South Dakota High School to College Transition Report

2008 Graduating Class
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Executive Summary

The South Dakota High School to College Transition Report is an annual report developed by the South Dakota Board of Regents intended 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. The report itself is divided into four major sections (in addition to performance indicators noted at the end of the report), and the critical data points for each are highlighted in the following sections.

2008 Graduating Class

During the 2008-09 academic year, a total of 2,791 of the South Dakota High School Graduating Class of 2008 entered Regental Institutions on a full-time basis in Fall 2008. These students represented 31% of the 9,136 graduates from South Dakota high schools, and this percentage is up slightly from the 29% of graduates enrolled in 2007. When noting that 72% of South Dakota high school graduates go on to some form of postsecondary education, the data indicates that the Regental system had maintained more than 45% of all graduates who continued their educational endeavors beyond high school.

Data were also reviewed this year to determine the geographic areas in the state with the highest enrollment counts, demonstrating that 18 counties had 40% or more of their graduates attend one of the six Regental Institutions (see Figure 1 & 2).

One hundred and sixty-seven (6%) of the first-time, full-time students enrolled in associate degree programs, with the remainder (94%) enrolling in one of the more than 700 baccalaureate degree programs offered in the system. Additionally, 2,728 (97%) of the graduates were admitted having met the Baccalaureate admission requirements, with the remainder (63 or 3%) admitted as exceptions.

College Readiness

ACT Inc. recommends that all students take a college preparatory curriculum (4 years of English and 3 years each of Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science). Students who complete a college preparatory curriculum have consistently scored higher on the ACT. ACT Inc. also established the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, which align student ACT-subject area scores with their performance in entry-level college courses. These Benchmarks are the minimum ACT scores a student must achieve to ensure at least a
50% chance of achieving a B or higher, or at least a 75-80% chance of achieving a C or higher in specific first-year college courses. Using these Benchmarks, students can be placed into one of three Benchmark categories: those who failed to meet any of the Benchmarks, those who met one to three Benchmarks, or those who met all four Benchmarks. When examining these three categories for the 2,791 South Dakota high school graduates, 34% had met all four Benchmarks, with the majority meeting between one and three (56%), followed by those failing to meet any of the Benchmarks (10%).

According to the ACT (2008) South Dakota profile report, the average ACT score for the seniors tested in 2008 was a 22.0, slightly higher than the national average (21.1). The average composite ACT score of those graduates entering the system on a full-time basis was 23.1, down slightly from the 2007 average of 23.5. For those who entered on a part-time basis, the average composite score was 20.6, consistent with the 2007 graduating class.

**First Year College Retention**

Colleges and universities throughout the country place considerable effort on retaining students during their first year of postsecondary education. National data indicates that only 77% of first-time, full-time students returned to their same institution their second year. The average for the six Regental Institutions is slightly below the national average (71% for all students), and data in this report depicts the percentage of students who were retained at the same institution into their spring semester. Overall, 2,549 (91%) of the graduates were retained into the spring, having returned to the same institution after their first semester. Because of the common student data system employed at the six campuses, student retention can also be assessed by evaluating the number of students who not only returned to the same institution, but by determining student overall retention in the system (e.g., returned to a different institution after the first semester). When examining retention in this light, 2,558 (92%) of the 2008 graduates had been retained in the Regental system having completed coursework during both the fall and spring semesters.

**Remedial Performance**

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 sub-scores 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.

Graduates requiring remedial education was at an all time low in 2007, with only 26% of all students enrolling in developmental coursework. For the 2008 graduates, this percentage increased to 28% which is still 2% lower than the level set in 2006. A number of students required remedial English (383 or 14%) which resulted in a 5% increase when compared to 2007 numbers. Those requiring some form of Math remediation also increased slightly (624 or 22%), yet overall remediation in this area has declined by 4% when compared with numbers reported just 4 years ago. One particularly alarming trend identified in the
remedial data is the fact that American Indian/Alaskan students were more than four times as likely to be placed into two developmental courses when compared to their White Non-Hispanic counterparts in the Regental system (7% vs. 34%).

