

# Heart River Elementary School

## School Profile

2023



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM

## QUICK FACTS

**Location:** Dickinson, ND

**Year Joined:** 2022

**Grades:** K-5

**Enrollment:** 250

**NDFSCS Implementation Team:**

Site Coordinator, Elementary Principal,  
Director of Special Education

“It’s really had a remarkable impact so far in terms of what we’ve been able to provide for our students and their families,”

— Randy Muffley, Principal

## Website:

[dickinson.k12.nd.us/schools/heartriver](http://dickinson.k12.nd.us/schools/heartriver)

## IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Of Dickinson Public Schools’ six elementary buildings, Heart River has the highest numbers of both English language learners and students on free and reduced lunch—and with a unique student body comes a unique set of opportunities and challenges. The entire staff have collaborated to create and implement systems to meet students’ needs, like trauma-informed practices and the character-building Positivity Project.

Even with a school-wide commitment to serving students, Heart River encountered an obstacle: a disconnect between schools, families, and community services.

“The Dickinson area has a lot of different services, but there was not an understanding of what those services were or how they might help our families and students,” Muffley said. “The challenge is that you have to get out to connect with those services, and that’s not always an easy task as an administrator.”

In the fall of 2022, Dickinson Public Schools was awarded a grant through the North Dakota Full Service Community Schools Consortium (NDFSCS) that would allow Heart River to hire a dedicated Site Coordinator to take on the task of bridging the gap between school and community—and Muffley knew just the person for the role.

In her years as both a substitute teacher and a Heart River parent, Sherry Leavitt spent time getting to know both staff and students at the school.

“I was so intrigued with the work and what I could do to help,” Leavitt said. “What grabbed me the most is that you can really have an impact and help.”

In the few months since Leavitt joined Heart River as Site Coordinator, she has begun forming partnerships with local leaders to coordinate comprehensive support in areas like wellness, workforce readiness, and academic achievement.

In May 2023, Heart River implemented virtual wellness services through the North Dakota eCare School Health Program. This partnership allows students to receive safe, effective care from a registered nurse via telehealth—a significant gain for Heart River, considering no schools within the district have a designated in-building nurse.

Leavitt has also coordinated several well-attended events with the intention of improving family presence within the school, including a STEM Night, Health and Wellness Fair, and Literacy Festival.

“We want our school to be known as a place where families can seek out assistance, whether it’s for physical health, mental health, or other services,” Muffley said. “It’s not even been a full year, but it’s really had a remarkable impact so far in terms of what we’ve been able to provide for our students and their families.”



## WHO WE ARE

We are an organization of educators, health professionals, and parents. Above all, we are a group of people passionate about helping students and schools 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 and families thrive.



## WHY WE DO IT

Students cannot learn when their basic needs are not being met, but not all schools have the resources to meet these needs. With NDFSCS, schools don’t have to navigate these challenges alone.



As the North Dakota Full-Service Community Schools Consortium, we believe that students learn best when their basic needs are being met. We help coordinate comprehensive supports in areas such as wellness, workforce readiness, and academic enrichment to help students and families thrive.

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