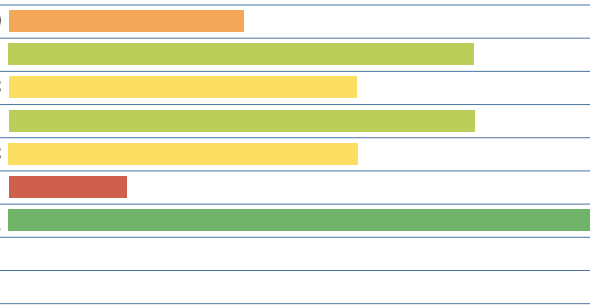
South Dakota

School Management	D
Finance	B
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	C
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	B
Data	C
Pipeline to Postsecondary	F
Technology	A
State Reform Environment	?
Gold Stars	



School Management. South Dakota does a below-average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. The state has mediocre academic standards, and 91% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. In addition, the state does not sanction low-performing schools or have a charter school law.

Finance. Overall, South Dakota earns an above-average grade in this category. The state gets an excellent mark for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism, and it receives an average score for the online accessibility of its financial data. However, South Dakota does not have a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. South Dakota receives an average mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Three percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, compared with the national average of 13%. But South Dakota requires incoming teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests. The state's interstate portability requirements also earn a high mark.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. South Dakota receives a solid score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Fifty-two percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 9 percentage points below the national average of 61%. However, 73% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. South Dakota gets a middling mark for its state data system. While the state does not publicly report college remediation data, it does have the ability to match individual students' test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. South Dakota receives a dismal mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Thirty-eight percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 27 percentage points below the national average of 65%. In addition, only 32% of South Dakota schools report offering work-based internships.

Technology. South Dakota receives a high grade in this category. The state has established a virtual school and offers a computer-based assessment. Still, the state needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the state supports common academic standards.