Table ES.1 provides a comprehensive set of trend data from South Dakota high school graduates entering Board of Regents universities over a five-year period, between 2004 and 2008, revealing a number of significant changes. Despite the fact that remedial enrollment has increased this past year, the trend data depicts continued progress in the efforts of South Dakota high schools to ensure graduates are prepared for their entry into postsecondary education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Entering Cohort</td>
<td>2,796</td>
<td>2,690</td>
<td>2,786</td>
<td>2,665</td>
<td>2,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of SD Graduates Entering Regental System</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average ACT composite score</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% awarded credit for CBAP</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% requiring English Remedial Courses</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% requiring Mathematics Remedial Courses</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of unduplicated remedial enrollments</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA of those in remedial courses</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA of those in general education courses</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA of all students</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD Opportunity Scholarship Recipients</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 two 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 $762, 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.
The South Dakota High School to College Transition Report includes information on the cohort of South Dakota high school graduates who entered Board of Regents universities in Fall 2008 who: 1) graduated from a South Dakota high school in 2008; 2) were first-time students enrolled for 12 or more semester credit hours on the Fall 2008 term census date (10th day of classes); and 3) were admitted to a baccalaureate or associate degree program. A limited amount of information is included on students who were enrolled for fewer than 12 semester credit hours on the Fall 2008 term census date (see Appendix A).

Report Background

The transition report was first developed in 1995 to enrich the data available to South Dakota school districts as they make curricular decisions to increase preparation of students seeking to pursue their postsecondary career after graduation. Overall, the purpose of the report is three-fold including the desire to enhance communication between high schools and the public universities governed by the South Dakota Board of Regents. It is our belief that by providing high schools with information about their graduates’ readiness for postsecondary education it further facilitates necessary collaboration between universities, high schools, and parents to ensure that students are prepared to be successful in college.

In addition to this narrative report, a series of documents are mailed to the principal, superintendent, and school board president from each high school. Each individual district report identifies the Regental Institutions in which their students enrolled, admissions criteria status, the graduates’ first year performance in college (GPA, retention, and credit hour completion), remedial placement in English and Mathematics, ACT performance, as well as performance based on a variety of demographic characteristics (remediation, College Readiness, Opportunity Scholarship status, or Advanced Placement coursework). This updated report is intended to further the important collaboration efforts between K-12 and Higher Education which would improve the readiness of high school graduates for postsecondary education.

Based on this partnership we seek to decrease the number of students under-prepared for postsecondary learning while increasing the number of students who are prepared to take full advantage of the academic opportunities offered by universities. Additionally, we report on students taking part in the Opportunity Scholarship program and Advanced Placement in an effort to emphasize the importance of these programs for postsecondary and future workforce success.
**Report Limitations**

It is important to understand that the *South Dakota High School to College Transition Report* is only one source of information that high schools may use to assess the preparation of students for post-secondary education. It does NOT compare the quality of high schools, report on all of the high school graduates, or analyze the high schools’ class offerings. For instance, a total of 9,136 students graduated from South Dakota high schools in 2008, and a total of 2,934 (or 33%) of these graduates attended one of the six public universities during the Fall 2008 semester. These students represent 179 high schools, with significant variation in the number of students from the various high schools entering the Regental system. When matching student data from those that entered the system with information available from the South Dakota Department of Education (2009), it was evident that 24 public/private high schools had 50% or more of their students enroll at one of the six Regental institutions. When this data was further aggregated based on the school districts county location, there were 18 counties with 40% or more of their graduates who went on to the Regental system the year following graduation (see Figure 1). Data reported by The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2007a) indicates that South Dakota ranks first in the country (72%) for graduates going on to some form of postsecondary educational experience directly after high school. This data indicates that approximately 50% of all high school graduates who continue on to postsecondary education do so at one of the six Regental Institutions. For instance, 72% (or 6,500) of South Dakota high school graduates go on to some form of postsecondary experience. The system itself attracted 45% of those students (or 2,934 when counting part-time students).

![Figure 1: Percentage of the 2008 South Dakota High School Graduates from each County who Entered the Regental System](#)
Additional data is needed to determine the academic performance indicators for the remaining 55% of the graduates who go on to postsecondary. This data is available through the National Student Clearinghouse, and the Board of Regents continues to collaborate with the Department of Education to obtain a more comprehensive picture of our graduates’ postsecondary participation. Despite a lack of the comprehensive set of data on South Dakota graduates, the transition report does provide a useful snapshot of Regental students as they transition into their first year of college.

**Degree Seeking Status**

The Regental system in South Dakota has a unique dual mission for providing baccalaureate/graduate and associate degree programs. There are currently a total of 27 different associate degree programs offered at five of the six institutions, with more than 2,200 students enrolled during the 2008-09 academic year. Approximately half of those students are enrolled in or seeking enrollment into the Nursing program at USD. Of the 2,791 high school graduates from 2008, a total of 167 (6%) were admitted to associate degree programs (see Table 1). Additionally, the six institutions offer more than 700 baccalaureate degree programs, and the remaining 2,624 (94%) students were admitted to one of these degree programs.

