



MEDIA RELEASE
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Forest Lake Area Schools Principal, Kenny Newby, Receives Professional Leadership Award

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



Kenny Newby

(Roseville, MN, May 6, 2021) – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Kenny Newby, principal of Forest Lake Elementary, Forest Lake Area Schools, with the 2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA’s East 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](#).

Newby summed up his educational philosophy in a quote: “‘All of our kids are all of our kids.’ It doesn’t matter if a student is in my class or yours, my school or yours, or my district or yours. We need to all take responsibility for supporting each other in helping every student succeed.”

Newby was nominated by Arthur Williams, principal at Middleton Elementary School in the South Washington County Schools District and President-Elect of the East Suburban Division. On behalf of MESPA East Suburban Division principals, Williams stated: “Kenny was such an outstanding East

Suburban president last year. He inspired me to be the President-elect this year. He really worked on trying to bring members of our East Suburban division together.”

Among his most significant career accomplishments, Newby includes:

- Implementing Responsibility-Centered Discipline at Forest Lake Elementary. This structure provides teachers with the skills to work with students during challenging moments with the goal of students taking responsibility for their actions and getting them back on track while being able to stay in the classroom. As a result, the number of discipline referrals has decreased and the amount of time students are able to stay in the classroom and engaged in learning has increased at Forest Lake Elementary.
- The creation of the Safe Space Response Team at Forest Lake Elementary. Newby and his team’s goal is to educate their students, their families, and their staff about the importance of interrupting hate speech, responding appropriately, and making it a positive learning experience for all involved. Work around equity and engagement is something they will continue to make a commitment to and something Newby personally believes is of utmost importance.

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.