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Gov. Noem appoints Heineman and Westra to Board of Education Standards

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem has appointed Phyllis Heineman and Julie Westra, both of Sioux Falls, to the South Dakota Board of Education Standards.

Phyllis Heineman is a former teacher, who served as a state representative from 1999-2008 and as a state senator from 2011-2016. She earned her bachelor’s degree in mathematics from South Dakota State University. She has also served on the Sioux Falls Catholic School Board, the Dakotabilities board, and Junior Achievement board.

“While good, challenging educational standards are important, great teachers are the key to student success,” Heineman says. “I look forward to supporting the work of South Dakota teachers through my role on the board.”

Julie Westra served three years on the Sioux Falls School Board. She has also served on the South Dakota Professional Administrators Practices and Standards Commission. Westra earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration and her master’s degree from the University of South Dakota. She owns and manages a real estate business in Sioux Falls. She and her husband Steve have two sons attending the University of South Dakota, and their daughter is a student at Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls.

“I am honored to serve on the South Dakota Board of Education Standards,” Westra says. “Education and how we shape the future for our next generation have always been very important to me. I look forward to making a positive impact on the education of our students.”

Heineman will succeed Gopal Vyas, whose term expired in December 2019. Westra will succeed Susan Aguilar whose term also expired in December 2019. Both will serve four-year terms, which expire in December 2023.

As the body charged with confirmation, the state Senate will consider these appointments during the 2020 legislative session.