Intent to Plan for a New Program
South Dakota Board of Regents
Academic Affairs Forms

Internal Ticket ID: 31514
Created: 12/19/2025
Modified: 1/14/2026

Use this form to request authorization to plan a new baccalaureate major, associate degree program, or graduate program; formal approval or waiver of an Intent to Plan is required before a university may submit a related full proposal request for a new program. The Executive Director and/or their designees may request additional information. After the university President approves the Intent to Plan, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the System Academic Officer through the proper process. Only post the Intent to Plan to the university website for review by other universities after approval by the Executive Director, System Academic Officer or designee. This form is meant to capture critical elements for stakeholders to review prior to a full proposal.

University	BHSU - Black Hills State University
Degree	AS : Associate of Science
Name of Major	BED : Education **Education**
Specialization Required?	No *Note: If the new proposed program includes specific specializations within it, complete and submit a New Specialization Form for each proposed specialization and attach it to this form. Since specializations appear on transcripts, they require Board approval.*
College/Department	6D : BHSU College of Education/BSCE : School of Education
Intended Date of Full Proposal	Fall 2026
Planned CIP Code	13.0101

Program Description

1. Provide the working program description that may appear in the university catalog.

The AS in Education prepares candidates to support teaching and learning in K-12 schools. The focus of this two-year degree is on the fundamentals of teaching and learning in K-12 classrooms. The program will prepare students to enter the school systems as paraprofessionals, teachers aides, as well as transition to Bachelor's degrees in education.

Strategic Impact

2. Describe how the program fits in with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities.

The program will help BHSU meet regional workforce demands in the education field by preparing students for teaching and learning support roles in K-12 schools as well as opening an additional path for students to earn Bachelor's degrees in education as well as initial certification.

If the program does not align to the strategic plan, provide a compelling rationale for the institution to offer the program.

3. How does the program connect to the Board of Regent's Strategic Plan?

This program connects with Goal 4, Part I of the BOR Strategic Plan related to workforce alignment by targeting high needs areas and providing an affordable path to entering the workforce sooner while also keeping options open to full Bachelor's programs in certifiable areas.

Program Summary

4. If a new degree is proposed, what is the rationale?

This question refers to the type of degree, not the program. For example, if your university has authorization to offer the Bachelor of Science and the program requested is a Bachelor of Science, then the request is not for a new degree.

This Associate's degree will be stackable with Bachelor's degrees in Education, and will help meet the needs of new students, especially those who are interested in entering the workforce sooner. It will also set up successful graduates to return to BHSU to complete their bachelor's degree and certification as a classroom teacher. The degree would support all manner of classified employees in K-12 settings including teacher's aides, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers.

5. What modality/modalities will be used to offer the new program?

Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.

	Yes/No	Intended Start Date
On Campus	Yes	Fall 2026

	Yes/No	Location(s)	Intended Start Date
Off Campus Location	No		Fall 2026

	Yes/No	Delivery Method(s)	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery	Yes	Online Asynchronous	Fall 2026

	Yes/No	Identify Institutions
Does another BOR institution already have authorization to offer the program online?	Yes	Northern State University

6. If the program will be offered through distance delivery, identify the planned instructional modality:

Asynchronous : Students are not required to attend the course at a specific time or location.

Academic Quality

7. What peer institutions and current national standards will be referenced to develop the curriculum for this program? Include links to at least 3 comparable programs at peer institutions and links to national or accreditation standards, if any.

-Northern State University: https://northern.edu/degrees/early-childhood-education-associate-degree
-Colorado Mesa University: https://catalog.coloradomesa.edu/areas-study/education-early-childhood/early-childhood-education-liberal-arts-aa/#requirementstext
-Weber State University: https://catalog.weber.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=24&poid=12187&returnto=9149&_gl=1*1wriq5w*_gcl_au*MTg2OTg4Njg2NC4xNzY2NDE5NDgw

Standards:
Though the AS in Education will not result in state teaching certification, all courses in this program are approved for accredited programs and follow both the InTASC standards and CAEP Initial Certification Standards. BHSU is also in collaboration with the SD DSS to articulate ECE hours for individuals who have completed the Child Development Associate credential.

8. What program accreditation is available, if any?

The AS in Education will not result in teacher certification, so no accreditation is available.

9. Will the proposed program pursue accreditation or certifications?

No

If no, why has the department elected not to pursue accreditation for the program?

The AS in Education will not result in teacher certification, so no accreditation is available.

