

# MICHELLE POWERS, Ed.D

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## EDUCATION

**Doctor of Education** | Educational Leadership | University of South Dakota

**Education Specialist** | PreK-12 Principal | University of South Dakota

**Master of Arts** | Special Education | University of South Dakota

**Bachelor of Science** | Elementary Education and Special Education | University of South Dakota

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## SKILL AREAS

Effective Instruction | Classroom systems and behavior management | Assessment and Use of Data | Collaborative leadership | Compliance and Regulatory Expertise | Policy Development and Implementation | Legislative and Lobbying Expertise | School Governance | Board Level Stakeholder Relations | Budget Design & Administration |

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### SOTERIA EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

**Brookings, SD | Co-owner | 5/2023 - Present**

Providing consultation and direct services to educational programs across South Dakota. I have:

- Provided tailored professional development to school districts on topics including classroom management, social and emotional development and support, behavior management and system structures.
- Provided individualized coaching and support to special education staff designed to address specific student needs and challenges

### NORTHERN HILLS TRAINING CENTER

**Spearfish, SD | Chief Executive Officer | 1/2024 – 11/2025**

Responsible for leading regional support organization serving people with intellectual disabilities, I:

- Led the organization in realizing enterprise systemic transformation to align operational, process improvement, cultural and administrative processes with its strategic objectives,
- Established a unified vision and singular source of truth around the organization's mission and objectives, impacting over 155 staff members and 130 clients.
- Chaired and led stakeholder consultations to uncover opportunities for refinement across various service delivery channels.
- Directed the budget development process, assessing use and variance of the annual \$11 million operating fund.
- Champion a direct-engagement model to understand clients' and volunteer needs to define and articulate the operational impacts of strategy and policy implementation.
- Coached leaders across teams in process excellence, strategic planning, project management, and problem-solving to accelerate transformation and value creation.
- Advocated for Northern Hills' at the public policy level, building relationships with decision-makers, government agencies, and allied community organizations.

### AUGUSTANA UNIVERSITY

**Sioux Falls, SD | Assistant Professor – Special Education | 08/2017 – 12/2023**

Responsible for the design and delivery of coursework to develop the special education skills of undergraduate and graduate students, I:

- Reviewed and assessed learning delivery to ensure alignment with university's goals and anticipated student outcomes.
- Collaboratively developed course curricula and structure; creating instructional and assessment strategies complying with school standards, learning metrics, and student expectations.
- Evaluated student performance and progress and an understanding of key concepts through periodic evaluations, formal examinations and ongoing class participation.
- Surveyed stakeholders to uncover learning and instructional gaps and aligning learning pathways with key requirements and anticipated outcomes.
- Launched the university's Augie Access Experience Camp, a fully funded initiative to elevate the learning experience of high school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### BROOKINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Brookings, SD | Director of Special Education | 07/2005 – 06/2017**

Responsible for the administration of special education and related services to all eligible students and their families in the district, I successfully:

- Developed and managed the budget and expenditures of \$4.5 million for the special education programs in the district.
- Led development of policy and guidance for the school district, provided briefings and options to the superintendent, school board and other leadership on proposed policy decisions.
- Structured the management and monitoring of policy issues at the district level in the field of special education, providing advisement to state, and local organizations and offices.
- Participated in a variety of state-level workgroups and task forces to develop various policy manuals and guidance for the state of South Dakota.
- Supervised and evaluated professional staff, related services staff, and teaching assistants related to the special education program, with approximately 100 staff under my supervision

## **SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **Pierre, SD | State Director of Special Education | 07/2003 –07/2005**

Developing policies, regulation, and guidelines to ensure compliance with state legislative decisions and to seek improved outcomes for students with disabilities ages birth through twenty-one across the public education sector, I was tasked with:

- Administering the federal grant for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act , in addition to discretionary Part D- State Improvement Grant and Section 619-Preschool Grants programs.
- Overseeing federal grants for administrative, discretionary and flow-through funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and other grant dollars
- Structuring interagency agreements with partnering state agencies, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Departments of Corrections, Labor, Human Services, and Social Services.

