

Ellendale Public School

School Profile

2022

QUICK FACTS

Location: Ellendale, ND (Rural)

Year Joined: 2019

Grades: K through 12

Enrollment: 300

NDFSCS Implementation Team:

Superintendent, Elementary Principal,
Counselor, Site Coordinator, Targeted Case
Manager, Licensed Therapist



“We are going beyond academics
and meeting additional
dimensions of students’ needs.”

— Michael Kaiser, Superintendent



Website:
www.ellendale.k12.nd.us

IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

In 2017, Ellendale Public School assembled a task force composed of school officials, city leaders, mental health practitioners, and community members with the goal of combating mental health stigma and identifying opportunities to meet the community’s needs for mental health services.

When Michael Kaiser joined the district as Superintendent one year later, he was faced with a question: “How can we keep this conversation going?” Michael found his answer in the North Dakota Full-Service Community Schools Consortium (NDFSCS).

“My first year was really spent researching and thinking about ways to continue this conversation about mental health,” Michael said. “I’d always hoped that an opportunity like this would come along.”

In 2019, Ellendale applied and was selected to become a pilot site for NDFSCS. Their top priority was the pipeline service area of Wellness, particularly Behavioral Health Supports. Michael and his team had the foresight to recognize that such a small school would not be able to sustainably do this work on their own, and partnered with Nexus-PATH and neighboring Edgeley Public School to bring increased mental health services to their students.

Through this partnership, a licensed therapist is able to spend two days a week inside Ellendale Public School and two at Edgeley, serving a caseload of approximately 30 students between the two schools.

“Those kids are receiving those services right here rather than having to travel 45 or 50 minutes to a bigger area,” Michael said. “We are filling a void that hasn’t been filled before.”

Ellendale Public School is also in the process of staffing a Targeted Case Manager (TCM) through Nexus-PATH to provide even more individualized support for students and their families. Kristen Kaiser, the district's former TCM, has stepped into the role of Site Coordinator for Ellendale Public Schools.

"We were having trouble pushing things across the finish line," Michael said. "We needed that dedicated person."

Among Kristen's first tasks as Site Coordinator has been tackling the issue of childhood hunger in Ellendale. She has established a Backpack Program in partnership with the Great Plains Food Bank and the Ellendale Community Food Pantry. This program sends students at risk of hunger home on Friday with a backpack full of nutritious meals and snacks to get them through the weekend.

In its first two months, Ellendale's Backpack Program has already served 29 students every week.

"We are going beyond academics and meeting additional dimensions of students' needs," Michael said. "By partnering with Great Plains and our local food bank, we're able to address those insecurities or concerns to meet the needs of the whole child."

And students are not the only ones benefiting from Ellendale's participation in NDFSCS. With the additional capacity of a Site Coordinator, an on-site therapist, and a Targeted Case Manager, staff have regained the time and energy to focus on meeting the needs of their students and growing as professionals.

"These additional services have been very powerful for our staff," Michael said. "They feel supported as a result of the partnerships that have been created within our school."



WHO WE ARE

We are a Consortium representing a variety of ND schools and organizations who are passionate about helping ND students and families succeed.



WHAT WE DO

We partner with local leaders to coordinate comprehensive supports in areas such as wellness, workforce readiness, and academic enrichment to help students, families, and communities thrive.



WHY WE DO IT

Students cannot learn when their basic needs are not met. Not all schools have the resources to meet all needs. NDFSCS supports schools and community partners in navigating these challenges together.



North Dakota Full-Service Community Schools serve as a place and a set of collaborative partnerships that embrace a whole-child, whole-family approach to student success.

Visit ndfscs.org/schools to learn more.