

I LOVE THE KIDS

Ben Franklin Middle School educator wins Fargo district's 'Teacher of the Year,' A2

The Forum

OF FARGO-MOORHEAD

LATE EDITION

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DIALING IT DOWN



Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor

Fargo Police Chief David Todd talks about the different ways that officers respond to people threatening suicide.

Responding to a suicidal person, police find it's sometimes 'best to back off'

Fargo

Police here did something they don't often do when dealing with an armed, suicidal man inside an apartment building on a recent Thursday evening.

After exhausting attempts to communicate with him and consulting with his family, officers decided to leave in order to not escalate the situation. The next day, Friday, April 19, police were called back to the Cheyenne Estates apartment complex at 1033 43rd 1/2 St. S., after learning the man had killed himself.

Fargo Police Chief David Todd said his heart goes out to families in these situations. "We do the best we can ... to try to help people, not make things worse," he said.

With mental health problems at the root of many police calls, departments in the Fargo-Moorhead area have continued to put more officers through Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. In Fargo, more than 65 percent of patrol officers are CIT certified; in West Fargo, the number is 64.5 percent; and in Moorhead, 50 to 60 percent, according to their departments. The certification includes



Robin Huebner reports



WDAY photo

Fargo police responded to a report of a man with a gun threatening suicide at the Cheyenne Estates apartment complex on April 18. After not being able to reach the man, police eventually decided that leaving the scene was the best course of action.

Suicide warning signs

- ▶ Talking about wanting to die, feeling trapped or hopeless
- ▶ Changes in school or work performance
- ▶ Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- ▶ Acting anxious or agitated, behaving recklessly
- ▶ Sleeping too much or too little
- ▶ Extreme mood swings

▶ Withdrawing or feeling isolated
Source: FirstLink

What to do

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, please reach out for help. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, answered locally by FirstLink, at 1-800-273-8255. Or text your ZIP code to 898-211 to get help.

intensive, weeklong training on how to de-escalate situations involving people with mental illness, substance abuse problems, or both.

Some of Fargo's specially trained officers were on scene that April night.

"We feel that we had the right people out there. It's just that there isn't always a good ending to some of these calls — despite our efforts, despite family efforts," Todd said.

Capt. Deric Swenson, who leads mental health training and response for the Moorhead Police

Department, said there's no simple method to calm a person who is suicidal. "Every situation is so unique," Swenson said.

'Escalating the situation'

The call answered by Fargo police just after 7 p.m. on April 18 involved a man with a gun who wanted to harm himself. Before officers arrived, property management evacuated the apartment complex.

The situation did not warrant dispatching the Special Weapons and Tactics team, or SWAT,

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UND's Kennedy named University of Colorado president

After weeks of controversy, regents approve hire in 5-4 vote

By Sydney Mook
Forum News Service

AURORA, Colo. — It's official. University of North Dakota President Mark Kennedy has been named the next president of the University of Colorado system.

The CU Board of Regents voted 5-4 Thursday afternoon, May 2, to name Kennedy to the position.

Kennedy was the sole finalist for the job, which oversees more than 67,000 students on four campuses in Aurora, Boulder, Colorado Springs and Denver. He will take over for outgoing President Bruce Benson.

The regents' decision comes after weeks of controversy surrounding Kennedy's nomination, including protests and petitions asking the regents to reconsider.

Kennedy's departure from UND was reportedly met with cheers from students across campus in Grand Forks, while many students, faculty and staff in Colorado were upset by his ensuing arrival.

Kennedy, who was in Colorado for the vote, said he is excited to work with the University of Colorado. He added he also looks forward to helping the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education and North Dakota University System Chancellor Mark Hagerott find an interim president to take over after June 15,

which will be his final day at UND.

Kennedy's appointment did not come easily. Last week, Kennedy visited each of the system campuses. During nearly all of the visits, students and faculty protested Kennedy, as well as the regents' decision to reveal a sole finalist.

Kennedy, a Republican member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 2001 to 2007, faced a barrage of questions about his congressional voting record during each stop. The CU Faculty Council came out against Kennedy, alleging he misrepresented accomplishments on his resume.

During the public comment portion of Thursday's meeting, every commenter spoke out against Kennedy, asking the regents to find a candidate who more closely reflects the views of students, faculty and staff at CU.

Kennedy said he already has reached out to all nine regents in Colorado, including those who voted against him, to "start charting the path for the future." He also said he would meet with CU Faculty Council members, who after the vote asked the CU board to consider starting a transition plan as Kennedy's tenure begins.

"Unity is the order of the day," he said. "I'm going to spend a lot of

KENNEDY: Page A5



Joe Amon / The Denver Post

Mark Kennedy, sole finalist for CU president, holds a town hall meeting for CU system administration and the CU foundation to answer questions April 22 in Denver. He was approved as the University of Colorado's next president on Thursday, May 2.