### **Previous Professional Experience**

- South Dakota Department of Education | State Asst Director of Special Education | 04/1998 – 07/2003
- South Dakota Department of Education | Education Program Representative | 04/1993 – 04/1998

## **PUBLICATIONS / CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

### **Publications**

- Powers, M. (2024). Does accountability make a difference? An analysis of state performance plans and shifts in educational environments. *Special Education Research, Policy and Practice, 2024, 139-161*.
- Powers, M. & Uhing, B. (2023). Effects of state-level funding systems on identification rates of students with autism spectrum disorders. *The Advocate, 28(1)*, <https://doi.org/10.4148/2637-4552.1178>
- Uhing, B.M., & Powers, M. (2022). Effects of state-level funding systems on rates of students identified as other health impaired. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher, 34(1)*, 29-41
- Uhing, B. & Powers, M. (2020). Effects of state-level funding systems on identification rates of students with learning disabilities. *Special Education Research, Policy and Practice, 2022, 19-32*.

### **Conference Presentations**

#### **Research Presentations**

- Powers, M. (2023). *Does accountability make a difference? An analysis of state performance plans and shifts in educational environments*. Poster presentation at 2023 CEC International Conference, Louisville, KY.
- Powers, M. (2022). *A comparison of BCBA rates and educational placements for students on the autism spectrum*. Paper presentation at 2022 CEC International Conference and Expo, Orlando, FL.
- Powers, M. (2022). *Changing minds: Challenging deficit thinking about educational placements*. Poster presentation, CEC International Conference and Expo, Orlando, FL.
- Powers, M. (2021). *Effects of state-level funding systems on identification rates of students with autism spectrum disorders*. Paper presentation at MWERA, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Powers, M. (2020). *Implementation models for providing personalized learning and considerations for students with disabilities*. Poster presentation at the 2020 CEC International Conference and Expo, Portland, OR.
- Powers, M. (2019). *Can personalized learning and special education work together?* Poster presentation at 2019 MWERA Annual Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Powers, M. (2019). *An overview of the history of special education law and policy, funding systems, current issues and recommendations for the future*. Invited opening speaker for the Special Education Interim Legislative Committee, Sioux Falls, SD.
- Powers, M. (2019). *Autism-The long path to learning*. Individual session presentation at International Reclaiming Youth at Risk Conference, Sioux Falls, July, 2019.
- Powers, M. (2019). *Navigating insurance for Applied Behavioral Analysis in South Dakota*. Panel presentation, Lighting the Way, Sioux Falls, SD, June, 2019.
- Powers, M. (2018). *The effect of direct metacognitive instruction on the reported self-efficacy of preservice educators*. Individual presentation, MWERA, Cincinnati, Ohio, October, 2018.

#### **Topic specific presentations**

- Powers, M. (2023). *Working through challenging issues in the IEP process*. Invited speaker. New Directions Down Syndrome Conference, Sioux Falls, SD.
- Powers, M. (2023). *Top ten reasons you should become a special educator*. Educators Rising, Spearfish, SD.
- Powers, M. (2018). *“There’s room for everyone at the library”*. Siouxland Libraries staff, Sioux Falls, SD.
- Powers, M. (2015). Breakout facilitator, Autism Speaks Law Summit.

