

Regent Scholars

In 1988, the South Dakota Board of Regents identified the Regents' Scholar Curriculum which is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in their high school coursework providing the necessary skills for college and career readiness. This curriculum includes coursework in six content areas including:

- **4 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.
- **4 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; not included are arithmetic, business, consumer or general mathematics or other similar courses.
- **4 units of science including 3 units of approved laboratory science:** Courses in biology, chemistry, or physics in which at least one (1) regular laboratory period is scheduled each week. Qualifying physical science or earth science courses (with lab) shall be decided on a case by case basis.
- **3 units of social studies:** History, economics, sociology, geography, government--including U.S. and South Dakota, American Problems, and similar courses.
- **2 units of a modern or classical language (includes American Sign Language):** The two units must be in the same language.
- **1 unit of fine arts:** Coursework in art, theatre or music. Such credit may be in appreciation, analysis, or performance.

Effective in 2001, the Regents' Scholar Diploma program was established as an academic letter that school districts use to recognize graduating high school seniors who have demonstrated academic excellence through the completion of coursework in the six content areas. Additionally, high school graduates designated as Regents' Scholars automatically are admitted to all six public universities. For students to be nominated as a recipients of the Regents' Scholar Diploma, they must have 1) graduated from a South Dakota high school; 2) completed the coursework identified in the six areas outlined above; 3) receive a "C" (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher on all required coursework; and 4) maintained an unweighted cumulative grade point average of a "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) throughout high school.

Traditionally, school districts present Regents' Scholar Diplomas to eligible seniors during graduation or academic award ceremonies each year. To receive the Regents' Scholar Diploma, high school administrators must submit the names of all eligible students to the South Dakota Board of Regents. Data files should include the name of each eligible graduating senior, the student's SIMS ID number, and the anticipated high school graduation date. An Excel template can be found at the link posted below. Upon receipt of the school district list, the Board of Regents will print Regents' Scholar Diploma certificates that can then be presented to students.



The South Dakota Legislature authorized the Regents Scholarship Program in 2003 to allow South Dakota's most academically accomplished high school graduates to receive an affordable education at any university, college, or technical school in South Dakota that is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In 2004, the Legislature renamed the scholarship the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship and authorized funding from the state of South Dakota's Education Enhancement Trust Fund, beginning with high school graduating classes in 2004.

Scholarship Amounts

Starting this Fall 2015*, the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship provides \$6,500 over four years to a qualifying student who attends an eligible higher education institution in South Dakota. Recipients may participate in the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship program for the equivalent of four academic years (eight consecutive fall and spring terms), or until attaining a baccalaureate degree. During each academic year, one-half of the annual scholarship award will be distributed at the beginning of the fall semester and the other half distributed at the beginning of the spring semester:

\$1,300 - 1st year of attendance

\$1,300 - 2nd year of attendance

\$1,300 - 3rd year of attendance

\$2,600 - 4th year of attendance

To meet the curriculum requirements for the Opportunity Scholarship, all recipients must receive a "C" or higher on all coursework including:

- **4 units of English** (courses with major emphasis upon grammar, composition, or literary analysis may be included to meet this requirement).
- **3 units of Social Studies** (such as history, economics, sociology, geography, U.S. government, and similar courses).
- **4 units of Algebra or Higher Mathematics** (algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or other advanced mathematics, as well as accelerated or honors mathematics [algebra] at the 8th grade, shall be accepted). NOT INCLUDED are arithmetic, business, consumer, or general mathematics or similar courses.
- **4 units of Science, including 3 units of approved laboratory science** (courses in biology, chemistry, or physics in which at least one regular laboratory is scheduled each week). Qualifying physical science or earth science courses (with lab) shall be on a case-by-case basis.
- **1 unit of Fine Arts** (in art, theatre, or music, as well as approved extracurricular activity).
- **2 units of either of the following or a combination of the two:**
 - **Approved Career and Technical Education Courses**
 - **Modern or Classical Language** (Includes American Sign Language; all units must be in the same language)
- **1/2 unit of Personal Finance or Economics**
- **1/2 unit of Physical Education**
- **1/2 unit of Health or Health Integration** (Students entering high school after July 2013)