Duplication and Competition

10. Do any related programs exist at other public universities in South Dakota?

A list of existing programs is available through the university websites and the RIS Reporting: Academic Reports Database. If there are no related programs within the Regental system, indicate ***none.***

Yes

A. If yes, defend the need for an additional program within the state, Include IPEDS enrollment data and additional data as needed.

The other existing AS in Education is at Northern State. The program has a Fall 2025 start date so no IPEDS data is available. The AS in Education at BHSU is similar in purpose and but not in direct competition. The program is needed in western South Dakota to address support staffs in P-12 schools and to provide multiple pathways into the teaching profession.

B. If yes, would this program be a candidate for Regental system collaboration?

Yes

11. Do any related programs exist at any non-Regental college or university within 150 miles of the university?

List those programs here:

Yes, Gillette College has an AS in Elementary Education and an AS in Secondary Education.

A. If yes, use IPEDS to identify the enrollment in those programs.

IPEDS data indicate the following AS in Education totals for the last 3 years of available data from Gillette College. This is the total number of AS in Education degrees awarded for both Elementary and Secondary Education. I was not able to determine the number of individual degrees for each.
2021: 27
2022: 26
2023: 21

B. What evidence suggests there is unmet student demand for the proposed program, or that the proposed program would attract students away from the existing program?

We do not have any evidence we would be able to attract students away from Gillette College. One intention of this program is to address students who may not have considered attending college previously because they are not interested in or cannot afford a 4-year degree. Additionally, students entering BHSU through the Fast Track admission program will have the option of this flexible, stackable AS degree while keeping open the option of attaining a 4-year degree resulting in initial teaching certification.

Market Demand

This section establishes the market demand for the proposed program (eg Regental system need, institutional need, workforce need). Use the following sources for your data:

- South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation
- O-Net
- US Department of Labor Projections Central
- SDBOR Workforce and Degree Gap Analysis Report

12. What is the expected growth of the industry or occupation in South Dakota and nationally?

Include the number of openings, as well as the percentage of growth when possible.

Per Dept. of Labor short-term projections, SD will add 100 positions (+1.7%) from 2023-2025 and 230 positions (+5.6%) from 2022-2032 classified as teacher's aides or paraprofessional.

13. What evidence, if any, suggests there are unfilled openings in South Dakota or nationally?

As of Spring 2025, there were over 50 openings in SD in paraprofessional/aide and SPED paras (https://www.teachinsd.com/list). SDDLR shows teaching assistants outside of SPED is in high demand with 85 openings and 0.04 candidates per job opening. SDDLR shows teaching assistants in SPED are high demand with 15 openings and 0 candidates per job opening.

14. What salaries can program graduates expect to earn in South Dakota and nationally?

In SD, pay ranges from $14-21/hour; nationally, average pay is $16.47/hour.

15. Optional: Provide any additional evidence of regional demand for the program.

e.g. prospective student interest survey data, letters of support from employers, community needs...

Local principals and superintendents have consistently relayed the need for paraprofessionals and several students have inquired about paraprofessional preparation at Preview Days and recruiting events.

Student Demand

16. Provide evidence of student completers/graduates at that degree level at peer institutions that offer the same/similar program using data obtained from IPEDS.

Choose programs not already listed in question 11. Use the most recent year available.

University Name	State	Program Name	Number of Degrees Conferred in Program	Total Number of Conferrals at Level (Undergrad or Grad)
Gillette College	WY : Wyoming	AS (totals combined elementary and Secondary education)	21	459
Miles Community College	MT : Montana	AA Education Pathway	5	104
Dickinson State University	ND : North Dakota	AS (totals combined elementary and Secondary education)	0	0

17. What evidence suggests there is interest from prospective students for this program at the university?

The main source of enrollment projects to be from existing programs, either as an off-ramp for students who cannot or likely will not complete the 4-year teacher education program or students who need to work while also completing the teacher education program. Currently, the off-ramp for students is a general studies degree, which does not allow for seamless transition back into the initial certification programs.

Enrollment

18. Are students enrolling in this program expected to be new to the university or redirected from existing programs at the university?

Include the number of openings, as well as the percentage of growth when possible.

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19. Narrative Description of the preliminary estimates on annual enrollment in this program by year six

Include all students within the program, not just those new to the program.

The major assumptions in the enrollment estimates are that Rapid City Area Schools have roughly 46% of the openings in Educational Support positions and that BHSU will work with 25% of applicants for these positions. The increases are based on projected 20% increase in students in the program for 3 years and then leveling off in years 4-6.