INSIDE TODAY'S FORUM



BUSINESS: Gunderson's Jewelers ready to shine in Fargo. **PAGE A4**

Discipline, safety issues debated after Fargo teacher's assistant was attacked by student

By Hannah Schlosser
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FARGO — City and state education leaders say there is currently no single approach to addressing school discipline issues after a recent attack on a teacher's assistant in a Fargo middle school.

District spokesper-

son AnnMarie Campbell confirmed that a student at Carl Ben Eielson Middle School assaulted a paraprofessional Monday, April 29, and that the resulting injuries required medical attention. She did not know how severe the injuries were.

The student will be

allowed back at the school, Campbell said.

Superintendent of Fargo Public Schools Rupak Gandhi acknowledges that discipline is an issue in schools, but that it can be difficult to apply it uniformly to every student.

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Today's weather



Chance of showers

62°
41°

Details, D6

- Classifieds C4-8
- Comics B5
- Crosswords B5, C7
- Life B1-6
- Obituaries A6
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KENNEDY

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their chosen area of study and the university continue to flourish with each progressive year," Hagerott said in a prepared statement.

In a statement, the university said it "would like to wish President Kennedy and First Lady Debbie Kennedy all the best as they embark on an exciting new chapter with the CU System."

Former Gov. Ed Schafer, who served as interim president at UND before Kennedy arrived, cautioned people who want to move on quickly from Kennedy and his time at UND.

"I think the most important thing for us now at UND is to be careful not to start all over again," he said, noting there are some areas, like strategic planning, where Kennedy did well.

"He has moved the university in the right direction and I hope that we can continue to build on that rather than stepping back three years and starting all over again," Schafer said.

Now work begins to fill Kennedy's role.

SBHE chair Don Morton said Kennedy's contract will be considered "done" after Kennedy officially resigns. The board will now have to work alongside the university to fill the open position.

Morton said the faculty and staff, along with Hagerott and many others, all have some input into the search process. He added the search process can sometimes be long in academia, as some of the best candidates may not be able to immediately leave their jobs in the middle of the school year.

"The best transition for higher ed is that someone fulfills their current contract, finishes the academic year and then starts the new academic year at their new spot," he said.

Swenson said. In 2018, Fargo police responded to 1,377 calls involving a suicidal person, according to department records. That year, there were 21 completed suicides in the city, according to data from the Cass County Coroner's Office.

Generally, police officers call the mobile teams when they arrive at a scene, but not in every circumstance. "There is that high safety risk if a gun or knife is involved. In those cases, we likely won't go," Schultz said.

The mobile teams and police use the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale to assess a person's suicide risk level and determine how to respond. People at high risk may be taken to a hospital, while someone at low risk might be encouraged to follow up with their

doctor or mental health professional.

Stephanie Schafer, an intensive outpatient program counselor at the Village Family Service Center in Fargo, runs three-hour, daily group discussions for people who need more support than an occasional therapy session.

When she hears of incidents like the one that happened at Cheyenne Estates, she said she thinks about the person involved and the pain they're in, along with concerned family and friends. She also thinks

about law enforcement officers whose job it is to respond. "They see a lot of trauma," she said.

If everyone could be more vigilant and check in more frequently with people who are struggling, Schafer said, it could make a big difference. "Hopefully that keeps us from having situations like that one, a bit more," she said.

Readers can reach Robin Huebner at rhuebner@forumcomm.com. Huebner is also a reporter on WDAY-TV.

Boyd announces retirement from FM Symphony Orchestra

By Ryan Johnson
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FARGO — Linda Boyd, Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra's long-time executive director, will retire from the position this fall after more than a decade in the role.

Boyd made the announcement Thursday, May 2, and the FM



Boyd

Board of Trustees launched a search to find its next executive director. Applications will be accepted through June 30, according to a news release, with an expected start date on

or before Nov. 1. For more information, visit www.fmsymphony.org.

She's served as the executive director since 2007 and previously held the position from 1993 to 1996. Boyd is a longtime music educator and nonprofit arts administrator who also served a term on the Fargo City Commission until 2008 and two

terms on the Fargo School Board until 2018.

The news release said Boyd will continue serving in her current role through the summer and fall.

The FM Symphony Orchestra recently wrapped up its 2018-19 season with the April 28 premiere of Rene Clausen's original piece "Before the Whirlwind."

Marital rape loophole in Minn. law closed with Walz's signature

By Dana Ferguson
Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — Jenny Teeson didn't get justice after her ex-husband raped her. But because of her, other survivors of sexual assault will.

