

MEDIA RELEASE



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WOODLAND ELEMENTARY NAMED 2019 STEM INNOVATION AWARD WINNER



(St. Paul, MN – December 6, 2018) – Woodland Elementary, located in Eagan, MN and a member of District 196, has been named the winner of the 2019 STEM Innovation Award. Principal Lisa Carlson (*pictured, left*) and STEM Teacher-Principal Intern David Lostetter applied for the award on behalf of Woodland Elementary.

The STEM Innovation Award is presented in partnership between the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) and the Science Museum of Minnesota. The award gives principals the opportunity to share innovative programs and/or projects in their schools. An "innovation database," created from entries for the award, is made available to MESPA members, helping schools across the state replicate their colleagues' successes.

There were eight impressive applications for this year's award, showcasing the breadth and depth of innovation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) taking place in schools all across Minnesota.

Woodland Elementary strives to incorporate STEM and technology throughout its programming and make it accessible to all students. Woodland has a Technology and STEM Specialist and has added a Targeted Services, extended day coding club to increase access to STEM experiences, learning, and enrichment for its K-5 students.



Through its STEM and technology programs, Woodland students are exposed to a variety of technologies, science, engineering, and math concepts. They develop digital literacies, learn to code, create websites, manage rain water, build strong bridges, work with circuits, and much more. Students also get the opportunity to work alongside real computer scientists and coders, scientists, engineers, and more.

Twice a year, students who qualify for Targeted Services can elect to participate in coding club, an extended day class, where they can further explore the coding skills they learned in the standard Technology and STEM programming in a smaller environment where they can receive personalized instruction. This offering actively seeks students out who represent underserved populations and/or who struggle academically, who are traditionally less likely to be included in this type of programming.

“It is amazing to see the work in our programming begin to transform the culture of our school,” Carlson and Lostetter wrote in their application. “Students can use the skills learned in the Technology and STEM program to extend and deepen their learning in regular classrooms’ units of study.”



Woodland has a program where its 5th-graders share their hopes for the future before graduating. According to Carlson, 3-5 years ago, hardly anyone put a STEM-related career as their future job. Now, students list many STEM careers, including civil engineer, electrical engineer, computer scientist, web developer, and more. Woodland has also seen the impact of its STEM programming through steady gains in student achievement on MCA Science

scores.

Woodland Elementary will be recognized at the MESPA Institute awards celebration – The MESPYS – in Bloomington, MN on February 7, 2019. Larry Thomas, Director of Lifelong Learning at the Science Museum of Minnesota, will present the award. In addition, the Science Museum of Minnesota will provide a \$300 certificate towards an education program for Woodland Elementary.

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The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association is dedicated to promoting and improving education for children and youth, strengthening the role as educational leader for elementary and middle level principals and collaborating with partners in education to assist in achieving those goals. For more information, visit the association's website at www.mespa.net.

The Science Museum of Minnesota has a 100-year history of bringing science learning to life through hands-on exhibits, giant screen films, and unparalleled educational opportunities for all ages. For more information about the wide range of education programs for school groups, teachers, kids, families, and adults, visit the museum's website at www.smm.org/educationprograms/.