

IN THE SUPREME COURT  
OF THE  
STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

\* \* \* \*

In the Matter of Assessment of                    )  
the Bar Admissions Process                    )  
  )  
  )  
-----

O R D E R

On this 18th day of November, 2022, it appearing to the Court that:

WHEREAS, South Dakota must continue to ensure that the bar admissions process measures an applicant's professional competence to practice law in an effective and efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota must recruit and retain legal talent to serve communities throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota has not undertaken a comprehensive study of the bar admissions process in recent history; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) - an organization working collaboratively with the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, and other associations of judicial leaders - has been on the vanguard of helping courts tackle some of their most pressing challenges in the areas of court education, strategic planning, community engagement, and justice system reform; and

WHEREAS, AccessLex Institute - a nonprofit member organization comprised of the nearly 200 American Bar Association-approved nonprofit and state-affiliated law schools - is dedicated to increasing the access, affordability and value of legal education and modernizing bar admissions processes; and

WHEREAS, NCSC and AccessLex have offered to support the South Dakota Supreme Court and will contribute staff and financial resources to the project to address the topic of what requirements should be considered to assess professional competency to practice law and to develop a strategic plan that supports South Dakota's efforts to recruit and retain legal talent in South Dakota, which will serve as a national model for other states;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The South Dakota Supreme Court shall appoint a committee to assess the bar admissions process, led by Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen. The Project shall engage in a strategic effort to address attorney licensure and bar admission issues in South Dakota and develop a strategic plan that supports South Dakota's efforts to recruit and retain legal talent in South Dakota.

2. The Project Leadership shall lead a Steering Committee composed of Project Leadership members and representatives from key stakeholder groups.

3. The Steering Committee shall create working groups to study various issues involving the bar admissions process, and the

working groups shall report their findings and recommendation to the Steering Committee.

4. Any findings and recommendations by the Project shall be made in the name of the Project only and not the individual members or institutions by which they are employed.

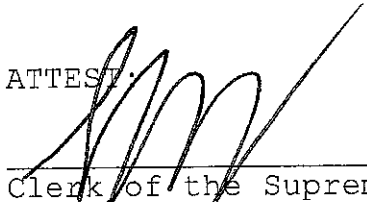
The Project shall submit its findings, recommendations, and strategic plan to the Supreme Court of South Dakota and State Court Administrator by October 23, 2023, or such later date approved by the Chief Justice.

DATED at Pierre, South Dakota this 18th day of November, 2022.

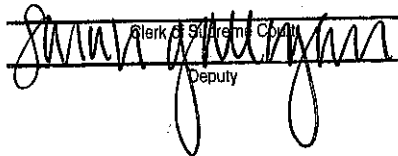
BY THE COURT:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven R. Jensen, Chief Justice

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the Supreme Court  
(SEAL)

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
in the Supreme Court  
Shirley A. Jameson-Fergel, Clerk of the Supreme Court of  
South Dakota, hereby certify that the within instrument is a true  
and correct copy of the original thereof as the same appears  
on record in my office. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set  
my hand and affixed the seal of said court at Pierre, S.D. this  
18 day of NOV, 2022.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy

SUPREME COURT  
STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
FILED

NOV 18 2022

  
Clerk