



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association**

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### **Retired Principal and Former MESPA Executive Director, Elmer A. Koch, Jr., Receives Professional Leadership Award**

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



*Elmer A. Koch, Jr.*

*(Roseville, MN, April 21, 2022)* – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Elmer A. Koch, Jr., retired principal from the Minneapolis Public Schools District and former Executive Director of MESPA, with the 2022 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for the Retired Principals of MESPA (RPM). Principals are responsible for a school’s instructional, school culture, and resource leadership. The award honors principals whose exemplary leadership and sustained efforts have made noteworthy contributions to the operation of effective school learning programs—improving education, their communities, and their profession. He was recognized by colleagues statewide on February 3, 2022, 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.

Koch summarized his educational philosophy in three words: “Listen, Learn, Collaborate.”

Koch was nominated by Larry Jallen, retired principal from the Onamia Public Schools District. On behalf of RPM, Jallen stated: “Elmer has given years of service to MESPA as Executive Director and

continued active through RPM helping to form the group into what it is today. His leadership, experience in education, expertise, direction, commitment, and council has gone above and beyond commendable.”

Among his most significant career accomplishments, Koch includes:

- Developing the elementary school mathematics curriculum for the Minneapolis Public Schools District.
- Serving as Executive Director of MESPA for 11 years.
- Helping to create and establish RPM as a viable Division of MESPA.

Past honors and recognition received by Koch include: Kennedy Center Arts Administrator Award; Arts Education Leadership Award, MN Alliance for Arts in Education; Honorary Life Membership, Minnesota PTA; Minneapolis South High School Wall of Honor, alumni award; Two time recipient of National Science Foundation Math Institute awards; Certificate of Commendation for Service in Education from Governor Ventura; WCCO radio Good Neighbor award; and serving as President of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Executive Directors’ group.

Koch has a long history of service to MESPA, and his previous recognitions within the association include:

- MESPA Champions for Children award.
- Distinguished Service award from MESPA 25 Year Club.
- MESPA Ambassador to the national WEF (World Education Forum).
- Serving as a RPM Board Member.

MESPA members selected 13 of their peers to receive the 2022 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award. Jon Millerhagen, MESPA Executive Director, congratulated the award winners by saying, “MESPA members who receive the Division Leadership Achievement Award are the strong foundations of their schools, their communities, and our association. They are transformational leaders who care deeply for their students. Our association benefits greatly from their knowledge, enthusiasm, passion, and commitment.”

### **2022 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award Recipients**

- Sam Court, Rocori School District, Central Division
- Travis Barringer, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale, East Suburban Division

- Renee Montague, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis Division
- Amy Oliver, Anoka-Hennepin School District, North Suburban Division
- Clayton Lindner, Independent School District 318, Northeast Division
- Chris Bjerklie, Red Lake Falls Schools, Northern Division
- Nancy D. Páez, St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul Division
- Josie Koivisto, Shakopee Public Schools, South Suburban Division
- Jared Groehler, Rochester Public Schools, Southeast Division
- Amanda Feterl, Sibley East Public Schools, Southwest Division
- Melissa Ness, Hopkins Public Schools, West Suburban Division
- Dana Christensen, Alexandria Public Schools, Western Division
- Elmer Koch, Retired Principals of MESPA

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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.