

# Wyndmere’s Rizzy Readers win regional North Dakota Battle of the Books competition

BY CAMERON SUTPHIN  
Reporter

The Rizzy Readers (Kaylee Bernard, Samuel Severance, Ella Severance and Olivia Hetland) of Wyndmere Middle School were victorious at the regional North Dakota Regional Battle of the Books competition.

Wyndmere faced off against three other teams from Williston and West Fargo. The competition was virtual, so the students did not have to travel across the state. The students were addressed team by team to answer questions, since the teams could not buzz in. North Dakota State Library Literacy Specialist Tammy

Kruger moderated the event.

Students had to read 12 books to prepare for the competition. During the summer, a committee of around half a dozen teachers from across the state chose which books the students would read and created the questions for the competition.

Students started reading the 12 books in the fall of 2024. The classroom competition was held in March 2025, and then the regional competition was held on Tuesday, April 15. There is no state competition this year.

First, students participated in a round called Academic Wiz Kid, where they filled



LEFT: Wyndmere Middle School students get ready for the virtual ND Regional Battle of the Books competition. RIGHT: The ND Regional Battle of the Books competition middle school teams and moderator.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

in the answers to questions about the 12 books in a packet. Each student had 90 seconds to answer each question in the packet. Students also competed in a team vs. team battle and a quiz-style battle.

This is the second

year Wyndmere Middle School students have participated in the North Dakota Regional Battle of the Books competition.

“I was really surprised that our students won. I was expecting the larger

schools to be the winners, simply because the format of how Wyndmere kids have done book battles for the last three to four years hasn’t been as intricate as what they did through the state library,” Wyndmere Li-

brian and Senior English teacher Jennifer Manstrom said.

Since 2024, Manstrom has coordinated with other educators throughout the state in an effort to make Battle of the Books a larger statewide competition.

# Daily News Exclusive: Interview with Representative Julie Fedorchak

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During a recent visit to Wahpeton, United States Representative Julie Fedorchak (North Dakota District At Large, Republican) started her day with a three-hour tour of the North Dakota State College of Science. She also had a meeting with city officials for an hour to discuss local funding issues.

Rep. Fedorchak granted the Daily News a one-on-one interview during the day.

**Daily News:** President Trump is attempting to use tariffs as a negotiation tactic. At what point are you willing to go against your own party and say the tariffs are doing more harm than good?

**Rep. Fedorchak:** I’ve been very clear about this from the beginning. A vast majority of North Dakotans supported President Trump, and he was very clear that he was going to deal with the unfair tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers with all of our trading partners. I’m going to support what he’s doing and give him space to help deliver the vision that he has in mind, which is to improve and create better trading relationships and create a more fair and level playing field for all of our producers, manufacturers, etc., and help return some of the supply chain manufacturing back to the U.S.

Now, that said, how I am approaching it is I’m in constant contact with our business community. I’ve met with many different farm groups. Yesterday, I was with every single main farm group in our state. I have had a roundtable with GT Thompson (U.S. House of Representatives), head of the House Agricultural Committee, and all of the aquatic groups in North



CAMERON SUTPHIN

Rep. Julie Fedorchak sat down with the Daily News for an exclusive interview.

Dakota and farming and ranching organizations to talk through some of these issues with them.

I am doing the same with manufacturers, main street businesses, etc., so I understand what the issues are and what the concerns are. I’ve also had two meetings with the U.S. Trade Representative Office to share those concerns.

President Trump had the initial round of these tariffs globally in place for only a week and felt like, okay, we’ve got people’s attention; now we’re going to negotiate. That was the goal.

There isn’t a reason to lay out a timeline for when I may or may not do something; this is still very much a dynamic situation—it’s early. I think, largely from my conversations with North Dakotans, they’re concerned, but they understand the goal; they want to see if it’s going to work.

**DN:** You just had your first 100 days in office. What does the first day in office feel like?

**Rep. Fedorchak:** Awesome and humbling. I am a big believer in a government that works for the citizens, so having the ability to try to effectively represent North Dakota in Washington is just an awesome experience.

