



One Board Position Up for Election

This year, the SDRS Board of Trustee teacher position is up for election, with two candidates on the ballot. Each group within SDRS elects its own representative; therefore, only teachers will receive ballots this year.

Elections for the SDRS board are held each spring. The term of office of a board member begins July 1, is four years in length, and expires on a staggered schedule.

Votes Must Be Received By May 26, 2026

The 2026 SDRS Board of Trustees' election and balloting processes are being managed through a third-party election services provider, Election Services Corporation (ESC).

Teachers: You may cast your vote for your representative online or by mail. Each ballot contains a unique code that allows a member to vote only once. Note that if you vote both by mail and online, the first vote received is the vote that is counted.

Voting Online

To cast your vote online, access the secure SDRS election login page at: <https://vote.escvote.com/SDRS>. To log in and vote, scan the QR code and enter your Election Validation number and ZIP code, as marked on the enclosure. Votes may be cast through 5:00 PM CT on May 26, 2026.

Voting by Mail

If you prefer to vote by mail, a paper ballot is included with this newsletter. Mark your selection for ONE candidate, detach the ballot portion, and place it in the enclosed return envelope. To be counted, envelopes must be received no later than 5:00 PM CT on May 26, 2026.

If you need voter assistance or a replacement ballot, please contact ESC by emailing SDRSHelp@electionservicescorp.com or calling toll-free at 1-866-720 HELP (4357).

Teachers

This special election issue of Outlook is intended to provide members with basic information on the candidates seeking election to the Board of Trustees. All biographical information is printed as submitted by the candidates. Additional questions on qualifications or philosophy should be directed to the candidates.



Penny Brunken
Incumbent

I have been honored to serve as the SDRS Teacher Representative since September 2016, bringing experience in South Dakota education to the Board of Trustees.

- 26 years, Sioux Falls School District as a National Academy Foundation Academy of Finance teacher.
- 2 years, Grant Deuel School as Business/Computer teacher.

I am proud to represent SDRS and its top-ranked retirement plan as it continues to maintain a sound, sustainable retirement system for South Dakota members. The SDRS Board of Trustees works collaboratively to ensure benefits remain fair, equitable, and financially strong for both current and future retirees. It has been a privilege to contribute to this important work on behalf of teachers.

My goals as Teacher Representative are to advocate for educators, support strong pension planning, and provide clear, accessible information about SDRS to both current and new members. I encourage members to visit the SDRS website, attend local workshops and forums, ask questions, and actively prepare for retirement by working with the knowledgeable SDRS member services team. Investing in the future through SDRS is a powerful way to ensure long-term financial security.

Your vote to allow me to continue serving on the board, would be greatly appreciated.

Growing up in South Dakota, I wanted to come back and live here after a few wayward years in college. I am now 9 years into teaching at Central High School in Rapid City. Knowing my long-term plans, I wish they still issued the 10-year teacher license - it would save on paperwork! I have taught a wide breadth of social studies courses - a love of history guided me to that interest-turned profession. As a lifelong learner, I taught myself 3D printing. From student to teacher, I now serve as advisor for the school's 3D Printing Club. I may love the past, but tinkering with technology allows me to live in the present, fully ready for the future. I have a while until retirement, but I believe that amounts to many more students to teach, hikes to take in the Black Hills, and lessons to learn. I want to help ensure that those who dedicate their careers to this great state are justly rewarded for their years of service at the end of a long, wonderful trail. I ask for your trust and your vote as teacher representative to the SDRS Board of Trustees.



Dana Hicks

UPCOMING SDRS BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTIONS

2027

Class B Public Safety
County Commissioners
Elected Municipal Officials
Justices, Judges, Magistrate Judges
Retirees

2028

Board of Regents Employees
Classified Employees
County Employees
School Boards
State Employees