- Powers, M. (2014). *SEARCHing for a post-high school program*. Statewide Special Education Conference, & South Dakota Joint SASD/ASBSD Conference, Sioux Falls, SD.
- Powers, M. (2012). *NCLB update and other state/national trends*. Council for Exceptional Children- Brookings, SD
- Powers, M. (2011). *How to recognize and work with children with attention deficit disorders*. Boys and Girls Club – Brookings, SD.
- Powers, M. (2010). *Instructional Leadership training*, Pierre, SD.
- Powers, M. (2010) *Seclusion and Restraint* – ASBSD/SASD Joint conference, Sioux Falls, August 2010 and Wild West Leadership, Spearfish, SD.
- Powers, M. (2009). *Identifying disabilities and the hidden potential of students*. Brookings, SD.
- Powers, M. (2008). *Getting through your first year as a special education director*. ASBSD/SASD Joint Conference, August, 2008
- Powers, M. (2006). *Differentiated Instruction*. University of Sioux Falls, Brookings, and the General Educators Academy, Prairie Lakes Cooperative, Hayti SD.
- Powers, M. (2005) *IDEA Reauthorization presentations*. Statewide presentations across South Dakota.
- Powers, M. (2004). *Technical Assistance from South Dakota's Perspective*. National Technical Assistance and Dissemination Conference, Washington DC.

## **Service**

### **State, Regional and National Service**

- Legislative team member, Community Support Providers of South Dakota, 2025
- Member, Council for Exceptional Children, National Professional Standards and Practices Committee, appointed, term 2020-2022
- Representative Assembly member, Council for Exceptional Children Annual Assembly, 2018, 2022, 2023
- Chair and member, SD Family Support Council, appointed by Governor Noem, 2019-2024
- President, SD Council for Exceptional Children, Executive Board, 2019 to present
- Vice-President, SD Council for Exceptional Children, Executive Board, 2017 to 2019
- Presentation chair, MWERA, 2019
- Reviewer, MWERA conference committee, divisions K and L, 2018 and 2019
- Reviewer, Educator Perspectives, professional journal 2020 to present
- Member, ELA standards workgroup, Summer, 2018
- Member, South Dakota Applied Behavior Analyst workgroup, July, 2015 to February, 2016
- Member, CEEDAR State Leadership Team, 2014 to 2015
- Member at large, Executive Board, National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) 2004-2005
- Member of South Dakota School Administrators of South Dakota Legislative Committee, 2007-2016
- Delegate for South Dakota School Administrators of South Dakota Delegate Assembly, 2007-2012
- Past President, South Dakota Council of Administrators of Special Education, 2010-2013
- President, South Dakota Council of Administrators of Special Education, 2008-2010
- Vice-President, South Dakota Council of Administrators of Special Education, 2007-2008
- Member, AdvancEd district-wide leadership committee, 2009-2016
- Member, Exemption Review Board, Department of Education, 2010-2013
- Member, joint SDCASE and SDSPLHA speech licensure committee, 2011
- Executive Board Member, South Dakota School Administrators of South Dakota Executive Board, 2008 to 2010
- Member, Dyslexia Handbook workgroup, 2009
- Member, NCATE review team, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD, 2005
- Member (elected), Pierre School Board, Pierre, SD, 2002-2005
- Extraordinary Cost Fund Board, SD Department of Education, Ex officio member, Pierre, SD, 2003-2005
- South Dakota Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, also member of Community Awareness subcommittee, Pierre, SD, 1998-2005
- South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities, Pierre, SD, 1998-2005
- South Dakota Mental Health Planning and Coordination Advisory Council, also Children's Mental Health sub-committee, Pierre, SD, 1998-2005
- South Dakota Assistive Technology Advisory Council, Pierre, SD, 1998-2005

### **Selected Conference Development -**

- SD CEC 5th Annual Summer Institute, June 2023, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD
- SD CEC 4th Annual Summer Institute, June 2022, virtual
- SD CEC 3rd Annual Summer Institute, June, 2021, virtual
- SD CEC 2nd Annual Summer Institute, June, 2019, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD
- SD CEC 1st Annual Summer Institute, June, 2018, Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD
- 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Institute, July, 1998, Pierre, SD
- Statewide Special Education Conference, October, 1997, Sioux Falls, SD
- 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Institute, July, 1997, Sioux Falls, SD
- EDLAW's Fifth Great Plains Institute on Special Education Law & Practice, April, 1997, Sioux Falls, SD
- Statewide CEC/Office of Special Education Fall Conference, October, 1996, Pierre, SD

