



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Hopkins Public Schools Principal, Melissa Ness, Receives Professional Leadership Award**

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



*Melissa Ness*

*(Roseville, MN, April 21, 2022)* – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Melissa Ness, principal of Eisenhower Elementary/XinXing Academy, Hopkins Public Schools, with the 2022 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA’s West 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.

When asked about her educational philosophy, Ness wrote: “The IB Philosophy aligns with my beliefs: The IB develops inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through education that builds intercultural understanding and respect.”

Ness was nominated by Jeff Radel, principal at Glen Lake Elementary School in the Hopkins Public Schools District. On behalf of MESPA West Suburban Division principals, Radel stated: “Melissa leads with love, intelligence, and a calm presence that allows her to handle anything that is coming at her.”

Among her most significant career accomplishments, Ness includes:

- Leading a School with 3 amazing programs: Community School, Chinese Immersion, Spanish Immersion.
- Facilitating a collective decision-making process to begin IB Candidacy.

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.