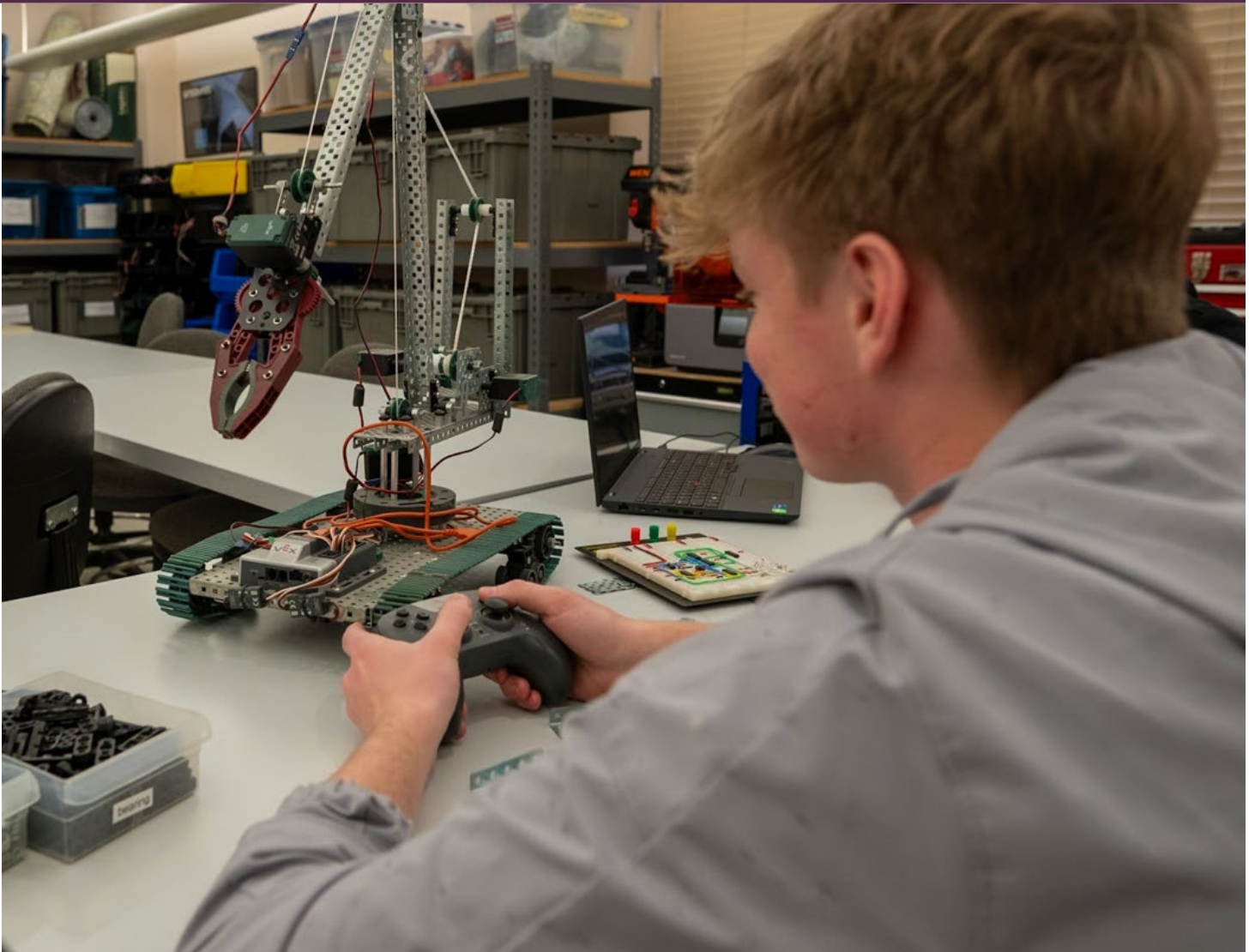




south dakota
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Learning. Leadership. Service.



WORKFORCE EDUCATION FUND

Annual Report to the Government Operations and Audit Committee

Fiscal Year 2026



WORKFORCE EDUCATION FUND

Background:

Established in 2013 via SB 235, the Workforce Education Fund (WEF) receives 30% of the Building South Dakota Fund annually. The WEF currently is solely used to support secondary CTE programs through Workforce Education Grants.

WORKFORCE EDUCATION GRANTS – OVERVIEW

Purpose:

Support transformative improvements in CTE programs for middle and high school students by funding projects that align with high-skill, high-demand, high-wage careers in South Dakota.

Eligible Applicants:

- Local Education Agencies (LEAs)
- Private, nonprofit entities

Projects must show sustainability, alignment to workforce needs, and completion capacity.

