South Dakota Board of
Technical Education

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To: Board of Technical Education

From: Nick Wendell, Executive Director, Board of Technical Education

Re: Proposed Performance Indicators

Date: 7/25/24

In December 2023, the Board of Technical Education (BOTE) approved a set of three strategic priorities and related goals. At that time, staff affirmed that an Institutional Effectiveness Task Force, comprised of one representative from each technical college, was in the midst of analyzing the system's data management and would be recommending primary and secondary performance indicators for each strategic priority.

The primary and secondary performance indicators will be used to track progress toward meeting the goals attached to each of the three priorities. The proposed indicators have been vetted with the college presidents and come to you with a recommendation for approval.

This memo is intended to provide the approved strategic priorities and measurable goals, along with proposed primary and secondary performance indicators with definitions for each. Attached to this memo is an appendix which provides a more comprehensive breakdown of the work related to the performance indicators.

Proposed Performance Indicators

1. **Attainment** (Appendix pages 5-10)
   Increasing the number of South Dakotans who attain high-quality postsecondary credentials.
   Goal | Produce 3,001 credential completers per year by 2030.

   1.1 Primary Indicator Completer Count
   Definition | The number of unique students who completed a credential (Associate of Applied Science, diploma, or certificate) between July 1 and June 30.

   1.2 Secondary Indicator Enrollment Count
   Definition | The number of unique, degree-seeking students enrolled between July 1 and June 30.

   1. 3 Secondary Indicator Retention Rate
   Definition | The percentage of students from the initial cohort enrolled in the next fall semester or who have completed a credential.

   1. 4 Secondary Indicator Full-Time Completion Rate
   Definition | The percentage of full-time students from the initial cohort who completed a program within 150% of the published time for the credential.

   1. 5 Secondary Indicator Part-Time Completion Rate
   Definition | The percentage of part-time students from the initial cohort who completed a program within 200% of the published time for the credential.

(continued on page two)

2. **Affordability** (Appendix pages 11-14)
   Ensuring that technical education in South Dakota is affordable and offers a positive return on investment.
   Goal | Maintain a 5.0 or lower cost to earnings premium for every AAS program in the system by 2030.

   2.1 Primary Indicator Cost to Earnings Premium (CTEP)
   Definition | The ratio of the total projected program cost of attendance to the earnings differential between program graduates and high school diploma holders in South Dakota.

   2.2 Secondary Indicator Actual Cost of Attendance
   Definition | The total actual cost of attendance amount paid by a graduate after subtracting the total actual amount of grants and scholarships a student received. Expressed as the median of all students in the completion cohort.

   2.3 Secondary Indicator Net Cost per Completion
   Definition | The difference between per-completion revenue and per-completion spending.

3. **Alignment** (Appendix pages 15-17)
   Preparing learners and graduates for meaningful employment and continued education opportunities.
   Goal | Increase the year five in-state placement rate to 75% by 2030.

   3.1 Primary Indicator Placement in South Dakota, Year Five Rate
   Definition | The percentage of graduates in the completion cohort who are employed in South Dakota or continuing education at a higher education institution in South Dakota five years following graduation.

   3.2 Secondary Indicator Placement in South Dakota, Year One Rate
   Definition | The percentage of graduates in the completion cohort who are employed in South Dakota or continuing education at a higher education institution in South Dakota one year following graduation.

South Dakota Board of Technical Education
Strategic Priorities
Proposed Performance Indicators

Introduction

Since June 2023, the Institutional Effectiveness Task Force has met regularly to identify set of performance indicators aligned to the South Dakota Board of Technical Education's (BOTE) strategic priorities. These performance indicators will be used yearly to monitor progress towards achieving, the strategic priority goals approved by the BOTE in December 2023 and to guide actions that institutions or the system can take to accomplish them:

1. Attainment: Produce 3,001 credential completers per year by 2030.

2. Affordability: Maintain a 5.0 or lower cost to earnings premium for every AAS program in the system by 2030.

3. Alignment: Increase the year five in-state placement rate to 75% by 2030.

This document provides background information regarding the proposed indicators. The next sections outline the long-term development and implementation plan, as well as the short-term plan for data and reporting in FY 2025. We then overview each strategic priority and its associated performance indicators in additional detail.

