



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **ROCORI School District Principal, Sam Court, Receives Professional Leadership Award**

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



*Sam Court*

*(Roseville, MN, April 21, 2022)* – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Sam Court, principal of John Clark Elementary School, ROCORI School District, with the 2022 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for MESPA’s Central 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. 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.

Court summed up his educational philosophy in a quote from author Pam Leo: “You can’t teach children to behave better by leading them to feel worse. When children feel better they behave better.”

Court was nominated by Jim Stang, principal at Holdingford Elementary School in the Holdingford Public Schools District. On behalf of MESPA Central Division principals, Stang stated: “Sam is an incredible principal and wonderful person. His school is a safe, fun filled, exciting place to learn,

laugh, and grow. Under Sam's care, every child is loved, accepted, respected, and encouraged to use talents and passions to better the world. Sam is a true equity leader and a champion for all children at John Clark Elementary, the Rocori School district, and MESPA Central principals. Sam will go above and beyond in hopes of giving fellow principals the tools they need to be successful for children and families. Sam's work ethic is only surpassed by his huge heart and willingness to help others. Sam's open communication style and vast knowledge of PBIS, elementary curriculum, best practices, and SEL quickly forms trusting, nurturing relationships between all stakeholders.”

Among his most significant career accomplishments, Court includes:

- Helping implement a positive school climate through PBIS at John Clark Elementary School.
- Helping establish district and building equity committees across the district.
- Working to balance work and home to be the best Dad and husband that I can be.

Other professional honors for Court include presenting “How to be a Catalyst for Equity Change” at the 2021 MESPA Institute Conference and receiving the TIES Exceptional Teacher Award: St. Cloud Area Schools in 2015. Court currently serves the MESPA Central Division as their Negotiations Committee Representative and Division Treasurer.

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.