For admission to baccalaureate degree programs, high school graduates must meet the minimum course requirements with an average grade of C and:

1. Rank in the top 60 percent of their high school graduating class; or
2. Obtain an ACT composite score of 18 (SAT-I score of 870) or above; or
3. Obtain a high school GPA of at least 2.6 on a 4.0 scale.

Students not meeting these baccalaureate degree programs can be admitted as exemptions, and each university may admit a group of students to baccalaureate programs, limited in size to 3 percent of the previous year's freshman class, at the discretion of the university. For the 2008 graduates, 2,728 (97%) were admitted having met the Baccalaureate admission requirements, with the remainder (63 or 3%) admitted as exceptions.
ACT Inc. (2005a) recommends that all students take a college preparatory curriculum that includes 4 years of English and 3 years each of mathematics, social studies, and science. The ACT is designed to measure students’ academic achievement and their readiness for college-level work. Research has continually demonstrated that students who complete a college preparatory curriculum achieve higher scores on the ACT.

### Rigorous Preparatory Curriculum

A rigorous college preparatory curriculum has been a cornerstone of the Board of Regents since it implemented its Regents Scholar curriculum in 1990. This curriculum was later adopted by the South Dakota Legislature as it established initial eligibility requirements for the Opportunity Scholarship program in 2004. In 2006 the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) implemented new minimum graduation requirements, which apply to all seniors graduating in 2010. The new *Advanced* graduation track meets the ACT college preparatory curriculum, and the *Distinguished* track exceeds these recommendations to align with the Opportunity Scholarship curriculum.

Furthermore it is important to point out that “The lack of rigor of the high school curriculum (expressed in terms of graduation requirements, curriculum depth, and alignment with the knowledge and skills required for successful transition to postsecondary education) does not result in all students being adequately prepared for college success” (ACT, 2005a, p. 2). As a result, it is important to note the potential impact that a rigorous curriculum can have on students’ postsecondary success in relation to measures of college readiness.

### ACT recommends that students complete a preparatory college curriculum to improve their chances for college success, including courses in:

- **4 Years English** – English I, English II, English III, & English IV
- **3 Years Mathematics** - One Year Credit Each for Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry / One-half Year Credit for Trigonometry, Calculus, and other math courses beyond Algebra II
- **3 Years Social Studies** – One Year Credit each for American History, World History, American Government / One-half Year Credit each for Economics, Geography, Psychology
- **3 Years Natural Sciences** – One Year Credit Each for General/Physical/Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Studies</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE/Health</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
College Readiness Benchmarks

In conjunction with this college preparatory curriculum, ACT Inc. established College Readiness benchmark scores (see Figure 3) in 1997 to enhance the practical value for students and high school administrators as they attempt to evaluate the significance of exam scores. Using student actual performance in college, ACT Inc. developed benchmarks in English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science test scores that correspond to high chances of success in entry-level college courses. These Benchmarks are the minimum ACT scores a student must achieve on an ACT test to ensure at least a 50% chance of scoring a B or higher, or at least a 75-80% chance of achieving a C or higher in specific first-year college level courses (Allen & Sconing, 2006). For example, a student who obtains an ACT Mathematics score of 22 or higher has a 50% chance of earning at least a B or higher grade in college algebra.

The ACT College Readiness Standards, content standards in the four areas of English, Reading, Mathematics and Science, indicate the skills and knowledge possessed by students obtaining particular ACT scores. These Standards are organized into a series of “strands” that describe specific knowledge and skills that can be aligned with standards established within a given high school curriculum.

When examining the data from all South Dakota high school students who sat for the ACT examination during the past five years, the total percentage of students meeting the College Readiness Standards has increased an average of 4% for each of the content areas. In 2003, 71% of South Dakota students obtained a score at or above an 18 on the English sub-score. This compared to only 67% of students throughout the country. The percentage increased to 75% in 2008, while the national average increased only to 68%. Table 3 provides a six year trend analysis for the percentage of South Dakota students meeting College Readiness Standards, with the strongest growth occurring in the areas of Science and those students meeting all four of the readiness benchmarks (5% over the six year period).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Examination</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Sub-scores</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Percentage of Students Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmark

![Figure 3](image-url)
2008 Graduate Readiness

Data demonstrates that the 2,791 full-time students who entered the Regental system met College Readiness Benchmarks in all four areas at higher levels than the South Dakota Average (See Figure 4). The largest differences occurred in the areas of Reading and Mathematics, with 11% of 2008 graduates meeting benchmark scores on these two sub-scores when compared to total South Dakota student population that tested during the 2007-08 academic year. Eighty-three percent of the 2,791 graduates had met the English sub-score benchmark, and 43% met the Science benchmark. Graduates entering Regental Institutions were 8% more likely to meet the benchmarks in these two areas.

