



MEDIA RELEASE

**Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association**

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**Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted Principal, Jennifer Olson,  
Receives Professional Leadership Award**



*Jennifer Olson*

(Roseville, MN, February 29, 2024) – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) recognized Jennifer Olson, principal of Humphrey and Winsted Elementary Schools, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted Public Schools, with the MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA's East Suburban Division. Principals are responsible for promoting a positive school culture, guiding instruction, and providing leadership. Principal Olson 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 Olson notes, "When you have an awesome team of colleagues working hand in hand and supporting one another, it's easy to step up, lean in, and enjoy giving back to our division and the greater MESPA organization. There are so many deserving individuals, and being honored with the Division Leadership Award for Central Division is humbling. I am grateful for the recognition, and look forward to continuing my leadership through service with and for others."

Jim Stang, principal of Holdingford Elementary and president of the Central Division, emphasized, "Jen is a rock star! A cut above the rest. A trusted friend and colleague that will listen, support, share in hopes of creating better tomorrows for her children and the children of Minnesota! As chair of our Education Advisory Committee, Jen has shined and touched countless lives. Her pursuit of high quality principal professional development coupled with her passion for seeing our MESPA family come together, grow together and learn from each other is unmatched. Jen is always humble and ready to make someone else feel successful and appreciated. Jen's work ethic has no limits. She is a relentless advocate for children and families. Jen personifies all that is right in public education, our schools, our communities, and our organization."

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, Fairbault 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.