

South Dakota Highlights 2022-2023

South Dakota's Engagement

- 16-Year Partnership.** South Dakota enacted authorizing legislation in 2008 to join the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), which was created in 1991.
- About MHEC.** MHEC brings together higher education leaders and policymakers from South Dakota and 11 other Midwestern states to develop and support best practices, collaborative efforts, and cost-saving opportunities. Through these efforts, it works to ensure strong, equitable postsecondary educational opportunities and outcomes for all.
- South Dakota Leadership.** Commissioners, commissioner alternates, and members of advisory program committees provide direction for MHEC programs and services.

How the Compact Benefits South Dakota

- \$354,800 in Savings.** In 2023, South Dakota colleges, universities, school districts, and state and local governments realized more than \$354,800 in cost savings through MHEC's contracts and programs, an increase over last year. Since 2008, South Dakota has saved over \$2.42M.
- Return on South Dakota's Investment.** The state of South Dakota received a three-fold return on its annual compact membership commitment of \$115,000.
 - » **Technology Contracts.** South Dakota institutions saved more than \$354,000 by purchasing \$3.94M in technology hardware, software, and services through MHEC-negotiated contracts.
- Credentials and Learner Records.** South Dakota has participated in MHEC's initiative to map the state's credential data to a national registry. The registry makes information on credentials leading to careers more transparent, accessible, and consistent. The South Dakota Board of Technical Education (SDBTE) has mapped all credential information in its jurisdiction to the registry, and has established a process for other institutions to upload data more easily.
- Open Educational Resources.** South Dakota used Hewlett grant funding provided through MHEC to offer a three-hour preconference workshop at the South Dakota Library Association conference in September 2023. Remaining funds will sponsor two individuals to attend Creative Commons training in spring 2024.
- South Dakota Research.** MHEC conducted research in response to a commissioner request to clearly define affordable credential and measures of college affordability, affordability benchmarks, and state approaches to tracking college affordability.

Commissioners



Michael Cartney
President Emeritus
Lake Area Technical
Institute



Steve Kolbeck
State Senator; Vice
Chair, Senate Education
Cmte, SD Legislature



Nathan D. Lukkes
Executive Director & CEO
SD Board of Regents



Larry Tidemann
Governor's Designee



Tyler Tordsen
State Representative;
Member, House
Education Cmte, SD
Legislature



Erin Healy
State Representative;
Assistant Minority Leader
SD Legislature
(Alternate)



Reynold Nesiba
State Senator;
Minority Leader
SD Legislature
(Alternate)

Legislative photos reprinted with permission
© Johnny Sundby Photography, Inc./SD Legislative
Research Council.

***Distance Education:** South Dakota participates in the Western-State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement. Without SARA, institutions must undertake a costly state-by-state, institution-by-institution approach.

Midwestern Higher Education Compact Priorities

FOSTERING INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY, & EFFECTIVENESS

The Compact serves as an incubator, providing a platform to discuss opportunities and pilot potential solutions.

- 1. Innovative Best Practices.** MHEC shares effective solutions to challenges identified by policymakers and higher education leaders. Discussion topics have included creating stronger and stable finance systems that help colleges to better meet pressing state interests and needs, rebounding from the pandemic, addressing federal relief, and campus mental health.
- 2. Open Educational Resources.** MHEC coordinates efforts to expand access to openly licensed textbooks and learning materials that are accessible via the Internet at little or no cost to students.
- 3. Credential Transparency.** MHEC brings states together to discuss and recommend initiatives related to the complex and evolving landscape of credentials and learner records.
- 4. Timely Research & Policy.** Member states direct and receive high-priority access to research on pressing topics such as college readiness, affordability and finance, and student success.
- 5. Interactive Dashboard.** MHEC's online tool provides state-by-state data on key performance indicators including preparation, participation, affordability, completion, finance, and workforce.

DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS TO REGIONAL PROBLEMS

MHEC takes on projects and issues that are too large or expensive for one state to do alone, working jointly to make the Midwest region stronger and more competitive.

- 1. Convenings.** MHEC convenes diverse leaders to discuss and identify critical issues in higher education, bringing together state leaders, policymakers and their staff, and campus experts such as CIOs, risk managers, librarians, health leaders, and compliance officers.
- 2. State Visits.** MHEC leaders visit each state annually during its legislative session to learn more about and address key issues affecting the state's economy and higher education.
- 3. Dual and Concurrent Enrollment.** MHEC helps Midwestern states navigate new accreditation standards for concurrent enrollment set by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for qualifying high school teachers to teach concurrent enrollment courses. Through consistent communication with HLC and work with a regional advisory group, MHEC brings consistency to instructor qualification practices across the Midwest.
- 4. Tuition Reciprocity.** MHEC provides a Midwest tuition reciprocity program whereby public institutions agree to charge students in participating states no more than 150 percent of their in-state resident tuition and private institutions offer a 10 percent reduction in their tuition rates. This program saves families thousands of dollars and keeps students in the Midwest.
- 5. Distance Education.** MHEC manages a regional approach to authorizing Midwestern states and institutions to regulate, approve, and oversee the delivery of interstate online education. This approach, part of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), provides a streamlined process that results in cost savings for postsecondary institutions and improved access to online education for students.

DRIVING COST SAVINGS & BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

MHEC programs and contracts result in tremendous cost savings for institutions, states, and students. The Compact solves key business problems and protects investment in higher education by collaborating and reducing risk.

- 1. Competitive Sourcing.** MHEC leads competitive sourcing for essential goods and services such as insurance and technology. In doing so, MHEC saves time and money for higher education institutions. As a lead public agency, MHEC negotiates flexible, cooperative contracts, and streamlines procurement processes. The negotiated contracts may be tailored to the purchaser's needs.
- 2. Technology Contracts.** MHEC leverages the combined hardware, software, and services volume of campuses and local governments in member states to reach favorable agreements with technology vendors. In FY23, member states saved an estimated \$31.59M with technology purchases of more than \$351.03M.
- 3. Student Health Solutions.** MHEC offers institutions options for fully insured, school-sponsored health plans. MHEC's responsive approach resulted in the recent addition of virtual mental health services for students.