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## **An Increase in High School Graduates Predicted for South Dakota**

BROOKINGS, S.D. – While nationally the number of high school graduates is predicted to decline, South Dakota is expected to show a significant increase in graduates over the next decade and beyond, based on projections made by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

An analysis of WICHE’s “Knocking at the College Door” report was presented to the Board of Regents on Wednesday. According to the report, South Dakota is expected to expand its number of total high school graduates by 14.4 percent during the next 15 years. A peak of 10,300 graduates is projected for the 2024-25 academic year.

“The predicted increase in graduates is good news,” said Regents Executive Director and CEO Jack Warner. “Since the 1990s the state has experienced a relatively steady decline of high school graduates. The universities have had to be very competitive in order to keep graduates in South Dakota and to recruit students from other states,” he said.

As of fall 2012, almost one-third of all undergraduates in the state’s university system were non-residents. The majority of these students came from a neighboring state. “With some of our neighboring states potentially facing declining graduate numbers over the next 5 to 10 years we could see fewer non-resident students to recruit and increased competition for our own graduates, Warner said. “It is very important that the university system continues to make it beneficial for residents to get their education in South Dakota and be an attractive option for out-of-state students as well.”

Another aspect of the WICHE report predicts growing racial diversity among high school graduates. Projections show the racial composition of the nation’s high school graduates will grow increasingly diverse. By the 2027-28 academic year, racial minorities will account for 48.2 percent of U.S. public high school graduates, up from 38.7 percent in the 2009-10 academic year.

A large increase in the number of minority graduates is predicted in South Dakota as well. By the 2026-27 academic year, racial minorities will account for roughly 28.7 percent of public high school graduates, up from 13.4 percent in 2011-12.