

Site Coordinators: The Foundation for Full-Service Community Schools

2024

QUICK FACTS

Provider: North Dakota Full-Service Community Schools (NDFSCS) Consortium and Central Regional Education Organization (CREA)

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What it is:

A Site Coordinator is embedded in a school to create a partnership between community resources and schools so that the school can be a hub of support for students, families, and communities. Using a whole-child, whole-family approach, Site Coordinators help increase family engagement through connections to essential services, to academic enrichment, or to community programs.

HOW IT WORKS

Ask most administrators and school staff what they most wish for and they'll usually say, "more time." Educators devote their energies to classroom instruction, remediation, assessment, and necessary adaptations; administrators are working to help their staff and students succeed within budget constraints. On top of that, more students are coming to school with complex challenges or unique needs that require individualized attention. Those demands require extra effort and resources that many schools want to provide, yet lack the time and personnel to offer effectively.

A Full-Service Community School Site Coordinator is the missing piece that many schools need to make their great ideas become a reality. Because for schools, it's seldom a lack of resources required to meet needs, it's a lack of coordinated effort to create partnership between schools and community resources. Site Coordinators connect the



NORTH DAKOTA
FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM

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dots, build bridges, and help transform schools into the hub of their communities for students and families. As Anne Williamson, the Integrated Student Support Services Chief of Staff, emphasizes, "Site Coordination is at the heart of the full-service community school model. It is really the catalyst that allows schools to take their programming to the next level through partnership."

SITE COORDINATORS: THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Becoming a Full-Service Community School includes the essential component of staffing a dedicated Site Coordinator. A Site Coordinator leads NDFSCS implementation efforts and is foundational in building bridges between staff, families and the community. The staffing of the role occurs through a collaborative effort

between NDFSCS consortium leadership and school leaders. The staffing model has proven to be highly effective and supportive for schools as consortium leadership provides supervision, training, ongoing support and connection to the statewide network of Site Coordinators through one collaborative team.

Site Coordinators prioritize building trusted relationships within schools and communities to best understand needs, assets and strengthen partnership. Intentional collaboration within school teams ensures Site Coordinator planning efforts are aligned with established school goals, strategic vision and priorities.

While experience in the field of education can be helpful, what matters most is that Site Coordinators have the skills to establish trusted relationships, assess needs through engaging stakeholders and collecting data, and effectively coordinate and implement programs and services through partnership. While Site Coordinators may come from varied backgrounds and fields, they hold one thing in common: a deep belief that the school is a great place to meet students and families where they are at with the programs and services they need to reach their fullest potential.

FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: EMBRACING A WHOLE-CHILD APPROACH TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Building and maintaining partnerships between the school and established community organizations makes a North Dakota Full-Service School a hub that ensures students and their families have access to the support they need to be successful. Because Site Coordinators have a deep understanding of local community context and assets and work alongside educators and staff to understand the needs of a specific school, they are able to lead implementation efforts for enhancing existing partnerships and exploring new ones.

Site Coordinators collaborate with external partners and direct service providers to offer essential services through the school such as food, clothing, healthcare, dental, or

vision programs. Ensuring needs are met in the classroom, Site Coordinators often support their school teams with exploring evidence-based programs and resources for both remedial and academic enrichment. Additionally, increasing opportunities for meaningful family engagement is often top priority for Full-Service Community Schools. We know

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that students have a greater chance of success when their families are equipped with the tools needed to be partners in their school journey. Family engagement could look like STEM events that provide hands-on learning opportunities between students and caregivers or parent coaching services that provide one-to-one support to caregivers in navigating the ups and downs with confidence. Site Coordinators keep the whole-child/whole-family unit top of mind as they consider programs and services.

As Site Coordinators provide links between their school and outside resources, they also share programs and resources on a state-wide basis by working with Site Coordinators from other districts to share best practices, relevant program and funding opportunities, and find support in problem solving potential barriers. The NDFSCS Consortium statewide network of coordinators provides a community of practice among their unique peer group and gives a Coordinator the ability to harness collective solutions for complex challenges.

SUCCESS AS A NORTH DAKOTA FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The “Why” behind the importance of the Full-Service Community Schools model is simple. The needs of students and families are ever-present, and schools are simply not equipped with the time, expertise or resources to meet all needs. Reducing access barriers and bridging gaps in support is needed. ND Full-Service Community Schools open their minds to partnership and their doors to the partners and providers who can deliver enhanced support so that they can focus on what they entered the field of education to do: to educate students and help them reach their fullest potential. Site Coordinators are the advocate and driving force behind connecting schools to local, regional and state-wide resources and support to transform traditional schools into community schools.

NDFSCS member schools report increased engagement, attendance, and behavioral improvements because student and family needs are being met. A school administrator emphasized the power of becoming a Full-Service Community School noting: “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. At the end of the day our goal is to improve the life of our students. [Being a member of NDFSCS] has really been life-changing for our school.”

HOW TO DO IT

To find out more about becoming a Full-Service Community School, contact:

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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.



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.com/providers to learn more.