In the past, the Board of Regents has reported on the performance of students solely on their need to take remedial coursework. While the next section will note that remediation continues to be an issue for 28% of students, it is also important to highlight the success for those students entering the system ready to complete college level coursework. Thus, as a reporting feature, College Readiness Benchmarks are used as a measure of student academic preparation and provide school districts with student performance data disaggregated based on a student’s ability to meet all four benchmarks, meet between one and three benchmarks, or those who failed to meet any of the benchmarks. Later in this report you will find data depicted according to these three classifications and when compared against the total cohort of graduates that enter the system in 2008 the largest percentage was able to meet between 1-3 of the benchmarks (1,556 or 56%), followed by those meeting all four (960 or 34%), and none (270 or 10%). The students in this final category are traditionally enrolled in remedial coursework for both Math and English unless they are able to complete additional testing to demonstrate their proficiency in these areas.
Each September ACT (2008) provides a state Profile Report that details South Dakota student performance on the ACT in relation to other students throughout the country. According to this report, a total of 6,959 South Dakota high school seniors sat for the ACT examination accounting for 73% of all high school graduates. This percentage is slightly higher than the national average. Of those students tested during the 2007-08 academic year, the average ACT composite score for the state was set at 22.0. Overall, South Dakota students scored higher than the national average (21.1). This was also the case when comparing student performance on each of the ACT sub-scores. Students scored considerably higher in the areas of Science (22.0 vs. 20.8), followed by English (21.6 vs. 20.6), Mathematics (21.9 vs. 21.0), and Reading (22.3 vs. 21.4).

It is important to reinforce that the South Dakota average includes students who did not attend a Regental Institution in Fall 2008, yet the average score for the 2,791 graduates who entered the Regental system was a 23.1. Significant variation existed when examining student demographic characteristics, and in particular the overall composite score varied based on a students selected degree route. Graduates who enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs averaged a 23.3 compared to associate degree seeking students who average a 19.2. Although the admission criteria for the Regental system specifies that a student must obtain an ACT composite score of 18 or higher, the threshold was raised to a score of 21 by both USD and SDSM&T in 2006. As a result of this modified admission policy, the highest composite scores were obtained by those students who enrolled at SDSM&T this past year, while USD and SDSU students varied only slightly in their ACT performance (see Table 4).

Lastly, ACT traditionally reports student data according to student ethnicity, and for the 2008 seniors there was considerable disparity when comparing Caucasian American/Whites (22.3) against the performance of American Indian/Alaskan Students (17.5). A similar trend was also noted for the students classified into these two ethnic groups that entered the Regental system with Caucasian American/Whites obtaining a 23.3, yet American Indian/Alaskan students scored considerably higher than the state average for this group with a 20.1 composite ACT score.

| Table 4 | ACT Composite and Sub-Score Performance for Graduates Entering Regental System |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ACT Examination | BHSU | DSU | NSU | SDSM&T | SDSU | USD |
| English | 20.5 | 19.9 | 20.8 | 24.8 | 22.5 | 22.9 |
| Reading | 21.6 | 21.0 | 22.3 | 27.0 | 23.7 | 24.0 |
| Mathematics | 20.8 | 21.5 | 21.4 | 27.0 | 23.3 | 23.2 |
| Science | 21.3 | 21.5 | 21.8 | 26.5 | 23.5 | 23.2 |

| | Composite Score | 21.2 | 21.1 | 21.7 | 26.4 | 23.4 | 23.5 |

Figure 5
Comparison of Average ACT Composite Scores for 2008 Graduates
Colleges and Universities throughout the United States place considerable effort on retaining students during their first year of postsecondary education. Despite these efforts, first year completion continues to be a critical concern as data suggests that a considerable number of first-time students are retained. NCHEMs (2007b) reported that only 77% of first-time, full-time students returned to their same institution their second year. Data for all South Dakota institutions (public, 2-year, and private) shows that we are below the national average with 71% of students in this classification returning the second year.

Retention at Same Institution

The methodology employed by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) targets first-time, full-time students and seeks to track their retention at the same institution into their second year. In an effort to provide South Dakota school districts with information once they are one year away from graduation, a similar but slightly different methodology was employed to depict the number of students who had been retained at the same institution and completed coursework during the cohorts first spring semester (see Table 5). Of the 2,791 South Dakota high school graduates that entered the system, 2,549 (93%) were still enrolled as full-time students for Spring 2009 at that same institution. Northern State University had the highest retention rate within the system with 93% of the students returning to continue their coursework after the first semester (see Table 5).

