



MEDIA RELEASE
Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association
1970 Oakcrest Ave, Suite 204
Roseville, MN 55113

For more information, contact:
Amy Thompson, MESPA Communications Manager, 952.297.8672
Dawn Brown, NDP Selection Committee Chair, 507.233.8302
Bret Domstrand, 2020 MN NDP, 952.232.2700

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bret Domstrand, Lakeville Area Schools, Named Minnesota's 2020 NAESP National Distinguished Principal

(Roseville, MN, May 14, 2020) – Bret Domstrand *(pictured, right)*, principal of Lake Marion Elementary in the Lakeville Area School District, and a member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), is Minnesota's 2020 NAESP National Distinguished Principal (NDP). MESPA and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) present the prestigious award.



"This is something beyond my dreams, both personally and professionally. It is an honor to be recognized among all of these great leaders across the country," Domstrand said. "The reality is that this award is a direct reflection of the work of our amazing staff, students, and families. I am lucky enough to get to lead with these stellar people. I love doing this work with Lake Marion Elementary. I look forward to telling our story to others."

Domstrand began his career in education in 2005 as a special education teacher at Hosterman Middle School in New Hope. He then moved on to Lakeville, serving first as a special education teacher at McGuire Middle School, then as a

special education lead teacher at Lakeville South High School. Six years ago, he became the principal at Lake Marion Elementary School, a position he holds to this day. Domstrand received his Bachelor of Science in Special Education degree from St. Cloud State University and his Masters of Educational Leadership at St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

Among his greatest accomplishments as a principal, Domstrand lists winning the 2017 National Blue Ribbon Award. "Our staff works diligently to ensure every student gets what they need to be successful academically, socially, and emotionally. To have the Commissioner of Education come to our school to meet teachers and students was a highlight for me as a leader. The recognition nationally helped shine a light on our school that succeeds in so many ways for all kids. I loved sharing that joy with our community. The Blue Ribbon was a visual way to validate their hard work," he wrote in his application.

The most popular "figure" or "individual" in Lake Marion Elementary, however, isn't Bret Domstrand. "Two and a half years ago, Lake Marion Elementary welcomed Sèamus, our new School Resource Dog," Domstrand wrote in his application. "Whether leading tours with new families, helping students who were dysregulated, or laying down and listening to a student read, Sèamus became an integrated member of the LME family." Sèamus is an important part of the family and community connections Domstrand works to build in his school.

"Bret has proven to be an exceptional servant-leader within our district. His commitment to students, families, the school community, and far beyond is tremendous," said Michael Baumann, Superintendent of Lakeville Area Schools. "Bret not only excels in our district, he devotes his time and talents to others beyond our district to share and develop school leadership, building the future of education."

“Research supports that innovative, caring, and skilled principal leadership yields highly successful public schools committed to rigorous learning for every child. Mr. Domstrand is an exceptional and uniquely skilled leader dedicated to the students in his school and a great support for principals throughout Minnesota,” said Jon Millerhagen, Executive Director of MESPA. “Each year he joins in teaching early career principals in outstanding professional development that helps get them started on leading their schools for success. We are thrilled to have Principal Bret Domstrand representing MESPA on the national stage.”

The National Distinguished Principal program was established in 1984 to recognize and celebrate elementary and middle-level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate for the students, families, and staff in their learning communities. Each year, NDPs represent Pre-K through grade 8 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. All nominated Minnesota principals’ applications were reviewed by a statewide selection committee, including representatives from each of MESPA’s 12 geographical divisions; 2019 NAESP National Distinguished Principal Eric Skanson; and selection committee chair, Dawn Brown, Minnesota’s NAESP State Representative. On May 8, Domstrand and the other three finalists were interviewed by the committee to determine Minnesota’s 2020 NAESP National Distinguished Principal.

The other finalists for this honor were: Nancy Antoine, principal at Bridgewater Elementary, Northfield Public Schools and Tony Steffes, principal at Montrose Elementary School of Innovation, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools.

For more details on the NDP process, visit *National Distinguished Principal* under *Honors* on MESPA’s website: 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.