



Brookings School District

Empowering all learners to embrace and be inspired to realize their potential

Dr. Summer Schultz, Superintendent

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A GREAT PLACE TO COLLABORATE: Engage all families and community groups in the Brookings School District in collaborative partnerships that enhance the learner's experience.

1. Brookings has been awarded the East River Grant to implement the Communities That Care (CTC) program over the next two years. Although Brookings United Way applied for the grant, its initiatives will significantly benefit youth and families within the Brookings School District. I have been asked to serve as the *Champion*, or community ambassador, for CTC, a request I have accepted. In this role, I look forward to collaborating with the CTC team to advance this important initiative focused on preventing youth health and behavioral challenges through science-based programming and data-driven strategies.
2. SDHSAA Transfer Rules Study Committee: Dan Swartos, the SDHSAA's executive director, created this study committee. The SDIAAA provided him with four athletic director members. Superintendents and Principals vote on administrative representatives for the committee. I have been selected to represent the AA Administration and below is a list of all committee members.
 - a. AA AD- Jim Altenburg, Harrisburg
 - b. A AD- Jeff Heisinger, Montrose (McCook Central/Montrose cooperative)
 - c. B AD- Michelle Schweigert, Jones County
 - d. Native American Rep AD- Allen Benoist, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte
 - e. AA Admin- Dr. Summer Schultz, Brookings
 - f. A Admin- Travis Ahrens, Clark
 - g. B Admin- Dan Knust, Ipswich
 - h. Native American Admin Rep- Louie Krogman, White River

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN: Ensure experiences and opportunities so all Brookings School District learners are academically, socially, and emotionally successful.

1. Building-Level Expectations for Tier 1 Behavior Evaluation:
 - a. A recurring theme from our Marzano study was consistency and an analysis of Tier I learning areas. Each building/department has been tasked to analyze student perceptions of their learning environments. This data will serve as a starting benchmark for modifying learning environments and working to create environments that support learning for all students.

A GREAT PLACE TO WORK: Ensure a positive culture within the Brookings School District through intentional relationships, retention, recruitment, and communication.

1. **Organizational Structures:** Each building administrator has also been tasked with providing me with a detailed organizational structure. Ensuring a seamless connection between accountability and mentorship/training opportunities is critical, but we must determine who is ultimately responsible. As our SPED, ELL, and Special Service programs grow, this will ensure appropriate levels of support are provided for BSD faculty and staff.
2. Governor Noem came to our District and met with Megan Olson, one of the paraprofessionals participating in the Teacher Apprenticeship Program. Megan is currently working in our Social Skills program at Hillcrest Elementary. This program offers paraprofessionals employed in accredited schools the opportunity to earn a teaching certificate while maintaining a full course load each term. Through this pathway, participants can earn a bachelor's degree in elementary education, special education, or secondary education, allowing them to continue working as paraprofessionals while benefiting from mentorship by experienced educators.

The program is a collaborative effort involving the South Dakota Department of Education, Dakota State University (for elementary and special education), Northern State University (for secondary education), the South Dakota Board of Regents, the Department of Labor & Regulation, and local school districts. The Brookings School District has five (5) participants enrolled in this pathway program, allowing us to truly “grow our own.”



(Right to Left: Keli Books BSD School Board, Shannon Smith Hillcrest Principal, Governor Kristi Noem, Megan Olson Hillcrest Social Skills, Summer Schultz, BSD Superintendent)

A RESPONSIBLE DISTRICT: Align Brookings School District resources, facilities, and processes to strategic plan priorities.

Advocacy:

In preparation for the upcoming legislative session, I have been collaborating with fellow superintendents to raise awareness about the rising number of students exhibiting aggressive behaviors and complex mental health needs. During the Governor's recent visit, we presented the urgent need for enhanced support and services to address these challenges. This issue is not unique to the Brookings School District; schools are grappling with a growing population of students whose needs exceed the capacity of traditional school resources across the state and nation.

Specialized service providers across South Dakota face lengthy waitlists, and even when support is available, transportation barriers prevent many students from accessing care. I am committed to helping lawmakers understand the scope of these challenges and advocating for resources to develop alternative programs that extend beyond the conventional educational model. Such resources would expand treatment options and create specialized placements, enabling schools to better serve students with needs that surpass what current systems are designed to support.

As these needs escalate, their impact will ripple through communities. Initiatives like Communities That Care (CTC) illustrate that our local leaders recognize the urgency of this issue. Together, we will continue to champion sustainable, community-based solutions.

Special Education (SPED) and Special Services Analysis (K-5):

Nearly 20% of BSD students receive special education services. To continue the progression from our Marzano work, we have begun an in-depth analysis of student programming across the K-3 and 4-5 buildings. Our K-3 schools provide SPED and Special Services across three buildings. A Tier 3 social skills program at Hillcrest serves students from all three buildings, and we have expanded our autism program to a second location. As these programs grow, ensuring a seamless transition to Camelot is critical for maintaining the consistency of services.