

MEDIA RELEASE



Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

1667 North Snelling Avenue, Suite C101
St. Paul, MN 55108

Contact:

Sam Richardson, Minnesota School of Excellence Program Chair
Greenvale Elementary School Principal
Northfield Public Schools
507-645-3500
Kelsey Gantzer, MESPA Communications & Operations Manager
651-999-7313

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lyndale Community School Validated as a 2017–2018 Minnesota School of Excellence

(St. Paul, MN – August 28, 2017) – Lyndale Community School has been validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This prestigious honor was awarded to Lyndale for its commitment to 21st century teaching and learning.

“Through the Minnesota School of Excellence program, grounded in national research on high-performing schools, MESPA has created the premier opportunity in the state for validating greatness in a school community,” said Jon Millerhagen, MESPA executive director. “This school improvement program examines the entire school community through six national standards, ensuring there is a holistic approach to creating a plan for future achievement and celebrating the unique accomplishments of each School of Excellence.”

Sam Richardson, chair of the School of Excellence Committee, said, “It takes hard work and commitment to thoroughly assess areas of strength and at the same time plan for continual improvement. The SOE process provides an opportunity for the entire school community to reflect on the collaborative work being done and to celebrate these accomplishments. Schools that receive validation have had important data-driven conversations about what a high-quality 21st century learning experience should be for all students and have plans to make that learning experience a reality. Honoring the important work of dedicated staff, eager students, and supportive communities is an essential component of becoming a School of Excellence.”

Lyndale Community School is located in the Minneapolis Public School District and serves Pre-K through 5th grade students. Lyndale strives to provide a positive learning environment that fosters

academic excellence and responsibility; collaboration with and connection to community; integration of the arts into daily life; and community of engagement and diversity.

“The School of Excellence process has benefitted our school in a number of ways,” said Mark Stauduhar, principal of Lyndale Community School. “First, it has challenged us to look deeply at our traditions, policies, practices, and procedures to take stock in how we are serving our school community and identify opportunities for growth. Furthermore, it has allowed us to highlight many of the great things that are happening at our school and take pride in the great work we do. Finally, I believe that will strengthen our image as a viable school option for prospective families, hopefully leading to an increase in student enrollment.”

The School of Excellence process helps schools identify areas of strengths and how they can grow and expand upon those strengths. “One of the strengths highlighted by the School of Excellence process are the many ways in which we partner with our families and the greater community to provide our students with a number of opportunities to learn and find their passions,” said Stauduhar. “Whether it be our Band, Orchestra, or Choral programs, or our partnership with Children’s Theater, our school continually works with people and organizations outside of our school to make these opportunities a reality.”

Eight schools achieved recognition as 2017-2018 Minnesota Schools of Excellence:

- *Sioux Trail Elementary School*, Burnsville–Eagan–Savage School District, Principal Shannon McParland
- *Braham Area Elementary*, Braham Area Schools, Principal Jeff Eklund
- *Jordan Elementary*, Jordan Public Schools, Principal Melissa Barnett, Assistant Principal Carol Lagergren
- *Triton Elementary*, Triton Public Schools, Principal Nancy Stucky
- *Normandale Hills Elementary*, Bloomington Public Schools, Principal Andrew Vollmuth
- *Lyndale Community School*, Minneapolis Public Schools, Principal Mark Stauduhar, Assistant Principal Sarah Hunter
- *Elm Creek Elementary*, Osseo Area Schools, Principal Elizabeth Ness
- *Armatage Montessori*, Minneapolis Public Schools, Principal Joan Franks, Assistant Principal Paul Scanlon

--- end ---

Minnesota School of Excellence Program Mission and History

The Minnesota School of Excellence Program promotes excellence through a rigorous evaluation process that showcases dynamic schools of the 21st century. Established by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA), the program is recognized by the Minnesota Department of Education, as well as the

National Association of Elementary School Principals, and was nominated for the Brock International Prize in Education—which “recognizes particular innovations and achievements in the field of education.”

The Minnesota School of Excellence Program was established in 1986, combining the findings of current research on effective schooling with the practical on-site experience of working principals and education staff. It offers a comprehensive school improvement process that results in student learning growth. This school improvement process focuses on six national standards and involves a systematic self-study, development of a school improvement plan, and implementation of the plan based on demonstrated results. Since the program’s inception, 197 schools have earned Minnesota School of Excellence validation. The validation remains effective for seven years, at which point schools may choose to reapply for validation.

MESPA Mission and History

MESPA is the professional association of Minnesota’s elementary and middle level principals. MESPA has represented Minnesota’s principals since 1950 and is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and its 20,000 members nationwide.

The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association strives to be the premier leadership resource for elementary and middle-level principals and a strong leading voice for public education. MESPA is committed to ensuring a high quality of education for all children through strengthening and enhancing the principal’s role as educational leader in our schools.