



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Shakopee Public Schools Principal, Josie Koivisto, Receives Professional Leadership Award**

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



*Josie Koivisto*

*(Roseville, MN, April 21, 2022)* – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Josie Koivisto, principal of Eagle Creek Elementary, Shakopee Public Schools, with the 2022 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA’s South Suburban Division. 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. She 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.

Koivisto summed up her educational philosophy in a quote from Dr. James Comer: “No significant learning happens without a significant relationship.”

Koivisto was nominated by John Garcia, principal at Cedar Park Elementary STEM School in the Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District. On behalf of MESPA South Suburban Division principals, Garcia stated: “Josie led our division as President during the past two years and has

supported all of us on our leadership journey. Josie is an exemplary Principal Leader and we benefit from her leadership.”

Among her most significant career accomplishments, Koivisto includes:

- The relationships she’s built with students and families.
- Believing that ALL students can learn.
- Eagle Creek Elementary achieving Minnesota School of Excellence validation in 2017.

Koivisto has held several key leadership positions within MESPA including: representative for the Elementary Principals’ Action Committee (EPAC) from 2014 to 2018, President-Elect of the South Suburban Division from 2018 to 2019, and President of the South Suburban Division from 2019 to 2021.

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.