Before proceeding, the Institutional Effectiveness Task Force members deserve special recognition for the time and energy each has committed to this work and the development of the proposed performance indicators. These individuals include Tina Kruse (LATC), Marla Smith (MTC), Jackie Pommer (STC), and Debbie Toms (WDTC).

Development and Implementation of Performance Indicators

Following BOTE approval, the work around performance indicators will continue and be progressively phased in over multiple fiscal years. This means not all indicators will be fully implemented on July 1, 2024, which is referred to as the baseline in the below table.

FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Preparation for Implement-ation	Baseline	Progress Report (Outcomes from FY 2025)	Progress Report (Outcomes from FY 2026)	Progress Report (Outcomes from FY 2027)	Progress Report (Outcomes from FY 2028)	Progress Report (Outcomes from FY 2029)	Final Progress Report (Outcomes from FY 2030)
Various indicators/metrics/reports/dashboards/etc. will need to be progressively phased in.							

Consensus takes time, and these indicators will be phased in for various reasons, such as an indicator's complexity, the need to establish data sharing agreements, collection of new data, or the need to crosswalk definitions across the technical colleges to ensure accuracy.

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Indicators will be phased in on an indicator-by-indicator basis rather than only focusing on the indicators associated with one strategic priority at a time. This is primarily because there is significant overlap between the current indicators across the strategic priorities.

For example: the system will use the same data set for both "Post-Graduation Earnings: Year 5" (CTEP) and "Placement Rate in SD: Year 5." Accordingly, it makes more sense to develop these indicators at the same time, compared to just the earnings portion in FY26 and the placement portion in FY27, considering both variables will be based on the same data set and would need to be outlined in the data sharing agreement with the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation.

Once the indicators are approved, the system will develop a manageable development and implementation timeline.

During the year the indicator is selected to be phased in, the system will develop out the associated definitions, data files, data sharing agreements (as needed), and publications. For example:

- Continue to refine data definitions and business rules, as needed. These definitions and rules will be formalized in technical guides.

- For any internal file submissions directly between a technical college and the system office, the creation of data files specifying the formatting requirements associated with the respective file.

- As needed, the system will establish the necessary data sharing agreement(s) with the appropriate entities.

- Development of platforms for communicating the data, such as a Power BI dashboard or the structure of a report.

Plan for FY 2025 Data and Reporting

Recognizing the continued development and implementation work that is necessary, the system's plan is to continue with the existing submissions and annual reporting calendar for FY25. In comparing the FY24 calendar to FY25, there will not be significant changes to ensure a predictable reporting calendar alongside transparent expectations of what data the system will / will not be collecting.

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Overview of Proposed Performance Indicators

The proposed set of performance indicators provide an accurate, aligned, and actionable framework to measure and inform progress toward the strategic priority goals.

1. Accurate: The indicator, as defined, can be accurately measured in a valid and reliable way.

2. Aligned: The indicator directly aligns with its associated strategic priority goal.

3. Actionable: The indicator is actionable, meaning a technical college or the system can take some form of action to influence the outcome the indicator is measuring.

The indicators have been developed as a cohesive set. When viewed together, they offer a comprehensive view of a student's pathway to, through, and beyond their postsecondary education experience. From this perspective, there are two important points of emphasis.

First, the indicators are highly interconnected. For example, Attainment indicators like enrollment, retention, and completion are influenced by Affordability factors. If education is more affordable, students are more likely to enroll and stay in their programs, boosting retention and completion rates. Similarly, the Alignment indicators, which look at where graduates are employed or continuing education a year and five years after graduation, are connected to both Attainment and Affordability. If students graduate with solid earnings prospects and efficient opportunities for continued education, they are more likely to stay in South Dakota.

