

PRESS RELEASE



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PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORTS RELEASED

PIERRE –The Executive Board of the Legislative Research Council (LRC) approved Program Evaluation Reports during its November 18, 2019 meeting.

The Dual Credit program within the Department of Education and the Community Vitality program within the Board of Regents were the topics selected by the Executive Board for review.

The program evaluations were conducted by the LRC's Division of Fiscal and Program Analysis. This marks the second year that LRC staff have completed Program Evaluation Reports. The process began in late April when the Executive Board selected the program evaluation topics. LRC staff performed in-depth examination and analysis of the programs throughout the summer and fall. The evaluation included interviews with program staff, review of program policies and procedures, analysis of available fiscal and program data, and research on relative laws, policies, and practices related to the programs. Recommendations and findings for each program were made based on information gathered and analysis performed in the evaluation process.

The following recommendations were made for the Dual Credit program:

- The Board of Regents and the Board of Technical Education should set metrics and goals for matriculation, retention, and graduation rates for dual credit students;
- The Board of Regents and the Board of Technical Education should provide an annual dual credit program report to the South Dakota Legislature; and
- The Board of Technical Education should work with the four technical institutes to set robust policies, procedures, and guidelines related to the dual credit program.

The report on the Dual Credit program also included a list of nine funding and policy considerations based on information gathered from other states in the immediate region.

The following recommendations were made for the Community Vitality Program:

- Develop a business plan for ongoing and future core services;
- Establish a framework for market gap analysis to be performed on ongoing and future services;
- Continue to improve communication with other stakeholders providing community development activities to better coordinate efforts and streamline services provided to communities;
- Establish a policy or criteria for determining when to waive the costs for provided services; and
- Establish a periodic review process of programs and services offered.

The report on the Community Vitality program also included a finding that outcomes are not being measured as identified in the business plan.

Representative Steven Haugaard, Chair, said the information provided in the reports helps to educate lawmakers on the specifics of the programs.

"LRC staff has obviously put in a lot of time compiling this information and that effort, along with having agency representatives present to answer questions, is a benefit to us as legislators," said Haugaard.

Vice Chair Senator Brock Greenfield noted the nearly 100 percent response rate from the schools, and he thanked those who complied with the Board's request for information. He also stressed the need for continued evaluations.

"All of this has been very illuminating, and I'm appreciative of that fact. Going forward, we have to continue to find out as much information as we can and look at it with a critical eye," Greenfield said.

Division staff presented the proposed reports to the Executive Board during the committee's November 18, 2019 meeting. Representatives from the Department of Education, Board of Technical Education, and Board of Regents, including the Cooperative Extension Service, were available to answer questions and provide comments. The reports were unanimously approved by all members present at the meeting.

The approved Program Evaluation Reports (which can be viewed on the LRC [website](#)) include background information on the programs, evaluation of the program based on the scope approved by the Executive Board, and findings and recommendations.