For more than a year, Teeson shared the story of her rape at the Minnesota Capitol to help push a proposal that would eliminate a so-called marital rape exception, a loophole in state law that shields those involved in voluntary relationships from prosecution on charges of sexual misconduct or rape.

When she was going through divorce proceedings, Teeson found videos on her then-husband's hard drive that depicted him raping her while she was unconscious. Her son was lying near her on the bed.

Teeson took her case to law enforcement but she learned that state law included defense against prosecution for those who are involved in voluntary sexual relationships.

The next day, Teeson decided to do something about it. She brought her story to the Legislature

and started making the case for changing the law.

The Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate unanimously passed the bill earlier this year. And on Thursday, May 2, Gov. Tim Walz signed into law the bill repealing that loophole. It takes effect immediately.

"This journey has definitely been long and today is a pivotal moment in Minnesota history," Teeson said. "Today, victims, former victims and people who are still in very difficult situations can know that if they are in an unsafe place, in an uncomfortable place and things are happening to them, that if they do go to the authorities, that justice will be served."

Walz, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and lawmakers along with Teeson's friends and family celebrated the bill's passage Thursday and attributed the change to Teeson's hard work.

"Jenny shared a deeply personal story time and time again in an effort to make Minnesota a more just place for survivors of sexual assault," Flana-



Dana Ferguson / Forum News Service

Gov. Tim Walz on Thursday, May 2, signed into law a bill closing a loophole in state law that shielded those involved in voluntary relationships from prosecution on charges of sexual misconduct or rape.

gan said. "The amount of courage and bravery it takes cannot be (overstated)."

Teeson's mother and father beamed as their daughter spoke to reporters.

"We're so proud of our daughter," Jenny's father Jerry Teeson said. "She changed the world."

Jenny Teeson said that as a result of her testimony, other states have begun reviews of similar laws on their books. She said she would share her story elsewhere if it helped repeal those laws.

Walz said the exception should have never been written into the state's law and credited Teeson with bringing the issue to the attention of the Legislature.

"No longer will this antiquated and shameful law be on our books," Walz said. "The concept of preexisting relationship defense should have never been part of our criminal statutes. It is reprehensible and, because of Jenny, it is now going to be repealed."

Follow Dana Ferguson on Twitter @bydanaferguson, call 651-290-0707 or email dferguson@forumcomm.com

SUICIDE

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Todd said, because the man was not threatening to hurt others. CIT officers tried to call, text, and talk through a door with the man, with no response, the chief said.

"We kind of got a feeling that because of our presence, because of the media presence, that perhaps we were escalating the situation," Todd said.

About four hours later, police called off efforts to connect with the man. "At that point, we'd probably be best to back off a little bit," Todd said.

Sometimes, even the police uniform is an obstacle in these cases. "That's a barrier for us to have open communication,"

found 70% were intimidated or fearful in their classrooms. About half said they had been "hurt" in their classrooms, with others reporting they were physically injured and missed one to even 10 days of work or suffered mental trauma, as did the students.

The survey also found that 63% said there were no "set procedures" in their classrooms when incidents occur, with 76% saying there was no consistency in procedures. Also, 81% said they had been in a lockdown in the classroom that took away educational time.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler said part of that solution may come from research and legislation to push for a uniform system of reporting for violent incidents like the one reported at Carl Ben Eielson Middle School.

"We can understand exactly how many times these destructive issues are happening, how many

injuries are occurring, how many times classrooms need to be cleared," Baesler said.

Baesler and Gandhi both say there's no one-size-fits-all approach to education and discipline in a school setting, but Baesler said that would be the first

step in seeing real change. "We need to have a handle on it," Baesler said. "We need to know exactly what we're dealing with so our legislators can have the facts in front of them and take some action."

Forum Reporter Barry Amundson contributed to this report.

follow-up calls. Stephanie Schafer, an intensive outpatient program counselor at the Village Family Service Center in Fargo, runs three-hour, daily group discussions for people who need more support than an occasional therapy session.

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SAFETY

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"Although we have consistent practices, we need to look at the unique needs of every child," Gandhi said. "I can't sit here and say that we have the solution that's going to help prevent it across the board ... what I can say is that we're committed to looking for the solution."

The assault happened as the Fargo Education Association debates a contract that includes language about teacher safety. The Forum previously reported that a survey was shared Monday, April 29, during contract talks between the school board and the Fargo Education Association union that indicated the majority of teachers surveyed in the district were frightened in the classroom.

Teacher negotiator David Marquardt presented a survey of around 850 Fargo teachers that

found 70% were intimidated or fearful in their classrooms. About half said they had been "hurt" in their classrooms, with others reporting they were physically injured and missed one to even 10 days of work or suffered mental trauma, as did the students.

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