



StormTRACKER

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StormTRACKER Forecast
Mostly sunny and breezy. West winds with highs in the mid-50s. Cloudier and calm tomorrow, close to 50°

Almanac Through 12 AM Sunday

Temperature	High	Low
Saturday	45°	26°
Normal	45°	26°
Record	77° in 1904	-5° in 1935

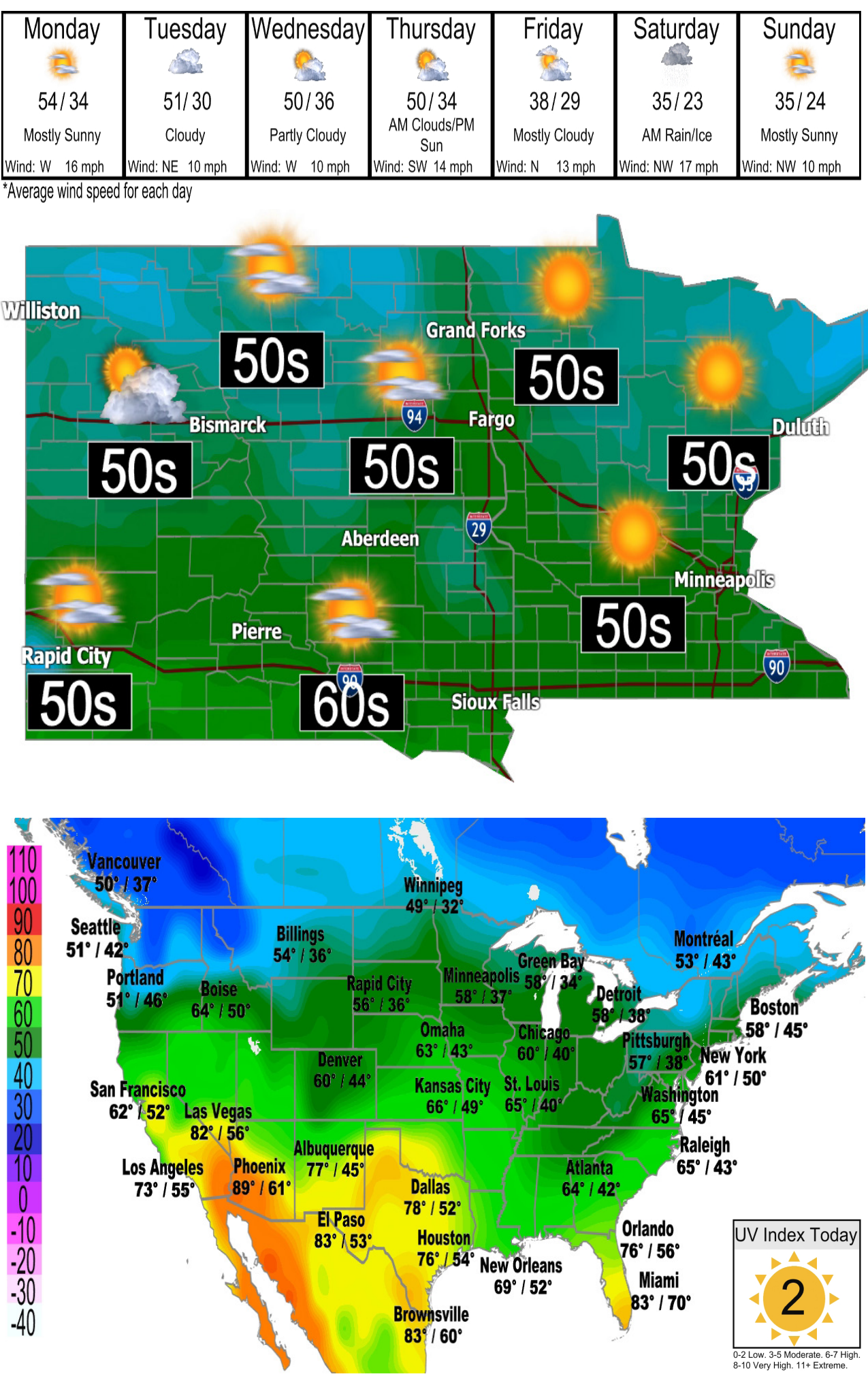
Precipitation In Inches

Saturday	0
Month To Date	0
Departure From Avg Month To Date	-0.03"
Year To Date	16.02"
Departure From Avg Year To Date	-2.98"

Sunrise: 7:20 a.m. Sunset: 5:15 p.m.