Second, the indicators redefine credential completion not as an endpoint but as a progression point. This shift leads to a sense of shared responsibility and ownership among students, our technical colleges, and the system in ensuring both the completion of the credential and the opportunities that credential leads to following completion—whether that results in graduates entering the workforce or continuing their education.

By integrating these indicators into a unified framework, the system can better track progress, identify areas for improvement, and implement strategies that enhance student success and institutional performance. This approach ensures we address all aspects of the student experience, ultimately helping the system meet the strategic priority goals in a meaningful and effective way.

In the subsequent pages, we overview each strategic priority and performance indicator in detail. For each indicator, we define the indicator and describe the alignment between the indicator and its associated strategic priority goal. We also provide examples of how the indicators can be acted on by the four technical colleges and/or the system to realize the strategic priority goal. *Please note, the intent in providing these actionable examples is not to prescribe the specific actions the technical college or the system will take but to demonstrate how the indicators can be directly tied to actionable strategies.*

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Strategic Priority 1: Attainment

Goal: Produce 3,001 credential completers per year by 2030.

Performance Indicators

- Primary Indicator: Completer Count.
- Secondary Indicators:
    - Enrollment Count.
    - Retention Rate.
    - Completion Rate: Full-Time.
    - Completion Rate: Part-Time.

Strategic Priority 2: Affordability

Goal: Maintain a 5.0 or lower cost to earnings premium for every AAS program in the system by 2030.

Performance Indicators

- Primary Indicator: Cost-To-Earnings Premium (CTEP).
- Secondary Indicators:
    - Median Net Cost of Attendance.
    - Net Revenue Per Completion.

Strategic Priority 3: Alignment

Goal: Increase the year five in-state placement rate to 75% by 2030.

Performance Indicators

- Primary Indicator: Graduate Placement in SD: Year 5.
- Secondary Indicator:
    - Graduate Placement in SD: Year 1.

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Strategic Priority 1: Attainment

Goal: Produce 3,001 credential completers per year by 2030.

The Attainment goal is rooted in the need to increase the number of South Dakotans who earn high-quality postsecondary credentials. This is essential for meeting the state's workforce demands and ensuring that residents are equipped with the skills needed for meaningful employment. Historically, the South Dakota technical college system has produced an average of 2,440 unique graduates per year between 2019 and 2023, with a peak of 2,598 graduates in 2023 and a low of 2,274 in 2022.

Based on current growth trends, the system is projected to produce approximately 2,760 graduates annually by 2030. However, to achieve the strategic goal of 3,001 completers per year, the system must achieve an average annual growth rate of 3%. This ambitious target underscores the importance of enhancing educational pathways, improving student retention and completion rates, and ensuring that all students have access to the support they need to succeed.

The performance indicators selected for this strategic priority are designed to track and enhance various aspects of student success, from initial enrollment to program completion:

1. Completer Count: This primary indicator measures the total number of unique students who complete a credential each year. It directly reflects the attainment goal by quantifying the annual output of graduates.

2. Enrollment Count: As a leading indicator, enrollment count measures the number of degree-seeking students enrolled each year. A higher enrollment count increases the pool of potential graduates, setting the stage for future attainment.

3. Retention Rate: Retention rate measures the percentage of students who remain enrolled from one year to the next or who complete their programs. High retention rates are indicative strong academic program design, effective support systems, and student engagement, all of which are crucial for increasing completion rates.

4. Completion Rate (Full-Time): This indicator tracks the percentage of full-time students who complete a program within 150% of the normal time. It assesses the efficiency of educational delivery and the institution's ability to support students through to graduation in a timely manner.

5. Completion Rate (Part-Time): Similar to the full-time completion rate, this indicator measures the percentage of part-time students who complete a program within 200% of the normal time. It highlights the institution's capacity to accommodate and support part-time students.

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1.1. Completer Count

Definition:

The number of unique students who completed a credential (Associate of Applied Science, diploma, or certificate) between July 1 and June 30.

