

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.”

— Dickinson Middle School Assistant Principal

IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Website:

dickinson.k12.nd.us/schools/dms

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 the Dickinson Middle School Assistant Principal. “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.”

Thanks to becoming a member of the North Dakota Full Service Community Schools (NDFSCS) Consortium in 2023, Dickinson Middle School Today, Dickinson Middle School provides for students more than they ever could before. The school worked with NDFSCS to hire its own Site Coordinator, and can access the resources its students need—all while becoming a hub for the community.

The Dickinson Middle School Site Coordinator spends workdays connecting the school and the surrounding community. “This job aligned with the work I want to do,” they said.

The Site Coordinator works with the school and community to match local resources with the needs of the school. They bridge the gaps created by the lack of time and resources that many rural North Dakota schools experience.

As a member of the NDFSCS Consortium, the Site Coordinator 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 a typical school to a Full-Service Community School alone, and they’re not left siloed after becoming established either. They’re supported by schools that 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.

A learner’s middle school years can present unique challenges, and programs within the Full-Service Community Schools model can support navigating barriers to learning. Thanks to the Site Coordinator’s teamwork with Dickinson Middle School and the surrounding community, programs like the Backpack Program address individual food insecurity for its learners. 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. The Site Coordinator works to change that—they help connect the school to Gateway to Science, where students participated 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 the one at Dickinson Middle School 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. The Site Coordinator 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, the Site Coordinator 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 working to partner with the ND Council on the Arts and Southwest Art Gallery and Science Center to enrich art instruction for students. The Site Coordinator also works to bring in the Hidden in Plain Sight program through a 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," said the Assistant Principal. "Now, I see staff and the Site Coordinator working together to get services out to students."

During the year, the Site Coordinator spends time with sixth graders in their classrooms. They want the student's ideas, feedback, and input on what they need and want from the community, and what would help them thrive.

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

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

The Assistant Principal agrees. "Every year, I try and find a way to help the kids be successful when they leave the school system," they 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 to learn more.