

# U.S. News & World Report Ranks USD Among Nation's Best

VERMILLION, S.D. – U.S. News & World Report again ranked the University of South Dakota among the top national universities in its 2016 guidebook released Wednesday, the 25th consecutive year USD made the list.

USD tied for 180th place, as did the University of North Dakota and University of New Mexico.

The 2016 edition the U.S. News guidebook includes data on nearly 1,800 colleges and universities, including statistics on borrowing, costs and graduation rates. The rankings weigh the strength of academic programs on up to 16 measures of academic excellence, including average freshman retention rates, SAT/ACT scores, acceptance rates,

average alumni giving rates and high school counselor assessments.

Schools like USD in the National Universities category offer a full range of undergraduate majors as well as master's and doctoral programs. The colleges also are committed to producing groundbreaking research.

"The U.S. News list is among the most respected sources of information for prospective students, so to be ranked among the best in the country for 25 years in a row is a testament to the quality, affordable education USD offers," said James W. Abbott, USD president.

A full list of the rankings is available on newsstands and at [www.usnews.com/colleges](http://www.usnews.com/colleges).

# Happy Happening At Good Earth State Park

BY CORTNEY REEDY

Fall into fun at Good Earth State Park at Blood Run! The air is crisp and the leaves are changing. Join us for programs that showcase the joys of fall! Earth, wind, fire, and water are the forces that have sculpted Good Earth State Park. Come enjoy the various events throughout the day including a riddle hike, scavenger hunt, and crafts on Saturday, September 19th from 11 am to 3 pm! Then at 7:30 pm come join the Tri-State Astronomical Society for the International Observe the Moon Night! Come view our

closest celestial beauty! If you have any questions about the park or the programs for this coming weekend, do not hesitate to give us a call at (605) 987-2263 or email [newtonhills@state.sd.us](mailto:newtonhills@state.sd.us). More info including an event schedule may also be found online at [www.gfp.sd.gov](http://www.gfp.sd.gov). If you would like to receive weekly email updates on programming at the park, like us on Facebook, or send an email to [newtonhills@state.sd.us](mailto:newtonhills@state.sd.us). The staff at Newton Hills and Good Earth looks forward to seeing you at the park this summer!

# Education Panel Inches Ahead Toward Teacher Salary Proposal

BY BOB MERCER  
STATE CAPITOL BUREAU

PIERRE – Public school teachers in South Dakota might see their salaries increase \$8,000 to \$10,000 apiece over the course of three to five years under goals discussed Wednesday by the governor's Blue Ribbon task force on teachers and students.

But the panel of educators, legislators and business people didn't specifically identify the tax package to generate \$80 million to \$100 million that would be necessary. The members hope to move closer to formal recommendations at the next meeting Oct. 1.

South Dakota ranked last nationally for average pay to public school teachers at just over \$40,000 during the past school year. But even a \$10,000 increase wouldn't be likely to move South Dakota up the ladder if the money was spread across three years or more.

The state sales and use tax currently is 4 percent on most purchases. Each 1 percent generates about \$220 million, according to the state Bureau of Finance and Management.

The task force also has been collecting information about whether South Dakota is in a teacher shortage. Statistics presented Wednesday showed South Dakota schools covered 99 percent of their needs in the past year but weren't able to offer 240 classes.

Abby Javurek-Humig, director for assessment and accountability in the state Department of Education, delivered three key findings:

One: "Over the course of the next five years, it is estimated that public schools in South Dakota will need an additional 3,059 teachers in order to meet the number of teachers needed to maintain a 14:1 student-teacher ratio.

"This number includes a total of 1,024 teachers lost due to retirement; 601 teachers due to estimated student growth; and 1,434 teachers leaving the field for reasons other than retirement."

Two: "(O)t can be estimated that these sources combined will provide a potential teacher pool of 3,459.

"This includes an estimated 1,721 teachers entering the profession through university teacher preparation programs; 1,403 educators prepared out-of-state who come to South Dakota to teach; and 335 teachers who enter the profession through either the Alternative Certification or Teach for America programs."

And three: "The estimated supply of teachers indicates the potential teacher pool will be 400 more than the minimal five-year need."

Erik Person, the Burke school district's superintendent, said the 400 breaks down to

80 per year and that might be inadequate. Not every teacher wants to teach in Sioux Falls and not every teacher wants to teach in Burke, he said.

Jason Dilges, state commissioner of finance and management for the governor, said he wants to know what happened for the immediate past five years. Dilges said the law of supply and demands almost always trumps everything else.

Last month an academic researcher told the task force that teacher shortages in math, science and English have been common throughout the nation since the 1950s because there is high turnover in the profession.

Rep. G. Mark Mickelson, R-Sioux Falls, reminded members of that point Wednesday. "We're not unique. What we pay is unique," he said.

School administrators are using what's known as a plan of intent to cover holes in their staffing. Plans of intent allow teachers to work two years as instructors of courses outside their professional training.

Javurek-Humig said most teachers in South Dakota hold full certifications for everything they are teaching but plans of intent can put teachers "outside their comfort zones." Use of plans of intent is growing, she said.

