

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA )  
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COUNTY OF HUGHES ) DIVISION OF THE SECRETARY  
 ) SOUTH DAKOTA DEPT. OF EDUCATION

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In re: Certification Application of )  
PIPER A. THORPE ) DSE 2022-08  
 ) ORDER DENYING  
 ) EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE

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In accordance with and pursuant to the authority granted to the Secretary by SDCL § 13-42-4, 13-42-7, and ARSD article 24:18, and after review of the record herein, the Secretary issues the following Order:

1. The Secretary accepts the allegations of the Notice of Intent to Deny Educator Certificate as true and enters the attached Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.
2. The application of Piper A. Thorpe for a renewal educator certificate is DENIED.
3. Piper A. Thorpe is permanently prohibited from reapplication for an educator certificate in the State of South Dakota.
4. The Order and Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law are a public record pursuant to SDCL § 13-42-17.1 and ARSD 24:18:04:05.
5. Notification of this denial is to be placed on the NASDTEC registry and be placed in applicant's permanent certification file within the South Dakota Department of Education.

This constitutes final agency action and may be appealed to circuit court pursuant to ARSD 24:18:02:06.

Dated this the 30th of November, 2023.



Dr. Joseph Graves  
Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Education  
800 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA )  
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COUNTY OF HUGHES ) SOUTH DAKOTA DEPT. OF EDUCATION

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In re: Certification Application of )  
PIPER A. THORPE ) DSE 2022-08  
 ) FINDINGS OF FACT AND  
 ) CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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Piper A. Thorpe filed an application for an educator renewal certificate which was activated on June 29, 2022. After a review of the entire file, the Secretary enters the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. On or about September 25, 2023, the South Dakota Department of Education Office of Educator Certification (hereinafter “Department”) served a Notice of Intent to Deny Educator Certificate and attached exhibits on Piper A. Thorpe (hereinafter “Thorpe”) via certified mail, first-class mail, and email. See Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part of this document.
2. The Notice of Intent informed Thorpe that if she failed to request a hearing within 30 days after service of the notice, the allegations of the Notice would be accepted as true by the Secretary.
3. The Department received no request for hearing from Thorpe within the 30-day period.
4. Thorpe answered “Yes” to Question 5 of the Conduct Review portion of the application which asked:  

“Have you ever had any credential, certificate or license authorizing school teaching or educational service suspended, revoked, voided, cancelled, denied, rescinded, rejected for cause and/or otherwise taken away in South Dakota or in any other state, commonwealth, territory or possession of the United States or elsewhere?”
5. Thorpe disclosed that in 2015 she resigned from a teaching position in North Dakota. Thorpe failed to provide the nature and result of any suspension or revocation of a previous license.

6. Thorpe answered “No” to all other Conduct Review questions.
7. The Department conducted an investigation into Thorpe’s employment in North Dakota.
8. The North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) and Thorpe entered into a settlement agreement on or about June 24, 2016, regarding Thorpe engaging in sexual contact with a student. Thorpe did not contest the allegation.
9. In 2021, North Dakota denied Thorpe’s request to reinstate her North Dakota teaching license.
10. North Dakota ESPB provided the Department with a letter from Thorpe’s former superintendent depicting that Thorpe engaged and later confessed to being in a physical relationship with a student.
11. The Department has concluded that Thorpe resigned in order to avoid disciplinary action.
12. Thorpe completed the application online and electronically signed an oath of affirmation prior to submitting the application. The oath of affirmation declares that under penalty of perjury pursuant to SDCL § 22-29-9.1 that the application and accompanying documents are true, accurate, complete, and correct to the best knowledge and belief of the applicant.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

13. Grounds for the denial or non-renewal of an educator certificate are provided in SDCL § 13-42.
14. The Secretary of the Department of Education has the power and authority to refuse to issue or renew a certificate. SDCL §§ 13-42-7 and 13-42-9.
15. ARSD 24:18:03:02. Revocation or suspension in another jurisdiction. If the certificate of an applicant in another jurisdiction has been revoked or suspended by that jurisdiction, the order of revocation or suspension is prima facie evidence that the applicant does not meet the requirements for certification in this state.
16. Pursuant to 24:18:03:02, the Settlement Agreement between Thorpe and the North Dakota ESPB

is prima facie evidence that Thorpe does not meet the requirements for certification in this state.

17. Thorpe's failure to adequately disclose her discipline in North Dakota with the Department constitutes moral turpitude in violation of SDCL § 13-42-9 and perjury under SDCL § 22-29-9.1.
18. Any Conclusion of Law more properly designated as a Finding of Fact is hereby so designated.
19. Thorpe's application should be denied pursuant to SDCL § 13-42-9.
20. Thorpe should be permanently prohibited from reapplication for an educator certificate in the State of South Dakota.

Dated this the 30th of November, 2023.



Dr. Joseph Graves  
Secretary, South Dakota Department of Education

Thorpe, Piper DSE 2022-08 file

RE: Intent to Deny

Certified: 09/20/2023

Piper Thorpe  
22623 293rd Ave  
Vivian, SD 57576

First Class: 09/20/2023

Email: 09/20/2023

Piper.adelle@gmail.com

7003 1680 0000 1463 7875

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PS Form 3800, June 2002 See Reverse for Instructions

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SEP 27 2023

DSE 2022-08

<b>SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION</b>		<b>COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete items 1, 2, and 3.</li> <li>Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you.</li> <li>Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits.</li> </ul>		<p>A. Signature <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult Signature <input type="checkbox"/> Agent <input type="checkbox"/> Addressee</p> <p>B. Received by (Printed Name) <i>Justin Thorpe</i> C. Date of Delivery <i>9-25-23</i></p> <p>D. Is delivery address different from item 1? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If YES, enter delivery address below:</p>	
<p>1. Article Addressed to:</p> <p>Piper Thorpe 22623 293rd Ave Vivian, SD 57576</p> <p>SEP 27 2023</p>		<p>3. Service Type</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adult Signature <input type="checkbox"/> Priority Mail Express®  <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Signature Restricted Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Registered Mail™  <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail® <input type="checkbox"/> Registered Mail Restricted Delivery  <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail Restricted Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Signature Confirmation™  <input type="checkbox"/> Collect on Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Signature Confirmation Restricted Delivery  <input type="checkbox"/> Collect on Delivery Restricted Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail  <input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail Restricted Delivery (over \$500)</p>	
<p>2. Article Number (Transfer from service label)</p> <p>7003 1680 0000 1463 7875</p>		<p>9590 9402 7376 2028 7023 14</p>	
PS Form 3811, July 2020 PSN 7530-02-000-9053		Domestic Return Receipt	