



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association**  
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## **St Paul Public Schools Principal, Nancy D. Páez, Receives Professional Leadership Award**

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



*Nancy D. Páez*

*(Roseville, MN, April 21, 2022)* – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Nancy D. Páez, principal of Riverview West Side School of Excellence, St Paul Public Schools, with the 2022 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA’s St Paul 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.

Páez summed up her educational philosophy in a quote from Maya Angelou: “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Páez was nominated by Dr. Fatima Lawson, principal at Highwood Hills Elementary School in the St Paul Public Schools District. On behalf of MESPA St Paul Division principals, Dr. Lawson noted that

Páez deserved recognition due to her leadership capabilities, particularly in equity-focused leadership, as well as her long term service and dedication to MESPA.

Among her most significant career accomplishments, Páez includes:

- Implementing Restorative Practices at Riverview Elementary.
- Contributing to establish the Racial Equity Policy in Saint Paul Public Schools.
- Establishing Tiered Systems of Support for reading.

Páez represented the St Paul Division on the MESPA School of Excellence Committee from 2017 to 2019, then served on the MESPA Board of Directors as President-Elect of the St Paul Division from 2019 to 2021, and now holds the position of Division President.

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.