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Governor Praises Boot Camp Graduates For Academic Progress November 5, 1999

(Pierre) – Gov. Bill Janklow said Friday's graduating class at the Custer boot camp for troubled boys is the latest example of the academic and personal success stories that come out of South Dakota's juvenile corrections programs.

"People need to know how hard these boys work to improve themselves and how effective the program is at helping them rebuild their lives," Janklow said. "In a class of 25, eight different boys went up by three or four or, in the case of one boy, five grade levels in just four months. We're seeing similar kinds of success among our girls at the State Training School at Plankinton.

"This shows what these kids are capable of doing when they get into an environment where they can focus on themselves and where they are free from alcohol and drugs and bad influences. It also points out how important it is for more South Dakotans to step forward and help mentor these young people when they leave our state institutions, so they stay on a productive path," Janklow said.

Twenty-four of the 25 members of Platoon 1037 showed gains in at least one of the three main areas of reading, spelling and mathematics. Fifteen of the boys who graduated Friday had improved their performance by at least two full grade levels during the four-month program.

"That's phenomenal, but it's also not much different from the previous groups of boys who went through the program. And you also have to remember, some of these boys come in at very high or even the maximum reading levels for high school, while others are special education students requiring individualized programs. They range from one end of the spectrum to the other, and our teachers and staff do a fantastic job working with each and every one of them."

In the two previous graduating classes, 35 of the total of 58 boys raised their reading, spelling or math scores by at least two full grade levels in the four-month program.

