



DEAR PARTNERS IN COLLEGE PREPARATION,

OCTOBER 1 - NOVEMBER 30, 2025, is South Dakota's statewide Free College Application Period organized by the South Dakota Board of Regents and the South Dakota Department of Education!

The goal is to provide all South Dakota students an opportunity to explore and prepare for postsecondary opportunities. When we say "college," we mean any form of high-quality education or training after high school. This includes trade and professional certificate programs, career and technical programs, two- and four-year degrees, formalized apprenticeship programs, and military service.

An estimated 72 percent of jobs will require postsecondary education or training by 2031, according to the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University. That means people looking for a job in the next 10 years will have dramatically fewer options without at least some college education. With South Dakota's attainment rate at 55.3 percent, there is still work to do. For this reason, we are proud to host the Free College Application Period.

Students can apply to South Dakota's state public colleges and universities for FREE during October 1 - November 30, we encourage you to use this time to build excitement and awareness surrounding the college exploration process.

To make this initiative outstanding, we challenge schools and communities to engage in various activities. Some ideas include decorating our doors and classrooms with items that reflect a college atmosphere, displaying signs and pennants in our community, and holding college-themed trivia contests. Let's get creative!

To support you in this effort, we've created a toolkit to help your school garner excitement and participation. In this toolkit, please find the following grab-and-go materials:

- Promotional Items (flyers, social media graphics, website banners, audio and video clips)
- ABCs of College Posters
- SD Public Colleges & Universities Map
- College Planning Checklist
- You Bet I went to College Poster
- College Door Wars
- College Bingo Activity
- College Awareness Announcements
- College Trivia Game
- College Decision Map
- College Fair Preparation Worksheet
- "I Applied" Statements
- I Applied, What's Next? Handout
- Other Ideas for Engaging High School and Community Support

Thank you again for your dedication to helping our students pursue and succeed in postsecondary education!

Sincerely,
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