

SOUTH DAKOTA



Adopted Common Core State Standards in 2010

South Dakota School Demographics

Total #Schools	707	
Total #Students	130,890	
Total #Black Students	3,532	3%
Total #Hispanic Students	5,916	5%
Total #Amer Ind/AK Native	15,040	11%
Total #Asian/Pac Islander	2,376	2%
Total #Two or More Races	3,437	3%
Total #White Students	100,589	77%
Total #Free and Reduced Lunch	51,707	40%
Total #ELL	4,254	3%
Total #Students with Disabilities	18,508	14%

South Dakota adopted new college- and career-ready learning standards in English language arts and mathematics in late 2010. The South Dakota Department of Education (the Department) began work to help districts better understand the updated South Dakota Content Standards with a pilot group of teachers in the summer of 2011. They built on that experience to begin outlining a professional development plan for teachers and administrators, the Common Core Professional Development Series, with the goal to have full implementation of the standards in South Dakota schools in the 2014-15 school year.

Investing in Teachers

The Department's efforts were modest at first and state officials knew more intense efforts of

professional development would be needed for the state's education community. In 2012, the South Dakota legislature set aside \$8 million in funding to add to the Department's budget, specifically for professional development and implementing the new college- and career-ready learning standards with a goal of providing professional learning opportunities for 8,000 teachers.

The \$8 million of Investing In Teachers funds has been the catalyst for the Department to put together a robust professional development program that is flexible enough to meet local district needs. The Department knew that districts had various capabilities for providing professional development, or when they would be able to allow teachers to receive it. They developed a menu of offerings for professional development that would allow each district to meet their own needs, whether it was a small district with little internal capacity to deliver training or one of the state's larger districts that could write their own plan and submit it to the state for approval. The options included summer workshops, workshops that occurred throughout the school year, online learning, and district-created plans.

At the state level the initial training was regionally based, allowing districts to send teams and bring back the expertise to be shared with colleagues. It was focused on both content areas to help educators better understand the shifts in English language arts and mathematics. They went from a higher level of awareness to more narrowly tailored modules so districts could choose to send their teachers where they felt they needed more support.

"It was well received for the flexibility and the ability for a district to customize for their own needs. Each district is in a different place and



we needed to work with them to meet them where they were,” said Becky Nelson, Director of the Division of Learning and Instruction.

“Our plan was really a reaction to what districts wanted and the Investing in Teacher funds really allowed us to give them what they wanted.”

Through the professional development the Department offers as part of Investing in Teachers, they can help districts understand alignment and help them to choose and develop curriculum that meets the more rigorous standards. It allows the Department to give guidance to local districts without interfering with local control.

The Investing in Teachers funds have also helped the Department with concerns about curriculum. South Dakota is a local control state where the state may make suggestions but doesn’t publish recommendations. It is up to local districts to determine if the curriculum they use is aligned to the South Dakota Content Standards. Through the professional development the Department offers as part of Investing in Teachers, they can help districts understand alignment and help them to choose and develop curriculum that meets the more rigorous standards. It allows the Department to give guidance to local districts without interfering with local control.

Shifts in Instruction

The Department credits the extensive professional development they have been able to provide with helping to make statewide shifts in instruction. The Department is able to give tailored support to districts. Using feedback from professional learning sessions

the Department can see themes emerging and develop trainings to meet specific needs in the various regions.

South Dakota classrooms are seeing shifts in instruction and in the alignment of concepts that are being taught as teachers adjust to the college- and career-ready standards. In math, teachers are more likely now to share their thinking and understanding of concepts with students and also to recognize that there are multiple ways to solve a problem.

“In the past, we used to have a teacher show one method to solve a problem. Currently, teachers and students are able to solve a math problem in several different methods,” said Nelson. “They then share that knowledge with their classmates, expanding everyone’s base of learning.”