Plans of intent increased from 548 in 2011 to 643 in 2014 and are expected to reach 758 this school year, she said. The number of teachers on the plans rose during the same period from 315 in 2011 and 300 in 2012 to 329 in 2013 and 373 in 2014.

Armed with data, where the task force might head in its deliberations at the next meeting Oct. 1 isn't clear. Financial information will be brought back, such as estimates of costs and possible sources of tax revenue.

Some members want changes in the state funding formula. Some want efficiency requirements. Some want school boards to face new limits on the amounts of non-obligated cash that they hold. Some want compensation tied to mentoring. Some want property-tax relief. Some want capital-outlay tax levies on property changed.

Don't settle for average, said Aberdeen superintendent Becky Guffin. "We should strive to be extraordinary," she said.

The panel plans a final meeting Oct. 29 before delivering its report to Gov. Dennis Daugaard and the Legislature.

From that document, the governor and lawmakers will decide how to proceed in the 2016 legislative session that opens Jan. 12 and runs through March 29. Two-thirds majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate would be needed for tax increases.

"I think it's important we admit teachers are underpaid," said Sioux Falls superintendent Brian Maher.

# Something To Sit On

BY DARIS HOWARD

It was a big event in the small Wyoming town. They were building a new church building, and this was to be the ground breaking ceremony. It would serve the needs of the people for multiple counties and would therefore be historical. It would also be a magnificent structure, set high on a hill where all could see it, and the highest church leaders were going to be there to officiate.

There would be lots of dignitaries there as well. The mayors of multiple towns were invited, along with the councilmen. Sheriffs, county commissioners, and anyone else of any influence planned to attend. Even the governor of the state might be there, along with many state legislators. Every person, from child to adult, that wanted to attend, was invited. A person was welcome no matter their faith, or even if they had no faith at all.

Because it was expected to draw thousands of people and be such a big event, committees were formed to get the word out and to try to accommodate the expected crowd. Port-a-potties were brought in and set up in the open field near where the building was to be built and the ceremony was to take place. Water coolers were borrowed from anyone who had one and was willing to loan it. These were filled and set on tables with stacks of paper cups for those who might need water on that hot summer day.

Every chair available was borrowed from schools, churches, and businesses. But as the committee added up the number of chairs that had been promised, they knew they were going to be short, far short, of the number needed for the expected crowd. They decided they would just have to rely on people to bring their own.

It was then turned over to those on the publicity committee to get the word out. They wrote articles for every newspaper, did interviews on every radio station, and even made sure every news channel carried announcements about the event. And with each article, interview, or news announcement, they made sure to mention that the meeting might be long and seating would be limited. "Bring anything and everything you have to sit on," they said. "And if you have extra, please bring extra."

The day before the big event occurred, the committee enlisted the young people of the valley to round up all of the promised chairs. These were lined up in the field on the hill in nice, uniform rows. When the last of the chairs was set up, the committee counted them and found they had even fewer than they had hoped for. There was only enough for about half of the expected crowd. There was nothing they could do about it. They would just have to hope that the word had gotten out and that people would bring something to sit on.

As the crowd started arriving, the chairs that were already set up filled quickly with those who wanted to have a front row seat. But as time went on, more and more people brought chairs to set up on the perimeter. However, there was something else the committee hadn't foreseen. The farther away people set up chairs, the less they were able to see of the proceedings.

And then something happened that the committee hadn't expected. What people brought to sit on were horses. People rode them into town, and trailers arrived filled with them. And it wasn't just a few. They came by the ones and twos, and then by the dozens. By the time the meeting was to proceed, the whole gathering was encircled by scores of people sitting on horses, giving a great view over the top of the crowd to each mounted person.

As the meeting time neared, the committee chairman apologized to the head church leader. "We really didn't expect to have people bring horses."

The church leader just laughed. "Your announcement did say to bring anything a person had to sit on. What's better than a horse?"

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**PARCEL 1: Legal:** Iverson Tract 3, SE1/4 NE1/4 SW1/ NE1/4 in Sec 15-92-53, Clay County, SD--South side of road--39.27 taxable acres. Taxes are \$1,245.50. Soil types include Hg and Ho with productivity ratings of 76% and 88%.

**PARCEL 2: Legal:** Iverson Tract 4, NW1/4 NW1/4 in Sec 14-92-53, Clay County, SD. 38.02 taxable acres. Taxes are \$1,148.30. Soil types include Ow and Ho with productivity ratings of 81% to 88%.

The Clay County FSA Office shows both parcels 100% tillable with a CCC corn yield of 139bu and bean yield of 35 bu. Both parcels of land are excellent! A great opportunity for investors and farmers to purchase a smaller tract of quality land. Call for a free, property information packet including maps.

**TERMS:** Each parcel will be sold separate and will not be tied together. 10% nonrefundable down payment due day of auction with balance due on closing of November 6, 2015. Possession on closing or after the crops have been harvested. Both parcels will be sold subject to the 2016 lease. Each parcel receives \$6,825 cash rent with first half due on March 10, 2016 and 2nd half due on November 1, 2016. Title insurance and closing costs will be split 50/50 between buyer and seller. Clay County Abstract & Title Co is the closing agent. Seller will pay taxes through 12-31-15. Auctioneers are acting as agents for the seller.

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