

Solen Public School District School Profile

2022



QUICK FACTS

Location: Solen, ND and Cannon Ball, ND (Rural)

Year Joined: 2019

Grades: Pre-K through 12

Enrollment: 235+

NDFSCS Implementation Team:

Solen High School Principal, Cannon Ball Elementary School Principal, Site Coordinator, School Counselor

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— Solen High School Principal



Website:
www.solen.k12.nd.us

IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Located on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in western North Dakota, Solen Public School District consists of Solen High School and Cannon Ball Elementary School.

It is a unique district, with unique needs. The poverty rate is just over 50 percent; the Principal of Solen High School, explains that students also face high rates of trauma, abuse, addiction, and other barriers to success.

“Our students deserve to have a quality education, but that has turned into more than just academics, especially in a community like ours. If we’re not supporting the basic needs of our students, it’s hard for them to even try to be successful in the classroom.”

However, the district’s rural location also makes it difficult to provide the services and attention that students need to overcome these challenges. Between the two schools, Solen Public School District averages just 20 full-time teachers

each year. This forces everyone to wear multiple hats; a school counselor may end up teaching a class, while a Special Education teacher leads an elective course.

In order to better meet the holistic needs of their students, Solen Public School District partnered with the North Dakota Full Service Community Schools Consortium (NDFSCS) in the fall of 2019. In 2021, the district brought in their first NDFSCS Site Coordinator.

“My students come first. I will drop whatever I am doing to address their needs, but sometimes things have to be put on the back burner even when we don’t want them to,” the Principal said. “To have a Site Coordinator who is aligned with our goals come in and focus on finding solutions has been incredibly helpful.”

Site Coordinators focus first on identifying needs, connecting with service providers, and coordinating

supports. Solen Public School District's most pressing needs include food insecurity, physical and behavioral health, family engagement, and transportation.

The nearest grocery stores to the district schools are in Mandan and Fort Yates, a nearly 30-minute drive in each direction. This leaves students with limited access to nutritious, diverse foods. In coordination with the Great Plains Food Bank, Solen Public Schools has opened a food pantry (which they have cleverly named the "Sioux-per Value"). The pantry is open to the entire community, and within its first month, demand has nearly quadrupled.

"We have increased our original order to the Great Plains Food Bank by several hundred pounds," Solen Public School District's Site Coordinator said.

Transportation also poses a barrier to receiving adequate health care. The Avel eCare School Health Program allows students to meet virtually with a licensed nurse without ever leaving school. If students are experiencing a physical health concern, they can receive a virtual checkup before making an unnecessary trip to the doctor, several miles away.

"Not only does Avera eCare help with the communication piece, but they can also save the families so much time when resources are already limited," the Site Coordinator noted.

Behavioral health resources are limited across the nation, but especially in a rural Tribal community. Students struggling with behavioral and mental health issues can also receive care through the Avel eCare School Health Program. Seven students in Solen Public School District are currently utilizing this service. These students meet with the same provider every week until they graduate from the program, giving them the stability, skills, and support they need to be successful.

"As an administrator, I feel more confident and able to do my job. We have access to reliable resources that support students and give school staff the confidence to make decisions," the Solen High Principal said. "At the end of the day our goal is to improve the life of our students. [The Consortium] has really been life-changing for 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.