Alignment with Goal:

- Direct Measurement of Output: Completer Count directly measures the primary objective of producing program completers. By tracking this indicator, technical colleges can gauge progress toward the annual goal of 3,001 completers, making it a clear and direct link to the attainment goal.
- Outcome-Based Focus: This indicator emphasizes the end result of the educational process—credential completion—ensuring a focus on guiding students through to graduation.
- Accountability and Transparency: Regularly reporting completer counts fosters accountability and transparency, enabling stakeholders to track progress and identify areas needing improvement.

Examples of Actionability:

- Enhancing Academic Support Services: Implement tutoring programs, writing centers, and study groups to help students succeed academically.
- Improving Program Accessibility: Offer flexible scheduling, online courses, and accelerated program options to accommodate different student needs.
- Increasing Retention Efforts: Develop mentorship programs, first-year experience courses, and engagement activities to keep students connected to the institution.

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1.2. Enrollment Count

Definition:

The number of unique, degree-seeking students enrolled between July 1 and June 30.

Alignment with Goal:

- Foundation for Future Completions: Enrollment Count is a leading indicator that lays the foundation for future completions. Strong enrollment numbers create a larger pool of potential graduates who can contribute to achieving the 3,001 completer goal.

- Predictive of Pipeline Health: Enrollment provides insight into the pipeline of students progressing through academic programs, and this indicator supports effective planning and allocation of resources to support these students toward completion.

- Engagement and Commitment: Enrollment demonstrates the ability to attract and engage students, reflecting a commitment to expanding access to education and supporting long-term attainment goals.

Examples of Actionability:

- Implementing Recruitment Strategies: Develop targeted marketing campaigns, attend college fairs, and engage with high school counselors to attract prospective students.

- Expanding Outreach Efforts: Reach out to underrepresented communities, offer dual-enrollment programs for high school students, and create partnerships with industry partners and community organizations to engage adult learners.

- Offering Attractive Academic Programs: Regularly review and update academic programs to ensure they meet market demands and student interests, adding new or sunsetting existing programs where appropriate.

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1.3. Retention Rate

Definition:

The percentage of students from the initial cohort enrolled in the next fall semester or who have completed a credential.

Alignment with Goal:

- Sustained Student Engagement: High retention rates indicate that students remain engaged and committed to their studies, which is essential for achieving high completion rates. Retained students are more likely to continue progressing toward graduation, directly supporting the attainment goal.
- Indicator of Institutional Support: Retention rates reflect the effectiveness of institutional support services, including academic advising, student engagement initiatives, and intervention strategies. High retention rates suggest that these services are effectively helping students stay on track, contributing to the goal of 3,001 completers.
- Predictor of Completion: Retention is a strong predictor of eventual completion. A focus on retaining students ensures that more students remain in the educational pipeline, ultimately contributing to the attainment goal.

Examples of Actionability:

- Offering Robust Academic Advising: Provide regular advising sessions, create individualized academic plans, and use degree auditing tools to keep students on track.
- Providing Mental Health and Wellness Support: Offer counseling services, stress management workshops, and wellness programs to support students' mental and physical health.
- Creating Engaging Campus Environments: Develop student clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities that foster a sense of community and belonging.

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1.4. Completion Rate: Full-Time

Definition:

The percentage of full-time students from the initial cohort who completed a program within 150% of the published time for the credential.

Alignment with Goal:

- Efficiency in Education Delivery: The Full-Time Completion Rate measures how efficiently full-time students complete their programs within an extended but reasonable timeframe. Higher rates indicate that the institution is effectively facilitating student progress, directly contributing to the attainment goal.
- Benchmark for Program Effectiveness: This indicator serves as a benchmark for the effectiveness of academic programs. High completion rates suggest that programs are well-structured and provide the necessary support for students to graduate on time, aligning with the goal of 3,001 completers.
- Resource Allocation and Planning: By tracking full-time completion rates, technical colleges can allocate resources and plan interventions to support student success. This ensures that efforts are focused on areas that will most effectively contribute to achieving the attainment goal.

