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CONTACT: Mary Stadick Smith, South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-7228, mary.stadicksmith@state.sd.us or
Ruth Raveling, South Dakota Department of Education, (605) 773-2593, ruth.raveling@state.sd.us

Board holds first public hearing on proposed certification rule changes

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Education held the first of two public hearings on proposed educator certification rule changes earlier today. The proposed rules constitute an overhaul of the state’s certification system.

For more than two years, the Department of Education has been leading stakeholders through a review of the current certification system.

“It’s tempting to just tweak the rules,” said South Dakota Education Secretary Dr. Melody Schopp. “But the K-12 educators, administrators and postsecondary representatives who developed these proposals really dove in and started over with the whole certification system. These proposed changes maintain the rigor necessary to ensure we have qualified educators in our schools, while at the same time eliminating unnecessary barriers.”

Among major areas of change is the creation of a new category of certificates, called educator permits. Several of these permits, like performing artist, expert lecturer and international teacher permits, could help small schools that struggle to find certified teachers in certain areas. Proposed changes also revise the process for alternative certification and update reciprocity rules.

Proposed rules are posted for public comment at rules.sd.gov. The board will hold a second hearing on the proposed rule changes at its March 20 meeting in Aberdeen.