



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association**  
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## **Lakeville Area Schools Principal, Bret Domstrand, Receives Professional Leadership Award**

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



*Bret Domstrand*

*(Roseville, MN, May 6, 2021)* – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Bret Domstrand, principal of Lake Marion Elementary School, Lakeville Area Schools, with the 2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA’s South Suburban Division. Principals are responsible for a school’s instructional, school culture, and resource leadership. The award honors principals whose exemplary leadership and sustained efforts have made noteworthy contributions to the operation of effective school learning programs—improving education, their communities, and their profession. He was recognized by colleagues statewide on April 15, 2021 at the MESPYS, the premier elementary principal celebration of the year celebrated via [YouTube livestream](#).

Domstrand summed up his educational philosophy with a quote from former US Senator, Paul Wellstone: “We all do better when we all do better.”

Domstrand was nominated by Josie Koivisto, principal at Eagle Creek Elementary School in the Shakopee Public Schools District and President of the South Suburban Division. On behalf of MESPA South Suburban Division principals, Koivisto stated: “Bret is a leader in the division and an advocate for MESPA. The [MESPA Principalcast] podcasts he spearheaded are great. He also showcased a dog

in school—amazing. Bret is there to listen and learn. He is driven to be better today than yesterday and is not boastful.”

Among his most significant career accomplishments, Domstrand includes:

- Lake Marion Elementary being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School.
- Implementation of “Breakfast after the Bell,” offering breakfast to students after the instructional day begins.
- Earning the 2020 NAESP National Distinguished Principal from Minnesota Award.

MESPA members selected 13 of their peers to receive the 2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award. Jon Millerhagen, MESPA Executive Director, congratulated the award winners by saying, “MESPA members who receive the Division Leadership Achievement Award are the strong foundations of their schools, their communities, and our association. They are transformational leaders who care deeply for their students. Our association benefits greatly from their knowledge, enthusiasm, passion, and commitment.”

### **2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award Recipients**

- Mary Holmberg, Paynesville Area Schools, Central Division
- Kenny Newby, Forest Lake Area Schools, East Suburban Division
- Jamil Payton, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis Division
- Christopher Forrest, Anoka-Hennepin School District, North Suburban Division
- Darren Sheldon (Ed. D.), Duluth Public Schools, Northeast Division
- Ami C. Aalgaard, Bemidji Area Schools, Northern Division
- Chreese C. Jones, St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul Division
- Bret Domstrand, Lakeville Area Schools, South Suburban Division
- Dr. Cindy Hansen, Pine Island Public Schools, Southeast Division
- Liam Dawson, St. James Public Schools, Southwest Division
- Dr. Heather Hanson, Robbinsdale Area Schools, West Suburban Division
- Trisha Mariotti, Detroit Lakes Public Schools, Western Division
- Dr. Carole Gupton, Retired Principals of MESPA

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**MESPA works to: Improve** education for Minnesota students through collaboration and advocacy; **Unite** current, past, and future licensed elementary and middle-level principals; **Encourage** and support a cooperative relationship between MESPA and other state/national organizations; and **Advocate** for the professional ethical, economic, and social welfare of its members.

**MESPA Mission:** 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 education for all children through strengthening and enhancing the principal's role as educational leader in our schools.