Examples of Actionability:

- Enhancing Curriculum Design: Streamline course sequences, ensure prerequisites are clearly defined, and eliminate unnecessary coursework that can delay graduation.
- Ensuring Timely Course Availability: Offer required courses regularly, reduce bottlenecks in high-demand classes, and provide alternative options such as online or hybrid courses.
- Providing Academic Support Services: Establish tutoring centers, writing labs, and study workshops tailored to challenging courses.

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1.5. Completion Rate: Part-Time

Definition:

The percentage of part-time students from the initial cohort who completed a program within 200% of the published time for the credential.

Alignment with Goal:

- Inclusivity of Diverse Student Populations: The Part-Time Completion Rate acknowledges the unique challenges faced by part-time students. Supporting part-time students ensures that all students, regardless of their enrollment status, have the opportunity to complete their programs, directly contributing to the attainment goal.

- Comprehensive Attainment Strategy: Including part-time students in the attainment strategy ensures a comprehensive approach to achieving the 3,001 completer goal. Part-time students represent a significant portion of the student body at some technical colleges, and their success is critical to overall attainment.

- Flexibility and Adaptability: High part-time completion rates reflect the institution's ability to offer flexible and adaptable programs that meet the needs of diverse learners. This adaptability is key to supporting student success and meeting attainment targets.

Examples of Actionability:

- Offering Flexible Scheduling: Provide evening, weekend, and online courses to accommodate students with work or family commitments.

- Creating Part-Time Student Support Services: Develop specific support programs for part-time students, including advising, counseling, and career services.

- Targeted Interventions for Part-Time Students: Identify part-time students at risk of dropping out and offer tailored interventions such as financial aid assistance, academic tutoring, and flexible payment plans.

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Strategic Priority 2: Affordability

Goal: Maintain a 5.0 or lower cost to earnings premium for every AAS program in the system by 2030.

The Affordability goal is designed to ensure that technical education in South Dakota remains accessible and provides a positive return on investment for students. Affordability in higher education is multifaceted, encompassing not just the cost of attendance but also the economic benefits that accrue to graduates. The cost-to-earnings premium is a crucial measure in this context, comparing the total cost of obtaining a credential to the additional earnings graduates can expect compared to high school diploma holders.

To maintain a cost-to-earnings premium of 5.0 or lower, the system must ensure that the cost of education is justified by the economic benefits it provides to graduates. This involves both controlling educational costs and enhancing graduates' earnings potential through high-quality, market-relevant programs. The performance indicators selected for this strategic priority are designed to track and enhance both aspects of affordability:

1. Cost-to-Earnings Premium (CTEP): This primary indicator measures the ratio of the total projected program cost of attendance to the earnings differential between program graduates and high school diploma holders in South Dakota. It directly reflects the affordability goal by quantifying the financial return on investment of an AAS program.

2. Actual Cost of Attendance: This secondary indicator measures the total actual cost of attendance amount paid by a graduate after subtracting the total amount of grants and scholarships received. Expressed as the median of all students in the completion cohort, it provides insight into the net cost to students.

3. Net Cost per Completion: This secondary indicator measures the difference between per-completion revenue and per-completion spending. It provides a comprehensive view of the economic efficiency of educational programs, highlighting the institution's ability to deliver cost-effective education.

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2.1. Cost-to-Earnings Premium (CTEP)

Definition:

The ratio of the total projected program cost of attendance to the earnings differential between program graduates and high school diploma holders in South Dakota.

Formula:

= (Total Projected Cost of Attendance) / ((Post-Enrollment Earnings at Year 5 in SD) −
(Typical High School Graduate Salary in SD))

Alignment with Goal:

- Direct Measurement of Affordability: CTEP directly quantifies the financial return on investment of an AAS program by comparing the cost of education to the additional earnings that graduates achieve compared to high school diploma holders. This ensures that programs are providing economic value to graduates, which is crucial for maintaining a cost-to-earnings premium of 5.0 or lower.

