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CONTACT: [Mary Stadick Smith](#), South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-7228

[Nancy Van Der Weide](#), South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-2593

Three South Dakota counselors and teachers earn National Board Certification

PIERRE, S.D. – Two South Dakota school counselors and one teacher earned national certifications in 2023, demonstrating advanced knowledge and skill in their professions.

The National Certified School Counselor certification recognizes counselors who demonstrate specialized knowledge and skills in school counseling. This certification shows that one has met national standards of practice, including additional education, experience, and a specialty exam. The following school counselors became National Certified School Counselors in 2023:

- Tova Hartle, West Central School District
- Charlene Soukoup, Wagner School District

Teachers achieve National Board Certification through a rigorous, performance-based, peer-reviewed assessment of a teacher’s pedagogical (teaching) skills and content knowledge. The certification process takes one to three years to complete. While licensing standards set the basic requirements to teach in a state, National Board Certified teachers demonstrate advanced teaching knowledge, skills, and practices.

Kristin Ottenbacher, an English Language Arts teacher with the Aberdeen School District’s Simmons Middle School, is the sole recipient of National Board Certification in South Dakota for 2023.

Public school teachers who earn National Board Certification receive a monetary stipend of \$2,000 per year for five years. The Department of Education will reimburse for associated fees paid by teachers and counselors upon achievement of national certification.