



MEDIA RELEASE

Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

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Ham Lake Principal, Jack Shields, Receives Professional Leadership Award



Jack Shields

(Roseville, MN, February 29, 2024) – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) recognizes Jack Shields with the MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA's North Suburban Division. Shields is the principal of DaVinci Academy of Arts and Science, a charter school in Ham Lake. Principals are responsible for promoting a positive school culture, guiding instruction, and providing leadership. Principal Shields 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.

Principal Shields notes, "It is an honor to serve students, families, and school staff as principal, and to be recognized by MESPA as a Division Leader for the North Suburban Region brings me great joy. The work MESPA does has helped me to grow in the profession as well as meet great people who share a common vision of serving students."

Ronald Salazar, principal of Birch Grove Elementary and National Distinguished Principal finalist, emphasized, "I admire his dedication to student learning, commitment to equity and diversity and his leadership within our division."

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.