

## MEDIA RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Triton Elementary School Validated as a 2017–2018 Minnesota School of Excellence**

*(St. Paul, MN – August 28, 2017)* – Triton Elementary School has been validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This prestigious honor was awarded to Triton for its commitment to 21st century teaching and learning. School of Excellence validation lasts seven years and Triton Elementary was previously honored as a School of Excellence in 2010.

“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.”

Triton Elementary is located in the Triton Public School District, a consolidated school district of three communities: Dodge Center, West Concord, and Claremont. Approximately 575 students in grades PreK-5 attend Triton Elementary. Triton Public School's mission is "Developing Life Long Learner," which is reflected in Triton elementary's mission: "Inspiring and preparing learners for life by providing educational opportunities in a safe, caring, and respectful environment."

"The SOE process has and will benefit Triton Elementary in a variety of ways," said Nancy Stucky, principal of Triton Elementary. "First, through the self-study process the strengths as well as opportunities for improvement were identified. This information provides the framework to help celebrate our strengths and the successes as a school community as well as identify areas of concern so that we can improve for more and even greater success. Secondly, a sense of accomplishment has been created. When working within the daily operations of an organization, the overall accomplishments that have been made are not as recognized. This process has provided the avenue for us to say, 'Look at everything we have accomplished!' Lastly, the process and this recognition will lead to a celebration where we will be honoring the students, staff and parents to instill an even greater pride in our school and the school community - a well deserved accomplishment!"

"Through this process we have identified several strengths," said Stucky of undergoing the SOE process. "One of the greatest areas for celebration is the reading intervention program that is embedded into our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model. Through job-embedded staff development and the support of the Center of Reading Research at the University of Minnesota, a systematic process was created and implemented throughout the school. By embedding the components of PRESS (Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites) staff is determining the root cause of a student's reading difficulty and then building an intervention program for each student. It has been an honor to share our process with other districts."

"Another area of strength is our Olweus Anti-bullying program entitled HERO (Here Everyone Respects Others)," said Stucky. "Through this program we honor our local Veterans, the real Heroes of our country, by placing a plaque with their names at the Veterans' Memorial Park. Identifying monthly student heroes and recognizing them for their 'HERO' behavior has also been an important element of this program. These two areas are a few of the strengths identified through the SOE process."

"The greatest 'Ah-ha' through the SOE process was identifying all of the accomplishments that have occurred over the last seven years," Stucky noted about surprises they encountered during the SOE process. "We were identified as a SOE school in 2010 and until we completed the process in 2017, staff

didn't realize everything that they have accomplished [over those seven years]. It was and is a great feeling to know the positive impact that staff has on a school community.”

Stucky summed up the school’s experience by saying, “The SOE process is a wonderful opportunity to promote continuous improvement within a school community. The learning that occurs for all staff helps drive the next steps to excellence. I would recommend this process to all school leaders.”

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

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#### **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.