

Scholarship Signing Guide

Planning, Promoting and Celebrating Student Signings

For more information or questions, contact Rita Nelson, Workforce Relations Coordinator at Rita@BuildDakotaScholarships.com or (605) 760-4284

Overview and Purpose:

A Build Dakota Signing Event celebrates a student committing to a career pathway—similar to an athletic signing day, but for real-world careers.

Why it matters:

- Celebrates student success
- Highlights career pathways
- Showcases employer investment
- Promotes workforce development

👉 *Think: This is how we “sign” top talent in our industries.*

Roles and Locations:

Who Does What

👉 Important: Collaborate with your local technical college to ensure you have the correct Build Dakota forms, processes, and student information. Invite a technical college representative to attend and participate in the event.

Industry Partners:	Technical Colleges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host or co – host the event • Welcome the student • Bring branded swag (gear, tools, apparel) • Some might include an employment agreement either at or prior to signing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide official Build Dakota signing documents and required forms • Confirm student eligibility and program details • Coordinate details with industry partner and school • Attend the event if possible
Chamber / EDO:	Schools / CTE Program:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the event • Invite community leaders • Support coordination and visibility • Invite local media • Capture photos or coordinate photography for event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host in classroom/lab, or help coordinate students to attend • Connect learning to high-demand careers

Where to Host

Employer Site – great for tours and showcasing workplace

CTE Classroom/Lab – built-in audience, easy coordination

Community/Chamber Event – ideal for multi-student signings

Planning and Event Flow:

Simple Timeline

2–3 Weeks Before

- Confirm student + employer + other partners (school, CTE, chamber)
- Set date/location

1 Week Before

- Share press release / invitation with media
- Finalize setup

Day Of

- Keep it short
- Capture photos/video
- Post social media same day

Setup Checklist

- Table + chairs
- Signing sheet
- Logo/backdrop
- Employer swag
- Photo/video person
- Water and light snacks (if appropriate)

Event Flow (5–10 Minutes)

Welcome

“Today we’re here to celebrate a big moment—this is our version of signing top talent.”

Student Recognition (Remarks by host)

Share strengths and career choice

Employer Remarks

“We’re proud to welcome [Name] and invest in the future.”

Chamber Remarks

Share how partnering with Build Dakota and supporting student impacts the community

Signing Moment

Sign, handshake, photos, swag

Close

“This is what workforce growth looks like.”

Promotion and Content:

Capture the Moment

Photos: signing, handshake, group, environment

Video: student story, employer message, quick clips

 Keep it simple, vertical, and authentic

Social Media

Professional:

We're proud to welcome [Student Name] as a Build Dakota Scholar...

Student Style:

SIGNED 🗨️ [Student Name] committed to [career field]!

Hashtags:

#BuildDakota #SkilledCareers #FutureReady #WorkforceDevelopment

Press Release (Sample):

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Company Name] Welcomes Build Dakota Scholar to Career Pathway

[CITY, STATE] -- *[Company Name]* is proud to announce the signing of *[Student Name]* as a Build Dakota Scholar, marking the beginning of a career pathway in *[career field]*. Through this opportunity, *[Student Name]* will receive hands-on technical training at *[Technical College]*, industry experience, and a direct connection to employment in one of South Dakota's high-demand industries.

The Build Dakota Scholarship program was created through the vision of T. Denny Sanford and Governor Dennis Daugaard and continues through strong industry investment and statewide leadership support. The program is a successful public-private partnership connecting students, technical colleges, and employers to help meet South Dakota's workforce needs.

The Build Dakota covers full tuition, fees, books, and other required expenses for eligible students pursuing high-need careers at South Dakota's technical colleges. In return, students commit to living and working in South Dakota for a minimum of three years after graduation. Graduating with little to no student loan debt, students are well-positioned to launch their careers, gain valuable skilled experience, and put down roots in South Dakota communities.

"We're excited to welcome *[Student Name]* to our team," said *[Employer Name, Title]*. "Programs like the Build Dakota help develop the high-demand technical skills our industry needs for the future while creating opportunities for students to build successful careers right here in South Dakota."

Build Dakota supports career opportunities in fields critical to South Dakota's economy, including health care, advanced manufacturing, construction, transportation, energy, engineering, information technology, agriculture, and public service such as law enforcement and child care.

"Build Dakota is more than a scholarship program — it's an investment in South Dakota's future," said Rita Nelson, Workforce Relations Coordinator. "These partnerships help strengthen local communities, support economic growth, and build the skilled workforce that keeps our state strong."

For more information about the Build Dakota Scholarship program, visit BuildDakotaScholarships.com.

Contact:

[Name] *[Title]* *[Email]* *[Phone]*