Retention in the Regental System

A sizable portion of students who fail to complete their first year will later return or transfer to a different institution. The National level data indicates that more than 23% of all first-time, full-time students each year do not return to the same institution the second year of college. American Council of Education (2002) noted that 64% of those students “returned-some to their original institution, but more to a different one” (p. 25). Most of those that did return to complete their postsecondary experience did so at “less than a 4-year institution.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Entering Count</th>
<th>Graduates Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BHSU</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>323 (92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSU</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>161 (93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSU</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>214 (93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSM&amp;T</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>159 (92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSU</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>1,112 (92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>580 (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>2,549 (91%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High School to College Transition Report: 2008 Graduates
result, it is important to consider that students who stop-out are likely to return for some form of degree completion. Although a number of these students are likely to transfer to other postsecondary institutions, a sizable number are less likely to enroll despite academic performance in high school that would signal a student’s ability to succeed academically in such environments.

One unique feature of the South Dakota Regental system is the fact that a common student data system is employed to track student enrollments at all six institutions. Using this data structure it is possible to determine a student’s re-entry at a different Regental Institution despite failure to be retained at the initial location he/she was enrolled. When comparing completion rates for both Fall 2008 and Spring 2009, Regental Institutions retained 92% of the graduates during the 2008-09 academic year (see Table 6 for comparison of retention and completion rates by institution).

Although academic preparation is critical, there are a wide range of reasons why a student will not return to the same institution the second year, and exit interview data from the Regental system has identified rationales that include:

1) Program availability
2) Proximity/distance from home
3) Illness
4) Work obligations
5) Schedule conflicts
6) Financial problems

Although 92% of the 2008 graduates enrolled somewhere in the system during both the Fall and Spring semesters, the data for all students who enrolled for the first-time in 2007 indicates that 75% enrolled in the system the following year (see Board of Regents Factbook). Data suggests that a number of these students transferred outside the system and enrolled in other private and public institutions. In 1993, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), a non-profit organization, developed services that allowed postsecondary institutions to obtain data on student degree, diploma, and enrollment verification. Data on South Dakota high school graduates from 1999 and 2000 that failed to graduate within 6 years were submitted to the NSC database to determine future enrollment and graduation status. A total of 929 (33%) of these students did not continue their postsecondary experience after stopping out from one of the six public institutions in the state. The highest number of these students (1,304 or 47%) had enrolled at postsecondary institutions outside the Regental system but did not obtain either an associates or baccalaureate degree. A total of 549 (20%) of these students were able to obtain their degree within six years of their high school graduation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>Graduates Completed Fall &amp; Spring in Regental System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td><strong>Entering Count</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHSU</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSU</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSU</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSM&amp;T</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSU</td>
<td>1,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>System</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,791</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[ACM2023]
**Remedial Performance**

**Developmental Coursework**

Developmental course taking at the college level has become a growing concern throughout the country with as many as 60% of community college and 40% of four-year students requiring some form of remediation. Recently, the Renner Center for Education Research and Policy (2009) noted that with “...the additional expense and time that remediation costs college students, enrollment in remedial courses often derails students’ persistence toward the completion of a college degree” (p. 1). Only a handful of students who enter remedial coursework are able to successfully complete the course sequence. Not only does the completion of developmental courses not count toward degree completion, these courses are delivered at a higher cost to students. All remedial courses are delivered using the self-support tuition rate, costing the student the added expense of non-credit bearing coursework at a steeper tuition rate. A three credit remedial course costs $762, and additional expense is incurred by these students when they are unable to begin general education courses at the start of their postsecondary career.

In the Regental system, all entering students are assessed in English and Mathematics to determine their readiness for engaging in college-level general education coursework. Students with ACT English scores below 18 and/or ACT Mathematics scores below 20 are placed into remedial courses in these disciplines. Students may challenge their placement by sitting for the ACT COMPASS placement examinations. Those students who are deemed unprepared for general education courses, are required to enroll in and to demonstrate proficiency in a Math or English (or both) remedial course(s).

For the 2008 graduates, a slightly higher number of students required remedial coursework when compared to the 2007 graduating class (26% vs. 28%). A number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Six Year Trend Analysis on Remedial Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Entering Cohort</td>
<td>2,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% requiring English Remedial Courses</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% requiring Mathematics Remedial Courses</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of unduplicated remedial enrollments</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of students required remedial English (383 or 14%) which resulted in a 5% increase when compared to 2007 numbers where English remediation had reached an all time low. Those requiring some form of Math remediation also increased slightly (624 or 22%) from the numbers reported for the 2007 graduates. Overall remediation in this area has declined by 5% since 2004. Despite a 4% decrease since 2004, the percentage increased slightly when compared to 2007 numbers. The number of students requiring remediation has declined significantly from 34.2% for full-time freshmen enrolled in 2003 to 28% (770 students) in 2008. If the percentage had not changed, in the Fall of 2008 there would have been 179 more students this past year enrolled in remedial courses. Since these students were not paying for remedial coursework, this is a direct savings of approximately $140,000 for these students and their families. This is assuming that these students needed to enroll in only one remedial course and that they passed the first time.