### **Professional Documents-**

- Referral to Placement – A primer for new teachers – Fall, 2005, updated 2013
- The Dyslexia Handbook for Teachers and Parents in South Dakota – March, 2009
- South Dakota's response to AYP and students in need of special education – August, 2003
- Online Special Education Program Manual – April, 2003
- Complaint Investigation Procedures – August, 2000
- Parental Rights Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – May, 1998
- Determining Eligibility for Special Education in South Dakota - August, 1996
- Making Connections, A Guide for Parents and Providers on the Transitions from Birth to 3 Connections - April, 1996
- Individual Education Plan, A Technical Assistance Guide - July 1995
- Administrative Guide, An Overview of the Compliance Monitoring Process - March, 1995
- Surrogate Parent Manual - August, 1994

- A Guide to Special Education in South Dakota - October, 1993

#### **Related Training and Experiences -**

- Special Education Expert Panel, Praxis test and cut score review - Educational Testing Service (ETS), 2023
- Special Education consultant - TAESE, 2022-2023
- SDStars Certified Trainer - SD Department of Education, 2022 to present
- Acceptance and commitment therapy/Relational frame theory - Online course, Spring, 2022
- Diversity Advocate certification, Augustana University Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, November, 2020
- Complaint investigation for special education disputes, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, June, 2000
- Invited interviewee with John M. McLaughlin, for article "*Child Find, Part C: Serving Children from Birth*" published in School Business Affairs, March 2018
- Invited interviewee, *How Autism is Reshaping Special Education: The Unbundling of IDEA* by John M. McLaughlin, May, 2016
- Invited interviewee with Dr. Rod Berger, MindRocket Media Group, November, 2016
- Educational Mediation training, Justice Center of Atlanta, November, 1993
- Volunteer and Catechist, St. Thomas More Parish, 2012 to present
- Leader and co-chair, Parents for Autism Insurance Reform, Political Action Committee, 2014 to 2020

#### **Grants and Awards -**

- Augie Access Experience Camp - fully funded inclusive post-secondary program camp to support juniors and seniors with intellectual or developmental disabilities to explore and discern post-high school goals and plans, grantee SD Council on Developmental Disabilities, award amount \$19,407.50.
- Oliver Innovation Fund grantee- funded for "Educational Makerspace" a multi-year grant to purchase and integrate technology and assistive technology items into methods courses, and to promote student interaction with Makerspace tools, award amount \$19,737.00
- ARAF grant, research funding "Does accountability make a difference? An analysis of state performance plans and shifts in educational environments" awarded Spring, 2022
- ARAF grant, research funding "BCBA rates and correlates to educational placements of students with autism spectrum disorders" awarded Spring, 2021
- ARAF grant, research funding "Effects of state-level funding systems on identification rates of students with disabilities" awarded Spring, 2020
- ARAF grant, research funding "A study of implementation models for personalized learning and considerations for students with disabilities" awarded Spring, 2019
- ARAF grant, research funding "The effect of direct metacognitive instruction on the reported self-efficacy of preservice educators" awarded Spring, 2018
- South Dakota Outstanding Special Education Administrator of the Year, SD CASE, 2013-2014

#### **Courses Taught**

##### **Undergraduate:**

- SPED 280 Practicum: Children and Youth with Disabilities
- SPED 236 Foundations of Learning Disabilities and Cognitive Impairments
- SPED 257 Foundations of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Emotional Disorders
- SPED 336 Methods of Learning Disabilities and Cognitive Impairments
- SPED 301 IEP Development

##### **Graduate:**

- EDUC 600/SPED 601 Introduction to Graduate Research
- EDUC 610 Issues in Education
- EDUC 695 Research Synthesis Project
- SPED 622 Special Education Law and Policy
- SPED 640 Classroom and Behavior Management
- SPED 642 Methods for Working with Students with Disabilities