300	11
Total	1128	1195	67

To qualify for the scholarship, South Dakota high school seniors must have an ACT composite score of 24 or higher, and complete high school courses commonly known as the **Regents Scholar curriculum** with no final grade below a C (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) and a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (grade of B). The Regents Scholar curriculum includes:

- **4 units of English** (courses with major emphasis upon grammar, composition, or literary analysis; one year of debate instruction may be included to meet this requirement).
- **3 units of social studies** (such as history, economics, sociology, geography, U.S. or South Dakota government, American problems, etc.).
- **4 units of algebra or higher mathematics** (algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or other advanced mathematics, as well as accelerated or honors mathematics [algebra] at the 8th grade, shall be accepted). Not included are arithmetic, business, consumer, or general mathematics or other similar courses.
- **4 units of science, including 3 units of approved laboratory science** (courses in biology, chemistry, or physics in which at least one regular laboratory period is scheduled each week). Qualifying physical science or earth science courses (with lab) shall be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- **½ unit of computer science** (students will have basic keyboarding skills and have had experience in using computer word processing, database, and spreadsheet packages and in using the Internet or other wide area networks).
- **1 unit of fine arts** (in art, theatre, or music -- appreciation, analysis, or performance).
- **2 units of the same modern or classical language** (includes American Sign Language).

To maintain scholarship eligibility while in college, students must remain continuously enrolled with a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, complete a minimum of 15 credit hours of instruction per term, and achieve minimum passing scores on all sections of the state's college proficiency examination.