**High School Performance**

Data on graduate remedial placement were further examined to determine the percentage of students required to take remedial coursework from each of the 178 high schools in South Dakota. The 2007 graduates had reached an all time high of 18% of all high schools having no students required to complete developmental courses. This year the percentage declined to 12% which is below the levels set by the 2005 graduates (see Table 8). Only 1% of the high schools had between 1-9% of their graduates requiring some form of remediation. The largest increase for the 2008 graduates appeared to exist at those high schools with 25% or more of their students enrolled in some type of developmental course. In 2007 only 20% had 50% or more, and this increased to 26% this past year.

As one interprets this trend data it is important to note that prior to 2004 the percentage of the high schools with no students enrolled in remedial courses had remained below 10% (see Figure 6). Previous *High School Transition to College Report* data removed high schools that had fewer than three students when determining the percent of high schools with no students enrolled in remedial education courses. However, the data depicted in Table 8 and Figure 6 reflect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of High School Students</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 9%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 24%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 49%</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% % - Above</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>163</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
all schools regardless of the number of students enrolled from a particular high school (e.g., includes those schools with 1 and 2 students). Note that this produced a dramatic increase in the total number of schools with no students (13%) when compared 2004, and doing so can result in major fluctuations in these numbers from year-to-year based on two factors: 1) the total number of high schools included in the report; and 2) the total number of part-time students which varies dramatically from year-to-year.

**Mediating Factors**

There was considerable variation in the percentage of students entering each of the Regental Institutions and their developmental course needs. For example, BHSU, DSU and NSU each had approximately 40% or more of entering 2008 graduates needing at least one developmental course (see Figure 7). SDSM&T had the fewest, followed by USD & SDSU. Despite these numbers it is important to compare remedial placement against student retention numbers reported in an earlier section of this report. In spite of having the largest percentage of remediated students, BHSU had a higher retention rate for students enrolled into Spring 2009 when compared to the entire system. The same could be said for both DSU and NSU suggesting that all three of these institutions have developed effective student and academic support services to assist those students in need of additional developmental training.

In addition to the institutional comparisons, a sizable number of native American students had English and Mathematics placement scores requiring some form of remedial coursework. Specifically, 74% of White/Non-Hispanic students required no remedial coursework compared to only 42% of American Indian/Alaskan’s (see Table 9). The most dramatic difference appeared to exist when examining the number of students that required two remedial courses. In this particular category, American Indian/Alaskans were more than four times as likely to be placed into two developmental courses when compared to their white counterparts in the Regental system (7% vs. 34%).

![Figure 7](image)

**Table 9**

2008 High School Graduates Remedial Placement According to Ethnicity Classifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>No Remedial</th>
<th>One Remedial</th>
<th>Two Remedial</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>1800 (74%)</td>
<td>449 (19%)</td>
<td>174 (7%)</td>
<td>2423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan</td>
<td>30 (42%)</td>
<td>17 (24%)</td>
<td>24 (34%)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>23 (70%)</td>
<td>8 (24%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11 (50%)</td>
<td>9 (41%)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>10 (71%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>2 (14%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>123 (64%)</td>
<td>51 (27%)</td>
<td>17 (9%)</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Refused</td>
<td>14 (74%)</td>
<td>4 (21%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10 (56%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 2021 (72%) 544 (20%) 226 (8%) 2791
While in the past the Board of Regents have provided a table that depicts average GPA by high school, it has been noted that using this indicator to rank high schools fails to fully capture features that influence student first year performance (cumulative GPA and credit hours attempted/completed). More meaningful analysis can be obtained by examining these performance indicators in relation to a number of important variables that have been shown to have a practical impact on student performance once they enter postsecondary institutions. Only those 2,765 full-time students who completed at least one semester during the 2008-09 academic year were used when comparing university grade point averages (GPA) and credit hour completion. Before we examine the overall performance of the 2008 graduating class during their first year in the Regental system, space is warranted to provide background on each of these indicators.

