



MEDIA RELEASE
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Retired Minneapolis Public Schools Principal, Dr. Carole Gupton, Receives Professional Leadership Award

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



Dr. Carole Gupton

(Roseville, MN, May 6, 2021) – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Dr. Carole Gupton, retired principal from Minneapolis Public Schools, with the 2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for the Retired Principals of MESPA (RPM). 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. RPM serves as an active and vital resource to MESPA, assisting and volunteering in a variety of ways including event support and special projects. As an active member of RPM, Dr. Gupton has continued to make valuable contributions to the principalship and supporting the next generation of educational leaders even after leaving her role as an active principal. She was recognized by colleagues statewide on April 15, 2021 at the MESPYs, the premier elementary principal celebration of the year celebrated via [YouTube livestream](#).

Dr. Gupton summed up her educational philosophy in a quote: “I really believe anything is possible in some way, if you can actually harness the potential of people around you. We have the skill to do so much, I just question whether we have the will to make the types of changes we need for the future.”

Dr. Gupton was nominated by Elmer Koch, a retired principal from Minneapolis Public Schools. On behalf of RPM, Koch stated: “Carole has shown a commitment to education and educational leadership in her retirement years. After her career in the Minneapolis Public Schools District, she assumed a leadership position at the University of Minnesota serving in a variety of capacities...with special concerns for diversity in educational leadership. Carole was also instrumental in the development of the Retired Principals of MESPA, and has continued to take leadership roles in helping to grow this group. She is an active member of the RPM Board, wearing many hats in various organizations at the same time.”

Among her most significant career accomplishments, Dr. Gupton includes developing year-round extended day school in Minneapolis. She stated, “It was the prototype for building a national year-round extended day school. It allowed me to do many things I wanted to do, especially for our students who were not given the same opportunities as others.” She also created a unique model for special education. Dr. Gupton explained, “We set the day so kids in special education, gifted programs, English as a second language, etc. were served at the same time. So there was no pull-out model, we altered the way that we identified our students and shifted some of the protocols that we had so that we could ask different questions, view kids differently, and therefore minimize the number of students going into special education.”

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.