



MEDIA RELEASE

Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

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Grand Rapids Assistant Principal, Clayton Lindner, Receives Professional Leadership Award



Clayton Lindner

(Roseville, MN, February 29, 2024) – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) recognizes Clayton Lindner, assistant principal of West Rapids and East Rapids Elementary Schools in Grand Rapids Public Schools, with the MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA's Northeast Division. Assistant principals are responsible for promoting a positive school culture, guiding instruction, and providing leadership. Principal Lindner was recognized by colleagues statewide on February 8, 2024, at the Mespys, the premier elementary principal celebration of the year celebrated during MESPA Institute, the annual statewide convention of Minnesota's elementary and middle-level principals.

Because of his leadership, the Northeast Division had the highest rate of attendance at MESPA's

Institute, the premiere conference for elementary and middle-level principals in Minnesota. Principal Lindner notes, "I have been honored to be MESPA's Northeast Division President for the past 4 years. We have great administrators in our region who are committed to leading and learning exceptionally well. I am proud to be receiving the Division Leadership Award for the Northeast region because it represents the dedication and service to excellence for our students and staff."

Robbi Mandati , principal of Washington Elementary in Cloquet emphasized, "Clayton is very deserving of this award as he has been a constant in our division. He initiates virtual and in-person meetings to keep us connected to one another and growing as professionals! He does an excellent job engaging colleagues, soliciting ideas and feedback, and planning for our evolving professional needs in a very geographically large division! I have appreciated his positive contributions to the NE division and MESPA as a whole!"

MESPA members selected 13 of their peers to receive the 2023 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award. Michelle Krell, MESPA Executive Director, congratulated the award winners, "The MESPA Division Leadership Award goes to principals who demonstrate exemplary leadership within their schools, communities, and our association. They embody transformational leadership, propelled by genuine care and dedication to their students, staff, and communities. Their knowledge, enthusiasm, passion, and commitment significantly enrich our association."

2024 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award Recipients

- **MESPA Central Division** - Jennifer Olson, Humphrey and Winsted Elementary Schools, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted Public Schools
- **MESPA Northern Division** – Kelsey Johnson, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Elementary, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo School District
- **MESPA Western Division** – Chris Ellingson, Hawley Elementary, Hawley Public Schools
- **MESPA East Suburban Division** – Maura Weyandt, Edgerton Elementary, Roseville Area Schools
- **MESPA West Suburban Division** – Eduardo Navidad, Alice Smith Elementary, Hopkins Public Schools
- **MESPA North Suburban Division** – Jack Shields, DaVinci Academy of Arts and Science, charter school in Ham Lake.

- **MESPA South Suburban Division** – Christine Evans, Southview Elementary, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District
- **MESPA Northeast Division** – Clayton Linder, East Rapids and West Rapids Elementary Schools, Grand Rapids School District
- **MESPA Southeast Division** – Nick Jurrens, Jefferson Elementary, Faribault Public Schools
- **MESPA Southwest Division** – Doreen Oelke, South Elementary, Saint Peter Public Schools
- **MESPA Saint Paul Division** – Sarah Lightner, Groveland Park, Saint Paul Public Schools
- **MESPA Minneapolis Division** – Vicki Turner, Kenny Elementary School, Minneapolis Public School District
- **Retired Principals of MESPA** – Jim Hoogheem

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The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) is the premier leadership resource for elementary and middle level principals, dedicated to connecting, developing, and providing resources for principals, and serving as a leading voice for Minnesota education.