

**South Dakota Board of Regents
2007 High School to College Transition Report**

Executive Summary

The South Dakota *High School to College Transition Report* is an annual report developed by the South Dakota Board of Regents with intent to further develop communication between South Dakota high schools and the Regental system. High school administrators are provided a range of valuable data (e.g., ACT scores, first-year GPA, retention, remedial enrollment, advanced placement, etc.) for their graduates after the first year of college to better ensure that these students are adequately prepared for success at the post-secondary level. During the 2007-08 academic year, a total of 2,665 of the South Dakota High School Graduating Class of 2007 entered Regental Institutions on a full-time basis in Fall 2007, representing 29% of the 9,244 graduates from South Dakota high schools in 2007. This percentage is up slightly from the 28% of those graduates enrolled in 2005. Four noticeable trends emerged in the data depicted in the narrative report:

- A total of 285 South Dakota high school graduates entered Regental Institutions on a part-time basis, representing approximately 10% of the 2007 high school graduates. This represents a 105% increase in the number of part-time students enrolling from the 2006 graduating class. When including part-time students in the overall count, 32% of South Dakota high school graduates entered the Regental system last year.
- The average ACT Composite score of those 2007 SD high school graduates who entered on a full-time basis was 23.5, up significantly from the 2006 average of 22.7. For those who entered on a part-time basis, the average ACT Composite score was 20.4, consistent with the 2006 graduating class.
- The third cohort of the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship recipients entering the public universities in Fall 2007 was 890 (33% of the South Dakota graduates who entered the public universities this past fall). This represents a 16% increase in the number of SDOS recipients when compared to 2006. One hundred and forty-five (81%) high schools had at least one graduate receive the SDOS.
- The percentage of SD high school graduates who were awarded credit for College Board Advanced Placement Examinations increased for the sixth year in a row from 5% in 2001 to 11% in 2007.

South Dakota Graduate Remedial Coursework

Students are placed into remedial English and mathematics courses based on their ACT English and ACT Mathematics scores. Students with ACT English scores below 18 and/or ACT Mathematics scores below 20 are placed into remedial courses. Students may challenge their placement by sitting for the ACT COMPASS placement examinations. Since the analyses in this report is based on the ACT subscores of entering freshmen, the number of students reportedly

placed in remedial courses is usually higher than the number of students who enroll in remedial courses because a set of students use the COMPASS exam to demonstrate that they are ready for college-level courses.

This year marked the most noticeable decline in remedial placement over the past five years. Of those South Dakota high school graduates who entered Regental Institutions on a full-time basis in 2007 and completed at least one semester during the 2007-08 academic year, 74% enrolled in college-level English and mathematics courses and only 26% enrolled in at least one remedial math or English course. Most notably, the number of students required to complete English and math remedial coursework declined by 4% when compared to the 2006 graduating class. Since 2003 the number of South Dakota high school graduates entering the Regental system requiring remedial coursework declined 8% for English and 9% for math.

Recommended Actions for Parents and Students

An important implication for parents and students to consider regarding a successful transition into post-secondary education is the need to take the right courses in middle school and high school. Preparation for success in college requires completion of rigorous academic courses in high school. For example, Algebra continues to serve as a *gateway* course and school districts should provide and allow prepared students to take Algebra I in the 8th grade followed by at least four years of higher-level mathematics in high school that includes Algebra II, Geometry, Trigonometry and Pre-Calculus.

Finally, there are three reasons why it is important that one considers making cost effective decisions while students are in high school. First, a three credit remedial course cost \$658, an additional expense for those students who are unable to begin taking general education coursework at the start of their post-secondary career. Second, remedial courses extend the amount of time it takes to earn a degree because they do not count towards a degree. Finally, high school Advanced Placement Courses save money. A high school advanced placement course can provide a student with college general education credit for a test fee of \$85, saving the student \$459 in tuition. Additionally, well prepared students who entered one of the six Regental Institutions in Fall 2007 were more likely to progress toward graduation during their first year (earning more than 31 credit hours during the fall and spring term).