It’s also really humbling because I know how impactful federal policy is on North Dakota, whether it’s tax policy, trade policy, the regula-

tory policies of this country and all the federal agencies, infrastructure needs, road bridges, or energy policy, which has such a huge impact on our state.

Agriculture policy — we are such an ag and energy state, federal policy has a huge impact, and being able to have a voice in shaping that policy is a really awesome responsibility. I’m very excited about it; I’m encouraged by how we’ve gotten off of the ground in our first 100 days.

I feel we’ve made progress on some of the biggest issues that we face, whether it’s the borders or helping to support President Trump’s efforts to secure the borders and make our communities safer.

Whether it’s working on regulatory relief, we’ve rolled back a number of different regulations that North Dakotans told me were choking them and harmful to their ability to do their work, whether it’s agriculture, energy or business.

Now we’re going to be working on tax policy. That’s another huge bucket of policy that has a major impact on just about every single North Dakotan and all of North Dakota businesses. We want to make sure that we continue the current tax policy, extend that and make it permanent if possible, so we avoid having the largest tax increase in American his-

tory ... That’s our next big step in the next few weeks.

Then dealing with the budget, trying to get our budget back in balance. Another thing I heard from North Dakotans all the time is our federal government has gotten too big, it’s unaffordable, our debt and our deficit are going to crush us, and we have to put our government on a sustainable path for the future.

**DN:** In terms of reducing the debt and the deficit, at some point the third rails are going to have to be touched, like Medicare and Social Security. What are your opinions on touching those to reduce the deficit?

**Rep. Fedorchak:** I have strong feelings about Social Security. We’ve all paid into Social Security most of our working lives. No matter what generation you’re from, you started doing that when you were probably, in my case I think it was 14 when I started working and paying social security, that’s not the government’s money. Those are the people who had that money taken out of their checks and put into Social Security, with the promise they’re going to get it back when they’re older.

My goal, long term—that’s not something we’re dealing with right now, but longer term—will be to help make Social Security sustainable so it’s available for future generations. It is an important priority; it’s not something we’re able to tackle right now because we’re dealing with this reconciliation process.

Social Security is not allowed to be part of that. But long term, it might even be after my first term, that we’re going to be able to tackle that big issue ... That might be the next time around, but I am defi-

nately committed to addressing that when the time comes and coming up with solutions to make it sustainable.

**DN:** Are you for solar and wind energy subsidies?

**Rep. Fedorchak:** Because of my 12 years of experience in the public service commission and a lot of experience in DG (decentralized generation) markets, my biggest concern is having a federal energy policy that supports reliability and affordability long-term.

In my opinion, subsidies should be used to help new technologies get off the ground and prove them. We have had the subsidies in place for solar and wind for 30 years. They currently are very competitive; they currently make up 17% of our nation’s energy supply, so I do not think that subsidies for wind and solar are warranted anymore; that’s why I introduced legislation to phase them out.

What our grid operators across the board, throughout the country, are asking for is dispatchable resources: gas, coal, nuclear, small modular nuclear, battery things they can turn on when needed ... Solar

and wind, their downside is they’re only available when there’s sun or there’s wind; that doesn’t always happen when you need the power, so we need those dispatchable resources.

**DN:** What are your hopes for the 2026 midterm election for your seat and the Republicans picking up more of a majority?

**Rep. Fedorchak:** I hope that in the next year and a half we have really strong results from this hard work that we’re doing right now to reduce the regulatory burden on our businesses and investors, that we’re able to help spur more economic growth and job growth and reduce inflation and all those things that have a huge impact on everyday citizens through our tax policy, other policies, and pro-growth policies.

We’re going to have stronger, safer, more secure communities through our efforts with border control and immigration reform. Those policies are going to have huge benefits that Americans are going to see and realize; we will not only maintain our majority but also grow the majority.

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