

## MEDIA RELEASE



### Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

1970 Oakcrest Avenue, Suite 204

Roseville, MN 55113

#### Contact:

Tami Staloch-Schultz, Minnesota School of Excellence Program Chair

Westview Elementary School Principal

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools

952.431.8380

Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

952.297.8670

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Holdingford Elementary Validated as 2020-2021 Minnesota Schools of Excellence

*(Roseville, MN – September 2, 2020)* – Holdingford Elementary has been validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence (SOE) by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This prestigious honor was awarded to Holdingford for its commitment to modern teaching and learning.

“Through the Minnesota School of Excellence (SOE) program, grounded in national research on high-performing schools, MESPA has created the premier opportunity in the state for validating excellence and a commitment to continual growth 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.”

Tami Staloch-Schultz, chair of the Minnesota School of Excellence Committee, said, “It takes commitment and teamwork to honestly and thoroughly assess areas of strength and at the same time identify a plan for continual growth. The SOE process asks the entire school community – parents, students, staff, administration, and more – to reflect on and celebrate the collaborative work being done in school communities. Schools that receive validation have had important data-driven conversations about what a high-quality, modern learning experience should be for all students and have plans to make that learning experience a reality for many years to come. Honoring the important work of dedicated staff, eager students, and supportive communities is an essential component of becoming a School of Excellence.”

Holdingford Elementary is part of the Holdingford Public School District and serves 581 students in grades PK-6. Holdingford prioritizes offering relevant, updated curricula along with a wide variety of electives. They are committed to fiscal responsibility, supporting students at all grade levels, and maintaining a culture of open communication.

Through the SOE process the principal of Holdingford Elementary, Jim Stang, identified a growth mindset as one of their major strengths. “Our School of Excellence committee felt it imperative to self study, what we do well and where we need to grow as we pursue educational excellence,” said Stang. “Our children are our future and we need to give them all the tools necessary to live a healthy, happy, and productive life!” Stang also considered Holdingford’s Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program another key strength highlighted by the SOE process. “Our PBIS program is working beautifully. Our children love school, our family trusts us and appreciate all we do to keep our school a positive, safe place to learn, laugh, and grow.”

Stang praised their staff as highly trained professionals who work tirelessly to support everyone at Holdingford Elementary, “The countless hours put into positive student and family engagements surpass contractual definitions and ensure all children regardless of trauma, learning challenges, or social emotional shortcomings have caring adults supporting them through every aspect of the day.” During the SOE process they also worked with Tracy Reimer, Program Director for Bethel University’s Doctor of Education in K-12 Administration. Stang would like to thank Reimer especially for her support.

Holdingford’s SOE committee discovered that one area they could improve on is the integration of technology into daily education. Stang said, “We also felt that with our changing world, we needed to bolster digital safety and digital citizenship efforts.” Holdingford plans to attend Academy Day and Tech Summit workshops as the school works towards becoming a Google Certified School. Stang indicated that they will continue to advocate for their students and families, and promise to learn from their SOE journey.

“I hope I can speak for our team, that the difference between good and great is a little extra effort and hard work. We have the most important jobs in the nation!” said Stang. “The entire staff, our students, and families would like to thank MESPA for this opportunity to grow and self reflect... We are Husker Strong, Husker humble and proud, and unified as a school, community, and as a learning family! Not every day is easy, but every day is a gift.”

--- end ---

### **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, 216 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.