- Focus on Graduate Outcomes: By emphasizing earnings at Year 5 post-graduation, this indicator ensures that the long-term financial benefits of the program are considered, aligning educational investments with tangible economic outcomes for graduates. This directly supports the goal by highlighting the balance between costs incurred and financial benefits received.

- Benchmarking and Comparability: CTEP allows technical colleges to benchmark their programs against institutional and system averages, helping to identify areas for improvement. This supports the goal by ensuring programs remain affordable relative to earnings outcomes.

Examples of Actionability:

- Program Cost Management: Controlling and managing program costs to ensures academic programs remain within the target CTEP. This might involve reviewing tuition and fees, optimizing operational efficiencies, and providing targeted financial aid.

- Career Services and Placement: Enhancing career services and job placement efforts to ensure graduates secure well-paying jobs that reflect the value of their education.

- Regular Earnings Analysis: Continuously analyze graduate earnings data to adjust program offerings and improve alignment with high-demand, high-wage career fields.

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2.2. Actual Cost of Attendance

Definition:

The total actual cost of attendance amount paid by a graduate after subtracting the total actual amount of grants and scholarships a student received. Expressed as the median of all students in the completion cohort.

Formula:

= MEDIAN ((Total Cost of Attendance) − ((Institutional Grants and Scholarships) + (Federal, State, Tribal, or Private Grants)))

Alignment with Goal:

- Clear Measure of Student Expense: This indicator provides a clear measure of what students actually pay out-of-pocket after receiving financial aid. By focusing on the median cost, it ensures that the measure is representative of the typical student experience, directly aligning with the goal of maintaining affordability in terms of real costs to students.

- Highlighting Financial Aid Impact: This metric emphasizes the role of financial aid in reducing costs, highlighting the importance of institutional and external grants in making education more accessible and affordable. This directly supports the goal by showing how financial aid can help maintain a favorable cost-to-earnings premium.

- Student Financial Planning: By understanding the actual cost of attendance, technical colleges can assist students in planning and managing their educational finances, reducing the likelihood of financial stress and dropout. This ensures that the actual costs remain manageable, supporting the overall affordability goal.

Examples of Actionability:

- Financial Aid Optimization: Institutions can increase the availability and effectiveness of grants and scholarships to reduce the net cost of attendance for students.

- Cost-Effective Program Delivery: Implement cost-effective delivery methods such as online courses, hybrid programs, and efficient use of resources to keep overall program costs low.

- Student Financial Education: Provide financial literacy programs to help students understand and manage their educational expenses, scholarships, and grants effectively.

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2.3. Net Cost per Completion

Definition:

The difference between per-completion revenue and per-completion spending.

Formula:

= (Total Institutional Revenue / Total Number of Completions) − (Total Institutional Spending / Total Number of Completions))

Alignment with Goal:

- Economic Efficiency Indicator: This measure highlights the economic efficiency of educational programs by comparing the revenue generated per completion against the spending per completion. It aligns with the affordability goal by ensuring that technical colleges are economically sustainable while providing cost-effective education.

- Focus on Institutional Health: By maintaining a positive net cost per completion, technical colleges can ensure their financial health and sustainability, which is critical for continuing to provide affordable education. This supports the goal by ensuring that resources are used efficiently, maintaining low costs for students.

- Resource Allocation and Effectiveness: This indicator helps technical colleges assess the effectiveness of their resource allocation, ensuring that investments in education are yielding desirable economic outcomes and supporting affordable education. This directly supports the affordability goal by maintaining or lowering the cost-to-earnings premium through efficient use of resources.

Examples of Actionability:

- Revenue Enhancement: Identify and implement strategies to increase revenue, such as through fundraising, partnerships, and alternative revenue streams.

- Cost Control Measures: Implement cost control measures to reduce unnecessary spending without compromising the quality of education. This could involve process optimization, energy savings, and better resource allocation.

