

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Joint BOR and Board of Education Standards Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: 2 – B

DATE: May 8-10, 2018

SUBJECT

Proposed South Dakota High School Graduation Requirements

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 2:3](#) – System Undergraduate Admissions

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

In 2010 the Board of Education Standards adopted a set of graduation standards that required all students to take three units of math and science to graduate. At the same time the basic, standard, and advanced tracks were eliminated.¹ These three options were then replaced with a common set of graduation requirements which also allowed students to request a waiver for the third unit of math or science if students could demonstrate an inability to successfully complete required coursework in these content areas.

The South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) has been engaging the various education groups regarding changes to the current set of graduation requirements. A revised set of graduation requirements were reviewed by AAC in February, and feedback provided to DOE on the potential issues that the revised requirements would have for student admission into the Regental system. A new set of revisions have been further developed, and the DOE has advanced them forward for a first reading by the Board of Education Standards at their May 8, 2018 meeting (see Attachment I).

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

Following a series of discussions with principals, school counselors, and superintendents, the DOE staff sought feedback from the Board on the following issues. First, school personnel would like to remove the word ‘lab’ science from the course science requirements. The DOE would seek to retain the requirement in the language for the postsecondary and advanced postsecondary endorsement because the BOR admission policy states the sciences must be ‘lab’ science courses. BOR staff confirmed that this

¹ The set of tracks were originally designed by the South Dakota Board of Education to provide guidance to students on the appropriate curriculum necessary for their intended postsecondary pathways. All students were expected to meet the basic curriculum track to graduate from high school. The Standard track aligned with the Regent’s admission criteria, and the Advanced track mirrored the curriculum requirements for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship.

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INFORMATIONAL ITEM

would continue to be an expectation for admission and removing the term “lab” would potentially cause an issue for graduates unless changes were made to BOR Policy 2.3 System Undergraduate Admission.

Currently, one unit of advanced computer science could be taken in lieu of one of the three science credits for the general diploma, postsecondary endorsement, and career endorsement, but not the advanced postsecondary endorsement. DOE staff inquired whether a student taking an advanced computer science course instead of a lab science, would then meet the general admissions requirements. Similar to the “lab” science issue above, if the computer science course did not align with the natural science lab requirement, then changes would be required for BOR Policy 2.3. Members of the Natural Science Discipline Council were asked to provide feedback on this potential change, and the membership was split. Those that showed general support indicated that some formal alignment with current DOE Science standards would be necessary. In response, DOE brought together a number of teachers to review courses that could be used to replace a science elective for the base and advanced career endorsement in the proposed changes to graduation requirements. Their assessment was that the proposed list of courses (see Attachment II) align to all the science and engineering practices, and at least 4 of the cross-cutting concepts² that were adopted in the SD science standards³ in 2015. If approved, DOE staff have indicated an intent to set criteria for determining which advanced computer science classes would count. Staff have not currently set the criteria, or formally reviewed the advanced computer science classes; however, they have indicated a willingness to work with the BOR to set criteria so it would meet the admissions requirements.

Finally, the DOE is planning to remove the listing specific to World History and Geography on the postsecondary endorsement. Currently, there are no requirements in our admission policy that specify the social science courses that must be completed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – Proposed HS Graduation Requirements

Attachment II – Current List of Approved Computer Science Courses meeting Natural Science Standards

² **Cross Cutting Concepts** – Patterns; Cause and Effect; Scale, Proportion, and Quantity; Systems and System Models; Energy and Matter; Structure and Function; Stability and Change.

³ **Science & Engineering Practices** – Asking questions and defining problems; Developing and using models; Planning and carrying out investigations; Analyzing and interpreting data; Using mathematical and computational thinking; Constructing explanations and designing solutions; Engaging in argument from evidence; and Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information