



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Lisa Carlson, Rosemont-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, Finalist for Minnesota National Distinguished Principal**



*Lisa Carlson*

(St. Paul, MN, February 27, 2017) – Lisa Carlson, principal of Woodland Elementary in Rosemont-Apple Valley-Eagan Public School District, and a member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), is one of three finalists for Minnesota 2017 National Distinguished Principal (NDP). This marks the 34<sup>th</sup> year MESPA and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) have presented the prestigious award.

“At the helm of every successful school is a successful principal,” said Gail Connelly, NAESP executive director. “Our National Distinguished Principals program provides us with an opportunity to recognize the outstanding leadership of these principals and their commitment to creating successful

learning communities. Because of them, students thrive academically, teachers grow professionally, and communities are strengthened.”

The National Distinguished Principals (NDP) program was established in 1984 to recognize elementary and middle level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staffs in their learning communities. The program is based on three fundamental ideas:

- Children’s attitudes toward learning and their perceptions of themselves as lifelong learners are established in the beginning school years.
- The scope and quality of children’s educational experiences are determined primarily by the school principal, who establishes, through the important work of teachers and the support of caring parents, the character of a particular school’s program.
- The dedication and enthusiasm of the outstanding principals who guide children’s early education experiences should be acknowledged to both show appreciation for their work as well as to allow them to serve as models for others in the field.

The NDP program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active principals. Criteria established by NAESP require that the individual:

- Is a practicing principal with at least five years experience in the principalship.
- Plans to continue as a practicing principal.
- Demonstrates evidence of outstanding contributions to the community and to the education profession.
- Leads a school that is clearly committed to excellence.
- Leads a school that has programs designed to meet the academic and social needs of all students.
- Leads a school that has firm ties to parents and the community.

Each year, NDPs represent PreK – 8th grade public schools from all across the country as well as principals in U.S. private schools and those from the United States Department of Defense Office of Educational Activity and the United States Department of State Office of Overseas Schools. Public school elementary and middle-level principals are nominated by peers in their state, and final selections are made by committees appointed by each of NAESP’s state affiliate offices.

Carlson was nominated by Michelle Krell, principal of Kasson-Mantorville Middle School in Kasson-Mantorville Public Schools. In her letter of recommendation she wrote, “Lisa is a charismatic leader who has amazing people skills and excels in creating positive, trusting relationships with students,

staff, parents, and the community. Lisa's leadership has created a school environment rich in educational opportunities for all students. She has always been a change agent, interested in cutting edge educational strategies and practices. She brings energy to her work that motivates those around her. She is able to collaborate, facilitate buy-in and has this amazing ability to empower others to work their hardest to meet the needs of all students. ”

All nominated principals were reviewed by a statewide selection committee, including: MESPA’s 12 division presidents; Brad Gustafson, 2016 National Distinguished Principal; and selection committee chair, Tim Bell. On May 5, Carlson and the other two finalists will be interviewed and the selection committee will determine the 2017 Minnesota National Distinguished Principal.

In addition to Lisa Carlson, the finalists for the honor are Jessica Cabeen, principal of Woodson Kindergarten Center in Austin Public Schools, and Nancy Antoine, principal of Bridgewater Elementary in Northfield Public Schools.

For more detail on the NDP process, visit *National Distinguished Principal* under *Honors* on MESPA’s website: [www.mespa.net/ndp](http://www.mespa.net/ndp)

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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.