- Completion Rate Improvement: Increase the number of completions through retention initiatives and support programs, thereby improving the net cost per completion by spreading fixed costs over a larger number of students.

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Strategic Priority 3: Alignment

Goal: Increase the year five in-state placement rate to 75% by 2030.

The Alignment goal emphasizes preparing learners and graduates for meaningful employment and continued education opportunities within South Dakota. Historically, the state's technical college system has seen fluctuating in-state placement rates. For example, 70% of graduates from 2001 to 2005, 72% from 2006 to 2010, and 71% from 2011 to 2015 remained employed in South Dakota five years after graduation. This goal seeks to build on past successes and enhance the long-term retention of graduates within the state.

Achieving a 75% in-state placement rate by 2030 requires strategic efforts to align educational programs with the state's labor market needs and ensure that graduates are well-prepared for employment and continued education opportunities in South Dakota. The performance indicators selected for this strategic priority are designed to track and improve the connection between education and employment outcomes:

1. Placement in SD: Year 5 Rate: This primary indicator measures the percentage of graduates in the completion cohort who are employed in South Dakota or continuing education at a higher education institution in South Dakota five years following graduation. It directly reflects the alignment goal by tracking long-term retention within the state.

2. Placement in SD: Year 1 Rate: This secondary indicator measures the percentage of graduates in the completion cohort who are employed in South Dakota or continuing education at a higher education institution in South Dakota one year following graduation. It provides an early measure of graduate success and initial retention within the state.

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3.1. Placement in SD: Year 5 Rate

Definition:

The percentage of graduates in the completion cohort who are employed in South Dakota or continuing education at a higher education institution in South Dakota five years following graduation.

Alignment with Goal:

- Long-Term In-State Engagement: This indicator directly measures the long-term success of graduates in finding employment or continuing their education within South Dakota. By tracking this indicator, our technical colleges can ensure that they are contributing to the local economy and workforce, aligning with the strategic goal of increasing in-state placement rates.
- Indicator of Program Effectiveness: High placement rates suggest that the programs offered are effectively preparing students for the job market and further education opportunities within the state. This alignment ensures that institutions are meeting the short- and long-term needs of both students and local employers.
- Retention of Talent in State: By focusing on placement within South Dakota, this indicator helps retain talent in the state, supporting regional development and reducing brain drain. This is critical for achieving the 75% in-state placement goal by 2030.

Examples of Actionability:

- Career Services Enhancement: Improve career services to assist graduates in finding in-state employment. This includes job fairs, resume workshops, and networking events with local employers.
- Partnerships with Local Employers: Develop strong partnerships with local businesses and industries to create internship and job placement opportunities for graduates.
- Alumni Tracking and Support: Implement systems to track alumni outcomes and provide ongoing support to ensure they remain in the state.

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3.2. Placement in SD: Year 1 Rate

Definition:

The percentage of graduates in the completion cohort who are employed in South Dakota or continuing education at a higher education institution in South Dakota one year following graduation.

Alignment with Goal:

- Early Career Success: This indicator provides an early measure of graduates' success in finding employment or continuing education within the state shortly after graduation. Early placement is a strong predictor of long-term retention in the state, aligning with the goal of achieving a 75% placement rate by Year 5.
- Immediate Impact on Local Economy: By ensuring that graduates are quickly integrated into the state's workforce or educational system, this indicator supports the immediate economic impact of higher education on the local community.
- Program Responsiveness: High Year 1 placement rates indicate that programs are responsive to current job market demands and are effectively equipping students with skills that are immediately relevant to local employers.

Examples of Actionability:

- First-Year Support Programs: Develop programs that support graduates in their first-year post-graduation, including mentorship, job search assistance, and professional development workshops.
- Continuous Employer Engagement: Maintain regular communication with employers to understand their hiring needs and adjust academic programs accordingly to ensure graduates have the skills required by local industries.
- Graduation-to-Employment Pipelines: Establish pipelines that connect graduates directly with job opportunities, such as cooperative education programs, apprenticeships, and industry-specific training.

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