

High school should prepare students for success in higher education, the workforce and life. With that goal in mind, the South Dakota Board of Education developed “Pathways to Graduation.”

Beginning with the freshman class of 2006, Pathways requires students to choose one of three routes to high school graduation. These routes are:

- Standard
- Advanced
- Distinguished

As they choose a pathway, students are forced to think about their future and to plan their high school career accordingly. State law requires that all students participate in the Advanced path (at the least), unless the student has a parent’s permission to pursue the standard, or basic, pathway. Each pathway features new requirements – deemed crucial by the Board of Education – in health or physical education and economics or personal finance.

What’s the difference between pathways?

• Standard

This set of courses meets the state’s basic standards for graduation. It is designed to prepare students for entry-level jobs and some technical programs. An agreement, signed by the student’s parents and the school administrator or counselor, is necessary to pursue this path.

• Advanced

This set of courses meets the state’s standards for graduation and prepares students for education beyond high school. It fulfills the minimum requirements for admission to South Dakota’s public universities and to most highly technical fields of study at technical institutes.

• Distinguished

This set of courses meets the state’s highest level of standards for graduation. It fulfills the minimum requirements for admission to most major colleges and universities. This pathway satisfies the course requirements of the South Dakota Board of Regents Opportunity Scholarship.

For information regarding other scholarship requirements, see your school counselor.

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Pathways to Graduation

Academic planning for high school students



South Dakota
Department
of Education
and South
Dakota School
Counselors
Association

Standard	Advanced	Distinguished
English/Reading & Communication Arts (4 units total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing – 1.5 units Literature – 1.5 units, including .5 Am Lit and .5 Speech 	English/Reading & Communication Arts (4 units total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing – 1.5 units Literature – 1.5 units, including .5 Am Lit and .5 Speech 	English/Reading & Communication Arts (4 units total)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing – 1.5 units Literature – 1.5 units, including .5 Am Lit and .5 Speech
Social Studies (3 units total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. History – 1 unit U.S. Government – .5 unit Geography – .5 unit World History – .5 unit Social Studies elective – .5 unit 	Social Studies (3 units total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. History – 1 unit U.S. Government – .5 unit Geography – .5 unit World History – .5 unit Social Studies elective – .5 unit 	Social Studies (3 units total)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. History – 1 unit U.S. Government – .5 unit Geography – .5 unit World History – .5 unit Social Studies elective – .5 unit
Fine Arts (1 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elective – 1 unit 	Fine Arts (1 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elective – 1 unit 	Fine Arts (1 unit)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elective – 1 unit
Health or Physical Education (.5 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .5 unit 	Health or Physical Education (.5 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .5 unit 	Health or Physical Education (.5 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .5 unit
Economics or Personal Finance (.5 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .5 unit 	Economics or Personal Finance (.5 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .5 unit 	Economics or Personal Finance (.5 unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .5 unit
Mathematics (3 units total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I – 1 unit Math elective – 2 units 	Mathematics (3 units or more) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I – 1 unit Algebra II – 1 unit Geometry – 1 unit 	Mathematics (4 units or more)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I – 1 unit Algebra II – 1 unit Geometry – 1 unit Advanced Math elective – 1 unit
Science (2 units total of Lab Science) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science electives – 2 units 	Science (3 units of Lab Science) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science elective – 1 unit Biology – 1 unit Chemistry or Physics – 1 unit 	Science (4 units of Science)* Minimum 3 units Lab Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science elective – 2 units Biology – 1 unit Chemistry or Physics – 1 unit
Required offerings: Students must select <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 units total – any combination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Language or Computer Studies or Approved Career & Technical Education courses 	Required offerings: Students must select <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 units total – any combination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Language or Computer Studies or Approved Career & Technical Education courses 	World Language (2 units)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 units of the same language Computer Studies (.5 unit)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .5 unit

Students must complete a minimum of 22 credits in any path in order to graduate.

*Indicates offerings necessary to help meet requirements of South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship