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Dear South Dakota Educator,

Recently, the South Dakota Board of Education Standards approved the updated health standards for schools. The standards are written in such a way as to emphasize the well-being of students at all grade levels and deliberately written to be flexible so districts may emphasize the issues they feel most relevant for their students and community.

Nevertheless, we would like to bring to your attention the rise of what all the data tells us is a threat to our children, human trafficking. *Call to Freedom*, a South Dakota non-profit organization devoted to prevention and treatment of human trafficking reported recently that South Dakota is 9th, out of the 50 states, in human trafficking. If that doesn't already alarm you, the South Dakota Department of Health reported in 2020 that 76% of trafficking cases in our state involve sex trafficking. This is consistent with the fact that 43% of rape victims in South Dakota are under the age of 18. Worse yet, the problem may be growing. This is a statewide problem which utilizes the Internet and social media as its primary "tools" to reach our children.

Thus, we are encouraging all districts to consider staff training in this mandatory reporting area and student awareness of its danger.

As a result, the South Dakota Department of Education wants you to be aware of some education resources on this topic. Specifically,

- The South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) offers a variety of trainings related to human trafficking from its Human Trafficking Coordinator, Mary Beth Holzwarth (mary.holzwarth@state.sd.us or 605.295.3640) The trainings are suitable for educators and all who work with children to assist with identifying susceptible children.
- The [Video Training for Mandatory Reporters](#) provided by the South Dakota Division of Child Protection Services includes human trafficking and reinforces the scope of reporting child abuse or neglect for mandatory reporters.
- The SD DOE will be platforming the DCI human trafficking trainings geared specifically for educators with continuing education offered. Additional information on this training will be forthcoming.

Thank you for all you do for the children of South Dakota.

Steve Perkins, President
Board of Education Standards

Joseph Graves, Secretary
Department of Education

Andrea Effling, School Counseling & Student Support Administrator
Department of Education