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South Dakota awarded $6.9 million Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant

PIERRE, S.D. – The U.S. Department of Education has awarded the South Dakota Department of Education a Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant in the amount of $6,883,481 to support the state's efforts to better serve students during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. South Dakota is one of only 11 states to be awarded one of these grants. Thirty-nine states applied.

"During school closures in the spring, we saw that those schools providing competency-based instruction, or what's often called 'customized' or 'personalized' learning, were better able to keep more of their students engaged in distance learning," said Secretary of Education Ben Jones. "This three-year grant will help us build on those successes and further develop that kind of learning model across South Dakota."

This grant project aims to provide a comprehensive road map to successful learning so that students can learn at school, at home, or with blended learning approaches. It will also seek to empower parents and families in navigating these options. Grant funds will be used to help a group of 30 schools pursue new course options in personalized, competency-based education and provide coursework and professional development for more than 1,600 South Dakota teachers, principals, and pre-service teachers.

Partners include South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center, and Technology and Innovation in Education.

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