

**Office of the Governor**

500 E. Capitol Ave.

Pierre SD 57501

(605) 773-3212

[www.state.sd.us](http://www.state.sd.us)

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**Contact:** Mitch Krebs or Roxy Everson at 605-773-3212

**Deaf Education Task Force to Recommend Actions**

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Mike Rounds has appointed nine members to a task force that will examine South Dakota’s educational services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of those services.

The Task Force on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education will meet for the first time May 27 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at University Center in Sioux Falls. Public testimony will be taken that day from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. in Room 282 of University Center, located at 2205 Career Drive.

“I have asked the task force to offer both short- and long-term recommendations on how we can best deliver services to all students who are deaf or hard of hearing,” Gov. Rounds said. “This is really about the best approach to take in providing deaf education in South Dakota. The task force’s work is not just about the South Dakota School for the Deaf, but how a continuum of services can best be delivered in partnership with K-12 schools across this state.”

By July, the group will recommend action on any items that pertain to the upcoming school year. Gov. Rounds also has asked for long-term recommendations by this fall, including any items which may require legislation for the 2009 session.

Members of the Task Force on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education appointed by the Governor include:

- Deanne Curran, Flandreau, parent of a School for the Deaf student
- Joanne DeBee, Sioux Falls, outreach teacher at School for the Deaf
- Sen. Thomas Dempster, Sioux Falls
- Michele Foy, Sioux Falls, parent of a School for the Deaf student
- Dr. Rick Melmer, Pierre, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Education
- Randy Morris, Spearfish, South Dakota Board of Regents’ member
- Dr. Tad Perry, Pierre, executive director of the Board of Regents
- Rep. Tim Rave, Baltic
- Supt. Rick Weber, Flandreau School District