

# Northern Cass Public School

## School Profile

2022

### QUICK FACTS

**Location:** Hunter, ND (Rural)

**Year Joined:** 2021

**Grades:** Pre-K through 12

**Enrollment:** 685

**NDFSCS Implementation Team:**

Site Coordinator, Superintendent, Elementary + Secondary Principals, School Counselors, Nexus-PATH Targeted Case Manager, Speech-Language Pathologist



“We are a small, rural school that is doing big, innovative things.”

— Dr. Cory Steiner, Superintendent



**Website:**  
[www.northerncassschool.org](http://www.northerncassschool.org)

### IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Located in Hunter, North Dakota, Northern Cass School is a one-building district serving learners from six nearby communities. With limited resources available to learners in the communities they serve, Northern Cass has both an opportunity and responsibility to help fill in the gaps.

“We are a small, rural school that is doing big, innovative things,” said Dr. Cory Steiner, Superintendent of Northern Cass School.

In early 2021, Northern Cass connected with the North Dakota Full-Service Community Schools Consortium (NDFSCS) in the hope of eliminating the barriers facing learners and strengthening the school’s relationship with the community. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic put life—and essential funding—on hold.

Now, a year later and with the support of NDFSCS Site Coordinator Amber Lockhart, Northern Cass is establishing a

system of support to help learners reach their full potential.

“I think of myself as a community organizer in the school,” Lockhart said. “My role is to see what needs are going unmet and determine how we can pair our school resources with community resources to help meet those needs.”

The school’s rural location, 25 miles from Fargo, has resulted in limited physical and mental health services and rampant food insecurity. Lockhart has helped foster and grow relationships with pipeline service providers such as Great Plains Food Bank and Nexus-PATH to meet these needs.

Great Plains Food Bank is the fiscal sponsor for the school’s food pantry, where learners can access a wide variety of nutritious foods for their family in a safe, familiar location. Great Plains and Northern Cass have also piloted a project called Lunch Repack, where unserved school lunches are frozen and packaged in

microwave-safe containers and distributed to learners in need.

Despite being a new program, Lockhart says that Lunch Repack is already having a huge impact on the school.

"We had a little guy come up and say 'I'm worried about what I'm going to eat this weekend,'" Lockhard said. "We were able to send him home with food in his hands and a smile on his face."

To ensure that learners' basic needs beyond hunger are being met, Northern Cass has partnered with Nexus-PATH to bring Targeted Case Management to the school. A licensed social worker is on-site two days a week, meeting with learners and their families to gain greater understanding of their needs and help them access essential supports and services.

Dr. Steiner has seen the power of Targeted Case Management reflected in one learner in particular. This learner was new to the district, and upon arriving, was combative and disengaged.

"You wouldn't believe the transformation that has happened. And it's been because they've been wrapped so tightly in terms of mental health needs, medical needs, and family support," Dr. Steiner said. "Having been in my position for so long, I can say that that kid has a chance now."

Northern Cass's journey to becoming a Full-Service Community School has been more than a year in the making. Now, this small, rural school is transforming the lives and learning of learners by ensuring that their basic needs are met.

"I've worked with Regional Education Associations throughout my entire career. I knew that any time we'd engaged with them, something positive had happened for our learners. I knew that we would get thought partners," Dr. Steiner said. "It's far exceeded what I thought we would get."



## 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](https://ndfscs.org/schools) to learn more.