

Ness, Pallansch recognized at School Board Meeting

by Devils Lake Journal Staff

The Devils Lake Public School Board met Monday, May 18 at 5 p.m. in regular session. All members of the board were present and following the Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Agenda Approval the discussion began with Continuous Improvement - Student Outcome Goals. First goal progress monitored was 2.3, Post-Secondary Ready. Mr. Kaffer from Central Middle School reported on the Native American Education Advisory Committee, then Mr. Ryan Hanson gave his input from the

Devils Lake High School. Employees recognized for this quarter were both from Minnie H Kindergarden Center, so Mrs. Krogfoss introduced them both; Teacher of the Quarter Katie Ness, who is Instructional Coach at Minnie H and Karen Pallansch, who is Head Cook at Minnie H. Both took a moment to thank everyone who nominated them and the school board members one by one congratulated them with handshakes or a hug. There were no community members signed up to speak at the board meeting, but Chairman Cory Meyer read the

board's policy regarding signing up for speaking. A consent Agenda of 11 items was approved. Three policies were on the agenda for discussion and possible rescinding; FAB - School Assignment, FEBA - Chemical Abuse Pre-Assessment Team (CAPT) and FEF - Student Social Event. Action on these items is pending. The superintendent submitted his report and the Time Tracker for the April 27, 2026 Meeting. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Devils Lake School Board will be on June 22, 2026 at 5 p.m.



Louise Oleson DLJ

Programs aim to get rural North Dakotans moving, eating healthier



Photo provided by NDSU.

Participants gather water for a 4H group working at a community garden in Williston last year. As part of North Dakota's program for using federal Rural Health Transformation Program funding, community gardens like this could see expansions and improvements.



Photo provided by NDSU Extension.

Youth campers make tortillas and pizza dough from scratch at a North Dakota 4H Camp last year in Washburn. Camp participants also took part in a Healthy Camp Challenge where all children received pedometers to track their daily step total while in camp.

Federal grants set to flow to community gardens, activity programs

By Michael Standaert, North Dakota News Cooperative

Chronic disease and metabolic dysfunction affect large numbers of North Dakotans.

Several new programs coming soon to rural areas aim to reverse that by getting people moving and making healthy, whole foods more accessible.

"What I want people to know is that moving is the most important thing we can do to stave off chronic disease, and to change the trajectory of it if you're starting to experience it," said Pat Traynor, interim commissioner at ND Health and Human Services.

"That is a huge, huge problem for us as humans, and there's a huge cost to it over time," Traynor said.

Of the \$199 million in Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) grants coming to the state over the next year, a total of \$3.5 million is dedicated to three programs encouraging movement, healthy eating and community cohesiveness.

That includes \$2.5 million for rural areas to establish community walking programs, \$700,000 for piloting before-school physical education programs



at schools, and another \$300,000 for establishing or scaling up community garden programs.

These address two pillars of the Make North Dakota Healthy Again program, ND Moves Together and ND Eats Well.

"We want to make it contagious, making walking and eating well contagious," Traynor said. "And let's do it together, so we're socially connected, because we have a crisis of friendship, a crisis of loneliness, we have anxiety and depression."

Trending in the wrong direction

A look at the numbers shows how unhealthy many have become.

A total of 9.8% in North Dakota have diabetes, and another 32.2% have prediabetes, according to American Diabetes Association numbers.

Around 31% of the adult population in the state is obese, a rate that could reach 54% by 2030, the New England Journal of Medicine projected in 2023.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the state and around 30% of all North Dakotans have high blood pressure, North Dakota Health and Human Services figures show.

On the mental health side, 18% reported their

mental health was "not good" eight or more days in a month, data from 2025 shows. Around 25% reported some form of mental illness over the past year including depression, anxiety and hopelessness.

Walking together

A total of 35 applications for community walking programs were submitted, Traynor said, with around 20 expected to be selected.

One hopeful applicant is First District Health Unit, which serves seven counties in the north-central part of the state.

Holly Brekhus, Minot-based executive director of the unit, said their proposal centers on finding a coordinator who will then utilize the public health nurses in each community to create walking programs across the area.

Proposals must include at least one community walk once per week and another two that can be individually done and logged, she said, with nurses also able to provide nutrition guidance and ensure people are getting their normal health screenings.

"It would kind of vary by community," Brekhus said. "If it's a tight-knit group, and they want to walk together three times a week, great."

Communities, no matter where they are, will likely need to collaborate with schools and other organizations that have indoor space that could be utilized



Photo provided by Gina McKee.

Raised beds ready for planting at the Towner Community Garden. If selected for a grant as part of the Rural Health Transformation Program, the garden could double the number of beds and other improvements.

for walking programs, particularly in deep winter or during other inclement weather periods, she said.

Gardening together

For the community garden program, 45 applications have come into HHS, with around 10 to be selected as pilots.

Gina McKee, who runs Prairie Wild Garden Company, has submitted a grant request. Earlier in the year McKee had been contracted to set up the Towner Community Garden project through a grant from the local soil conservation district to use a vacant lot in the town.

Now that this has been established, a RHTP grant could help cover some operational costs and double the amount of raised beds and help with other improvements, McKee said.

She's hopeful the grant will come through, particularly since the grant materials requested already established plots of outlines for programs that could be scaled up soon.

"It was excellent timing

with the grant availability," McKee said. "Had we not started yet, and already had some funding, it probably wouldn't have worked for us this year."

McKee said she hopes to work with NDSU Extension, which could hold educational workshops and training at the site, and sees potential collaboration with other groups like 4H.

Julie Garden-Robinson, a nutrition and food safety professor at NDSU Extension, was already selected for an RHTP grant for just over \$500,000 as part of the ND Eats Well Together pillar.

The grant will help NDSU Extension expand on existing outreach programs about nutrition and healthy eating and increase the ability to collaborate on projects across the state, like the community garden program.

"We're excited to have this funding because there's a lot of things that we never could do because we have limited funding," Garden-Robinson said.

Zero-hour PE programs
Another grant will support around 10 pilot programs for establishing "Zero-hour PE" initiatives at schools.

This would allow for the creation of structured 30-45 minutes of physical activity before school for middle and high school students with a component for tracking that activity through fitness tracking wearable devices.

So far, 23 applications have been submitted, Traynor said.

"We know physical activity improves academic performance as well as gets people hooked on activity that otherwise wouldn't have this opportunity, because they might not be in a sport," Traynor said. Traynor said funding for these programs will be available to ensure kids in rural areas can get to the sessions outside of the normal busing operations.

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Richard Flanders
David and I would like to thank everyone for their kindness over the past year after my dad's passing. We have been blessed with overwhelming kindness from family, friends, and people we have just met. We can't thank you enough for everything you have done to help us.
Kari Flanders Hill

"With grateful hearts, we wish to thank everyone for their prayers, support, and kindness shown during our time of loss and remembrance. From the touches of her favorite color purple to the remarkable gathering of family and friends and community, we were able to see and reflect on the incredible life she led. We are comforted knowing she is at peace and we will see her again someday!"
THE FAMILY OF SHEILA WINDFUE

DEVILS LAKE MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC
Tuesday, June 16
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
At Dockside Entertainment