



News Release

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Regents Advance Plans for Changes in Principal Preparation

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Incorporating best practices for training future school administrators, the South Dakota Board of Regents has advanced plans for four of its public universities to create a new master’s degree in principal preparation.

Board action Thursday allows campus officials to put together specific plans to offer the new degree program, subject to final approval by the regents. The collaborative master of education degree in principal preparation would be offered at Black Hills State University, Northern State University, South Dakota State University, and the University of South Dakota.

“What makes this program different is that it is being developed to address specific challenges faced by South Dakota principals operating in rural settings,” said Paul Turman, the regents’ system vice president for academic affairs. “The instructional model will allow students to learn theory and practice in independent settings, and apply their learning in field exercises at partner school districts.”

If approved to start next summer as expected, the degree program would be delivered through a mix of face-to-face coursework, online instruction, and field-based learning experiences. Participating universities expect an initial enrollment of 20 to 25 students.

Work on this concept commenced after a system-wide review of teacher preparation programs in 2006. After meetings involving university administrators, legislators, and school district leaders, the focus turned to improving the instruction and preparation of school principals. With grant support from the Bush Foundation, a statewide working group of PK-12 and university educators developed a collaborative principal preparation program to be shared among four universities.