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## Most of '01 class lacking college degrees

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Most 2001 graduates of Sioux Falls public high schools have not graduated from college, a new report shows. It's a statistic that concerns school board members.

The report shows that 39.3 percent of students from the class of 2001 have not finished a two- or four-year school, Sharon Schueler, coordinator of assessment and evaluation, told the school board Monday.

The news prompted board member Debbie Hoffman to question how well the district is serving students if so few are finishing college after six years.

"We spend so much time talking about AP classes and all the things we're doing to prepare these kids for college. What is the disconnect there?" she said. "We're doing all this preparation, but the actual outcome is something we don't necessarily have control over."

Schueler was quoting statistics from the 2007 National Student Clearinghouse report for Sioux Falls high school graduates from 2001 to 2007. The same report showed that 65.4 percent of 2007 graduates enrolled in college, compared to 66.6 percent of 2005 graduates.

"It seems like we are doing a good job of getting our kids to the door," board member Doug Morrison said. "If we posted those (college) graduation rates for K-12, it would not go over so well."

He also asked whether the district gets retention reports from the university system.

"To me, it's like half a story," he said. "In other words, where might it be showing why our kids might not be graduating?"

Superintendent Pam Homan said the Board of Regents issues such reports but not which schools students attended.

Schueler said that as graduates age, more enter college. For example, 64.6 percent of 2004 graduates entered college that fall, whereas in 2007, 72.5 percent of those graduates were in classes.

While at Southeast Technical Institute last week, Homan said graduating students she spoke with wanted to get their degree first, then worry about getting a job.

"It seems like the equation needs to be reinvented," Morrison said.

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