### Remedial Coursework

In the previous section we noted the impact of remedial coursework on students’ persistence in their post-secondary experience. One would expect that remedial students’ cumulative GPA performance would also be influenced. More importantly students completing developmental courses are further limited by the inability to complete credit bearing courses that allow them to make progress toward their degree.

Table 10 provides a snapshot of the 2,791 high school graduates based on their classification into Math remediation, English remediation, required to take both remedial courses, or no remedial coursework. Cumulative GPA at the end of the spring semester appeared to be lowest for those requiring both developmental courses, followed by English and then Math remediation. A similar trend occurred when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Enrollments</th>
<th>Cumulative GPA</th>
<th>Credit Hours Attempted</th>
<th>Credit Hours Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remedial Coursework Required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Remedial</td>
<td>636 (23%)</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Remedial</td>
<td>388 (14%)</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Remedial</td>
<td>246 (9%)</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Remedial Coursework Required</td>
<td>2,013 (72%)</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Readiness Benchmarks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>270 (10%)</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>1,556 (56%)</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All 4</td>
<td>960 (34%)</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Scholarship</td>
<td>918 (33%)</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent Scholar</td>
<td>1,276 (46%)</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Placement Coursework</td>
<td>319 (11%)</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
examining both the credit hours attempted and completed throughout the first year in the Regental system. Those students with no developmental coursework were more likely to be on track for graduation (attempting 30 and completing 29 hours), compared to those taking developmental courses. Being required to take remedial coursework in both English and Math resulted in considerably lower credit hour generation (17 attempted vs. 14 hours completed).

**College Readiness Benchmarks**

Related to student remedial placement is their ability to meet each of the *College Readiness Benchmarks* established by ACT. Earlier in this report we discussed the ACT sub-scores in the areas of English, Reading, Mathematics and Science that are used to determine students’ overall readiness for completing college level courses in these respective content areas. In an effort to explore student performance in relation to these benchmarks, the 2008 graduates were classified into one of three categories that include *None* (student failing to meet all of the ACT benchmarks scores), *1-3* (meeting between 1 or 3 of the scores), or *All 4*. GPA and credit hour generation are depicted in Table 10 for students in each of these areas with a positive relationship existing for students overall GPA and their placement within each of these categories. Those students meeting all four of the benchmarks obtained a significantly higher GPA at the end of their first year. They also attempted and completed more credit hours.

Not specifically detailed in Table 10 is the overall retention of students based on these classification areas. However, data were further explored to determine the number of students in each of these areas who had enrolled compared against those that had completed credit hours at the end of the Spring 2009 semester. Figure 8 demonstrates student retention when depicted in relation to College Readiness Benchmarks. On average 94% of all graduates completed courses at the end of the spring term, and 97% of those having met all four benchmarks were able to do so. Ninety-three percent of those meeting one to three were retained, with only 87% of those meeting none of the benchmarks completed courses into the spring term.
Opportunity Scholarship & Regents Scholar Recipients

The Opportunity Scholarship program was established in 2004 by the South Dakota Legislature to provide up to $5,000 in financial aid to qualified high school graduates. Students can establish initial eligibility in the program by meeting four criteria whereby a recipient must:

1) Graduate from high school with a cumulative GPA at 3.0 or higher;
2) Be a resident of South Dakota;
3) Obtain a minimum composite score of 24 or higher on the examination administered by ACT;
4) Complete the required number of high school courses in approved subject areas (Regents Scholars curriculum – see Appendix B).

In Fall 2008, 918 (33%) of the 2,791 South Dakota high school graduates entering South Dakota public universities met the academic performance requirements necessary to receive the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship. There were 178 high schools with graduates entering Regental Institutions in Fall 2008. Of those 178 high schools, 39 (22%) had 50% or more of their high school graduates receive the Opportunity Scholarship at one of the six Regental Institutions (See figure 10). There were 30 (17%) high schools that produced no South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship recipients, down from 19% of the high schools represented in the 2007 report.

The average GPA for students enrolled in the Opportunity Scholarship program was a 3.25 at the end of the Spring 2009, and these students completed 31 credit hours during their first year in the Regental system. When compared against those students who had met the Regents Scholar curriculum (but failed to obtain a 24 or higher on the ACT) student cumulative GPA (3.10) and credit hour completion (30) was slightly lower. This may be due to the fact that the administrative rules that govern the Opportunity Scholarship program specifies that a student must attempt and complete 15 credit hours each semester to maintain ongoing eligibility in the program. Students who fail to meet this requirement become permanently ineligible in the program and lose out on the remaining funding.
Advanced Placement

