

## MEDIA RELEASE



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Shannon Park Elementary Validated as 2019-2020 Minnesota Schools of Excellence**

*(Roseville, MN – August 28, 2019)* – Shannon Park Elementary has been validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence (SOE) by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This prestigious honor was awarded to Shannon Park Elementary for its commitment to modern teaching and learning.

“Through the Minnesota School of Excellence (SOE) program, grounded in national research on high-performing schools, MESPA has created the premier opportunity in the state for validating excellence and a commitment to continual growth in a school community,” said Jon Millerhagen, MESPA Executive Director. “This school improvement program examines the entire school community through six national standards, ensuring there is a holistic approach to creating a plan for future achievement and celebrating the unique accomplishments of each School of Excellence.”

Tami Staloch-Schultz, chair of the Minnesota School of Excellence Committee, said, “It takes commitment and teamwork to honestly and thoroughly assess areas of strength and at the same time identify a plan for continual growth. The SOE process asks the entire school community – parents, students, staff, administration, and more – to reflect on and celebrate the collaborative work being done in school communities. Schools that receive validation have had important data-driven conversations about what a high-quality, modern learning experience should be for all students and have plans to make that learning experience a reality for many years to come. Honoring the important work of dedicated staff, eager students, and supportive communities is an essential component of becoming a School of Excellence.”

Shannon Park Elementary is part of Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools and serves 663 students in grades K-5. The school's mission statement is: "A Community School with a Tradition of Excellence."

Of the decision to undertake the SOE process, Shannon Park Elementary's SOE committee wrote, "At the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, Mr. [Erik] Davis, Elementary Principal, met with the leadership team and asked, 'Where are we average?' In the following weeks, this question for the leadership team led to the unanimous vote to pursue the Minnesota School of Excellence program and begin the process of assessing and reflecting for the self-study."

One major strength of Shannon Park Elementary identified by the SOE process is the incorporation of both students and teachers in leadership roles throughout the school. Teachers serve on committees that choose and implement curriculum to best meet students' needs, and participate in professional development relevant to the students and subjects they serve. Students take on leadership roles as well through School Patrol, reading morning announcements, Kindness Council, grade-level buddy mentoring, and more. Everyone in the Shannon Park community has a chance to make their voice heard and help guide the direction of the school as a whole.

Other strengths of Shannon Park Elementary highlighted by the SOE process include: a regularly-meeting Leadership Team that meets regularly to set goals and interprets stakeholder feedback; tiered interventionists to support teachers and students in all curricular areas; and high family engagement through events such as Parent Information Nights, Family Math Nights, Adventures Through Art Night, the development of a Mental Health Council, and more.

An area for growth for Shannon Park Elementary identified by the SOE process is the incorporation of technology in curriculum for students. Shannon Park Elementary has set a goal of achieving a 1:1 student-to-device ratio for grades 4-5 and to utilize apps like Schoology to catalyze digital discussion and collaborative projects across multiple subjects. Shannon Park continues to use a variety of technologies to enhance collaboration between staff and students from a variety of different departments and disciplines.

"The [SOE] application is a collaborative effort and thoughtful reflection of the teachers and staff members who devoted much time and effort to assess the strengths of the school community, building on those strengths and planning for improvement as the team continues to work to educate all students at Shannon Park Elementary," wrote the Shannon Park SOE Committee.

Eight schools achieved recognition as 2019-2020 Minnesota Schools of Excellence:

- *Battle Lake Elementary School*, Battle Lake Public School District, Principal/Superintendent Darren Kern
- *Breckenridge Elementary School*, Breckenridge School District, Principal Corinna Erickson
- *Hermantown Elementary School*, Hermantown Community School District, Principal Debra Reynolds
- *Mora Elementary School*, Mora School District, Principals Randy Qual and Brenda Spartz
- *Shannon Park Elementary School*, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, Principal Erik Davis
- *Viking Elementary School*, Pelican Rapids Public Schools, Principal Derrick Nelson
- *Washington Elementary School*, Cloquet Public Schools, Principal Robbi Mondati
- *Winfair Elementary School*, Windom Public Schools, Principal Jamie Frank

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#### **Minnesota School of Excellence Program Mission and History**

The Minnesota School of Excellence Program promotes excellence through a rigorous evaluation process that showcases dynamic schools of the 21st century. Established by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), the program is recognized by the Minnesota Department of Education, as well as the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and was nominated for the Brock International Prize in Education—which “recognizes particular innovations and achievements in the field of education.”

The Minnesota School of Excellence Program was established in 1986, combining the findings of current research on effective schooling with the practical on-site experience of working principals and education staff. It offers a comprehensive school improvement process that results in student learning growth. This school improvement process focuses on six national standards and involves a systematic self-study, development of a school improvement plan, and implementation of the plan based on demonstrated results. Since the program's inception, 210 schools have earned Minnesota School of Excellence validation. The validation remains effective for seven years, at which point schools may choose to reapply for validation.

#### **MESPA Mission and History**

MESPA is the professional association of Minnesota's elementary and middle level principals. MESPA has represented Minnesota's principals since 1950 and is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and its 20,000 members nationwide.

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 of education for all children through strengthening and enhancing the principal's role as educational leader in our schools.