	Today		Tomorrow	
North Dakota	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Bismarck	54	35	53	31
Fargo	54	36	55	36
Medora	53	31	49	27
Minot	52	32	49	30
Williston	51	36	46	27

	Today		Tomorrow	
Minnesota	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Alexandria	55	36	56	33
Duluth	54	37	50	37
International Falls	51	32	49	31
Minneapolis	58	37	61	39
Rochester	57	38	61	40



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Slayton stressed that the Mott-Regent school district looks for applicants with state and local ties first, then expands its search nationally, before turning to the international pool.

“It’s not free to bring foreign teachers here, and we wouldn’t spend that extra money if we had candidates here at home. But the J-1s have been a lifeline for districts like ours, and the H-1Bs would be even better, if they were affordable,” Slayton said.

the Philippines. On a whim, Bluestone called the number in the paper and about eight months later, New Town’s first three J-1 visa teachers arrived.

“They all did a wonderful job. They joined churches, they volunteered. They really became part of the community,” Bluestone said.

Not long after that, speech and language pathologists were no longer allowed to come to the U.S. on J-1 visas, so Bluestone switched over to H-1B visas in order to hire additional specialists and get the original group back.

There are now more than 40 visa-holders teaching in the New Town schools, with a growing number of those on H-1B visas, including all 10 of the new foreign teachers who arrived this year.

“It has saved our school district,” he said.

Bluestone lamented the imposition of the new fee, which he called “a huge detriment” to the district’s efforts to make up for the fact that “we’re just not growing enough people to be teachers here at home.”

North Dakota and other regional teacher career fairs, he said, are especially disheartening, with no new young candidates expressing interest in teaching in remote and

isolated districts like his. The opposite is true about foreign teachers who come to New Town, with about 90% of teachers on visas opting to return after their first J-1 stint, often on H-1B visas in order to try to become permanent residents.

“I just met with a teacher on a J-1 whose time it is to go back to the Philippines and she’s doing a really, really good job, but she’d like to come back on the H-1 next time so she can move towards a green card. But there’s no way our school district could afford to pay another \$100,000 on top of whatever their salary is,” Bluestone said. “We’re going to suffer because of it.”

A spokesman for the Department of Public Instruction said they do not have any data on how many teachers in North Dakota are here on visas, and said they weren’t aware of any districts that relied on foreign teachers for staffing or that were concerned about the new fee.

The state’s Education Standards and Practices Board, which licenses teachers, does not track the number of teachers here on visas, but does keep a record of how many teachers were educated internationally, a statistic that correlates in the majority of cases with visa holders.



Contributed / Rachael Mayer

Jezeel Mulit, left, Eamon Alido, Ailen Alido, Vera Culpable, Christian Culpable, Parah Sison and Romeo Sison are educators at the Mott-Regent School. All are in the United States on J-1 cultural exchange visas.

A review by The Forum of the 376 teachers licensed in North Dakota who got their degrees at foreign institutions showed that one-third of the state’s school districts have at least one internationally-educated teacher on staff. A dozen districts have more than five international teachers. For seven of those, international teachers make up at least one-quarter of their entire teaching staff. For two districts, nearly half of their teachers are foreign-educated.

With the exception of Williston, Grand Forks and Minot, the school districts with five or more foreign teachers are rural and remote, and more than half are, like New Town, on or adjacent to Indian reservations — all areas that have been hardest hit by teacher shortages.

Selfridge Superintendent David Mahon echoed Slayton’s praise for the “outstanding” quality and energy five foreign teachers had brought from the Philippines to his district on Standing Rock Indian Reservation. He said the new H-1B fee “could kill a district” if they were forced to pay that amount in order to fill long-term vacancies.

“Oh yes indeed, we love our Filipino teachers,” Mahon said. “We had no applicants, that’s why we had to go this route, but we have been very fortunate to have them.”

Park River Superintendent Aaron Schraam said the Filipino teachers in his district are part of a growing network of teachers from the Philippines in the northeast corner of the state, but agreed the \$100,000 price tag for H-1B visas could jeopardize

that.

“The way the federal government has chosen to go about this, with the fee, has made an important tool no longer viable for us,” he said.

In late September, the School Superintendents Association of America said it is pushing the Trump administration to make an exemption from the fee for K-12 educators, but so far there has been no indication such a carve out is forthcoming.

In the meantime, two months into the school year, the Mott-Regent district is still waiting patiently for the arrival of their music teacher — his last interview at the embassy was in mid-October, and final approval papers could be issued any day — their first, and now possibly last, H-1B teacher from the Philippines.