



News Release

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Regents Set 65 Percent Goal to Meet State Workforce Needs

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Studies show this country needs an increasingly skilled workforce with higher levels of education, and the South Dakota Board of Regents has set a new goal to help deliver those workers.

The board today endorsed a new statewide attainment goal for 65% of South Dakotans, aged 25 to 34, to hold some sort of postsecondary credential by 2025. It called on all of its postsecondary education partners—public, private, technical, and tribal institutions—to work together to deliver on that goal.

“In our country’s rapid transition to a knowledge-based and service-oriented economy, it is projected that by 2020 roughly 65 percent of all jobs in South Dakota will require some level of postsecondary education, from technical certificates to graduate degrees,” said Mike Rush, the regents’ executive director and CEO.

Rush noted that as of 2013, only 38 percent of working-age South Dakotans held an associate degree or higher. “The 65 percent goal is ambitious and will require new ways of addressing the challenge,” he said. “But meeting the goal is critical to the success of South Dakota and is worth the effort. It will necessitate collaboration with our partners and making public and private investments in postsecondary education.”

The 65 percent goal is based on projections from the Georgetown University Public Policy Institute’s Center on Education and the Workforce.

“Setting this statewide attainment goal creates a platform to begin new conversations aimed at building partnerships and higher education allies across the state,” said Regents President Randy Schaefer. Schaefer said possible strategies could include new conversations with government leaders and agencies on state-level goals, developing strong business community advocates, and creating an informational campaign to support the value of postsecondary education in South Dakota.