

# Dickinson Middle School School Profile

2024

## QUICK FACTS

**Location:** Dickinson, ND

**Grades:** 6-8

**Enrollment:** 885



“In order to be in a good place to learn, we have to make sure their other needs are met. That takes a lot of different people.”

— Janelle Yoder,  
Assistant Principal

## Website:

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

## IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Like so many other rural and rural-adjacent schools, Dickinson Middle School wanted to do more for its students. However, like many rural schools, it lacked the necessary time and infrastructure to access and implement the resources that would help its students.

“It’s tough to learn if you’re hungry, or if you’re not feeling safe,” explained Dickinson Middle School Assistant Principal Janelle Yoder. “In order to be in a good place to learn, we have to make sure their other needs are met. That takes a lot of different people.”

Today, Dickinson Middle School is poised to provide for students more than they ever could before. Thanks to becoming a member of the North Dakota Full Service Community Schools (NDFSCS) Consortium in 2023 and hiring its own Site Coordinator, Dickinson can now begin to access the resources its students need—all while becoming a hub for the community.

Dickinson Middle School’s Site Coordinator Caroline Wood spends her workdays bridging the gap between the school and the surrounding community.

“This job aligned with the work I want to do,” Wood said.

Wood works with the school and community to match local resources with the needs of the school. She bridges the gaps created by the lack of time and resources that many rural North Dakota schools experience.

As a member of the NDFSCS Consortium, Wood and Dickinson Middle School have a network of support. All the Consortium’s Site Coordinators work together to identify and share programs and resources, as well as learn from each other about community options. The schools don’t undergo the transition from school to Full-Service Community School alone, and they’re not left siloed after becoming established either. They’re supported by schools who have already navigated the transition.

That network of support benefits the students, too. Through the connections of NDFSCS Site Coordinators, schools can find and access programs they might not otherwise know about.

Middle school years can present unique challenges and programs within the Full-Service Community Schools model can support navigating barriers to learning. Thanks to Wood’s teamwork with Dickinson Middle School and the surrounding community, programs like the BackPack

Program address individual food insecurity for Dickinson Middle School students. A district-wide food pantry, through a partnership with Great Plains Food Bank, serves as a support for students and their families.

Students also begin to develop an interest in career readiness during their middle school years. Finding and accessing diverse programming to introduce students to careers they may not run across in day-to-day life was an insurmountable challenge. Wood is working to change that—she helped connect the school to Gateway to Science, where students got to participate in robotics labs. Participation in programs like Gateway to Science aligns with the school's larger goal of creating more opportunities for their learners in relation to workforce readiness.

Site Coordinators like Wood can also support family engagement. Middle school is a crucial developmental period for students and meaningfully involved parents can support their students' physical, mental, social, and academic growth. Wood has built a relationship with Badlands Human Service Center to strengthen Family Functional Therapy (FFT), which was initiated by parents. By leveraging available resources through the consortium and beyond, Wood creates and cultivates opportunities for the school and the surrounding community. After all, students do better when parents are doing well.

Dickinson Middle School is preparing to bring in a professional artist to enrich art instruction for students through a partnership with ND Council on the Arts and Southwest Art Gallery and Science Center.. Wood is also working to bring in the Hidden in Plain Sight program through partnership with the Southwest District Health Unit, which educates parents about how children might store and hide drug paraphernalia to help families stop drug abuse.

"It takes a lot of different people working together to get services out to students," Yoder said. "Now, I see staff and Caroline working together to get services out to students."

Towards the end of the school year in 2024, Wood spent time with the sixth graders in their classrooms. She wanted their ideas, feedback, and input on what they needed and wanted from the community, and what would help them thrive.

"I worry kids in this age range might feel like they're being left behind," Wood said. "Their opinion matters at Dickinson Middle School."

For Wood, empowering those kids is what drives her. "I want to make some sort of difference for this school and for the community."

Assistant Principal Yoder agrees. "Every year, I try and find a way to help the kids be successful when they leave the school system," she said. "We want them to succeed."



## 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.