Funding Details:

- Grants began in FY2016.
- Up to \$250,000 may be awarded to nonprofit CTE providers.
- A 1:1 match is required; projects must be completed in 18 months



PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Projects Must:

1. Build, reform or enhance an approved secondary CTE program;
2. Align to high-skill, high-demand, and high-wage careers and postsecondary education programs in South Dakota; and
3. Demonstrate the ability to complete the project.

Project Categories Include:

1. Evaluation for alignment to postsecondary education and workforce demands;
2. Development of career pathways or programs of study;
3. Development of career guidance or work-based learning programs;
4. Educator training;
5. Facilities;
6. Equipment; or
7. Instructional materials.

Priority Considerations:

In accordance with ARSD 24:10:47, grants favor projects that:

- A project evaluating local CTE systems for the purposes of redesigning approved secondary CTE programs;
- An innovative project demonstrating alignment to postsecondary education and South Dakota workforce needs and including work-based learning, dual or concurrent credit courses and any applicable CTSO;
- A project which includes collaboration between multiple secondary schools;
- A project demonstrating partnerships with postsecondary education and business or industry;
- A project including industry-grade practices, equipment, and student certifications;
- A project integrating academic content, work-readiness skills, and entrepreneurship education;
- A project increasing access to and support for approved secondary CTE programs in rural areas;
- A project including plans for sustainability;
- A project which supports the retention of highly effective teachers, career counselors, and administrators for approved secondary CTE programs.

Grants Awarded:

Grants totaling \$8,648,620.31 have been awarded from FY2016 through the end of FY2026. A complete history of school districts and other entities awarded Workforce Education Grants can be found at the end of this report.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Burke School District

The Burke School District is expanding its Career and Technical Education (CTE) program with the construction of a new shop and dedicated CTE classroom. This investment will significantly increase student participation and broaden course offerings within Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR).

The new facility will give instructors the ability to deliver high quality instruction in a safer, more functional environment. A key focus of the expansion is providing students with the opportunity to earn Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs) on site. Previously, the district had to rely solely on industry partners for training on certain equipment due to limited space. With this improvement, students will gain the skills and credentials needed to support their post-high-school plans, where they pursue the workforce or future education.

CTE prepares students for in-demand careers with real-world skills that fuel workforce and economic growth.

Harrisburg School District

The Harrisburg School District project aims to strengthen the Education & Training and Human Services career clusters by creating a childcare and early childhood learning center that will function as a CTE working lab. This center will help address the community's growing need for early childhood educators and childcare professionals.

Developed through the collaborative partnership between the district and a regional early childhood learning provider, the center will serve as both a valuable resource for families and a dynamic, real-world training environment. Students will be able to earn practicum hours, participate in internships, and explore employment opportunities under the guidance of industry experts.

By integrating early childhood education directly into CTE, the program will cultivate a strong pipeline of future educators and childcare workers while supporting local families, ultimately strengthening the workforce and the broader community. This project represents a significant step forward for the Harrisburg School District's CTE Department, establishing a sustainable model of work-based learning that bridges secondary education, post-secondary pathways, and workforce needs.

The innovative approach combines hands-on experience with aligned academic training and meaningful community impact in a high-demand field. By establishing an early childhood learning and childcare center within the district, students will receive the preparation and training needed to meet current and future workforce demands, while families benefit from expanded access to childcare, supporting both the local economy and South Dakota's long-term capacity to meet this critical need.

OPEN GRANTS

As of June 17, 2026, there are six Workforce Education Grants open with a balance of \$393,040.61 remaining on the grants. Details of the open grants are in the table below:

School District/Entity	Grant Year	Total Awarded	Balance to Date	Description
Frederick Area School District	2026	55,142.00	55,142.00	Purchase equipment to equip newly expanded Agriculture program.
Hill City School District	2026	18,229.00	18,229.00	Modernize Manufacturing program with the purchase of industry grade equipment.
Rapid City Area Schools	2026	223,830.00	223,830.00	Modernization to the Culinary Arts lab to meet industry standards and support expanded course offerings.
Spearfish School District	2026	43,175.00	43,175.00	Purchase industry grade equipment to enhance Manufacturing program.
Burke School District	2025	225,000.00	38,602.42	Purchase industry grade equipment and construct a new CTE addition to enhance the AFNR cluster.
Harrisburg School District	2025	218,284.00	14,062.19	Enrich the Education & Training and Human Services clusters by establishing a childcare and early learning center serving as a CTE working lab.
TOTAL		\$783,660.00	\$393,040.61	

*Grant Agreements can be found at www.open.sd.gov. For more information, visit <https://doe.sd.gov/cte/WEG.aspx>