The advanced placement program is offered by many school districts and supported by both the South Dakota Department of Education and the Regental Institutions. The program provides motivated students an opportunity to complete one or more of 37 college-level courses in a high school environment that are administered by the College Board (the same organization that administers the SAT). The AP courses are taught in SD high schools by high school teachers who prepare students to take an AP exam that can gain them college credit. The AP curriculum is considered to be nationally recognized and student participation in AP courses in high school demonstrates students’ willingness to engage in a rigorous curriculum needed for college success. Research by the College Board (2009) has noted that “AP continues to prepare students for college success in many ways, including helping to offset college costs. While the majority of students entering college today fail to earn a bachelors degree in four years, AP students are much more likely to graduate within four years, saving the cost of additional tuition and preventing delay in their entry into the workforce” (para 4 and see also Hargrove, Godin, & Dodd, 2008).

Students seeking to obtain college credit for an AP course must sit for an AP exam and score a 3 or higher (maximum score of 5). Of all seniors eligible to take AP in any of the 37 courses, only 15.4% scored a 3 or higher in 2008. The percentage was slightly lower for South Dakota students with only 9.7% of seniors meeting scores necessary for obtaining college credit. Three hundred and nineteen (12%) of South Dakota high school graduates earned AP credit before enrolling in one of the six Regental Institutions in Fall 2008. The institution with the highest percent of AP students was SDSMT with 25% of its 2008 entering class from SD high schools bringing AP credit (see Figure 11 for institutional comparison on AP courses). Students with at least one AP course who entered the system had a mean GPA of 3.21. Similar results were also observed for AP students and their first year progression toward graduation. Advanced Placement students attempted (31) and then completed (30) more credit hours when compared to all other students (25 credit hours completed).
References


ACT (2005b). *Crisis at the core: Preparing all students for college and work.* Iowa City, IA: ACT Inc.


Although the largest number of South Dakota high school graduates that enter the Regental system directly after graduation tend to attend full-time, a small number of graduates also enroll for coursework on a part-time basis. A total of 143 South Dakota high school graduates entered Regental Institutions on a part-time basis (enrolled for fewer than 12 hours) in Fall 2008. These students represented approximately 5% of all South Dakota high school graduates entering Regental Institutions during this time period. Of these 143 students, 74% were admitted into baccalaureate degree programs and 26% were admitted into associate degree programs. Additionally, a larger percentage of these students had been admitted into the system as exceptions to the Baccalaureate admission policy. Specifically, part-time students were four times as likely to be admitted as exemptions with 18 (13%) of these students unable to meet the admission requirements for Baccalaureate degree programs.

When examining performance indicators for these students, the average composite ACT score was significantly lower (20.6) when compared to the first-time, full-time students and those entering as exceptions to the admission requirements had an average of a 16.9. Lastly, the average GPA for those students who finished the spring 2009 semester was a 2.18. These graduates had also attempted 20 credits during their first two semesters and completed 19.

### Retention and Completion Rates

While it is difficult to provide a comprehensive report on such a small number of students, it is important to document the overall retention of these students since many ultimately enroll on a full-time basis. One hundred and two (71%) of these students were still enrolled as part-time students for Spring 2009. When comparing completion rates for both Fall 2008 and Spring 2009, Regental Institutions retained 105 (73%) of the graduates during the 2008-09 academic year (see Table 12 for comparison of retention and completion rates by institution).
Appendix B: Regent Scholars Curriculum

To be eligible for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, students are asked to completed the required number of high school courses in the following subjects.

**Four 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;

**Four units of algebra or higher mathematics**: algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or other advanced mathematics, including accelerated or honors mathematics (algebra) provided at the 8th grade level. Arithmetic, business, consumer or general mathematics, or other similar courses, are not included;

**Four units of science, including three units of approved laboratory science**: courses in biology, chemistry, or physics in which at least one regular laboratory period is scheduled each week. Accelerated or honors science (biology, physics, or chemistry) provided in the 8th grade are accepted. Qualifying physical science or earth science courses (with lab) may be accepted on a case-by-case basis;

**Three units of social studies**: history, economics, sociology, geography, United States or South Dakota government, American Problems, and similar courses;

**Two units of a modern or classical language, including American Sign Language**: The two units must be in the same language;

**One unit of fine arts**: effective for the fall 2005 semester for students graduating from South Dakota high schools, one unit in art, theatre, or music. Such credit may be in appreciation, analysis, or performance. Through the fall 2004 semester for students graduating from South Dakota high schools, one-half unit of art, theatre, or music is required. Such credit may be in appreciation, analysis, or performance;

**One half unit of computer science**: students must have basic keyboarding skills, experience in using computer word processing, database, and spreadsheet packages, and experience in using the Internet or other wide area networks.