



MEDIA RELEASE
Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association
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For immediate release

Tracy Sexton-Oliver, Bluff View Elementary, Selected MN National Outstanding Assistant Principal



Tracy Sexton-Oliver

(photo attached to this media release)

(St. Paul, MN -- Dec. 6, 2017) – Tracy Sexton-Oliver, assistant principal of Bluff View Elementary in Lake City, MN and a member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), is Minnesota's 2018 National Outstanding Assistant Principal. MESPA and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) present this prestigious annual award.

The National Outstanding Assistant Principal program was established in 2011 to honor assistant principals who are doing a superb job in their roles. MESPA and NAESP are committed to preparing assistant principals to step into the principal role. This program promotes educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade (PreK-8) schooling and calls attention to the fundamental importance of the assistant principal.

“It doesn't matter if you are a young child discovering how a butterfly comes to be, a seasoned teacher

feeling invigorated by a new approach or an administrator working with staff to uncover ways to increase student engagement, there is amazing power and energy in learning,” wrote Tracy Sexton-Oliver in her National Outstanding Assistant Principal application. “In the era of accountability it can be hard to feel comfortable taking risks or making changes even though these are essential practices for educators to utilize in order to move learning forward in the 21st century. This is why I choose to model risk taking and offer support and encouragement for teachers to do the same.”

Bluff View Elementary, where Sexton-Oliver serves as assistant principal, serves more than 600 diverse students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Sexton-Oliver’s work with Bluff View Elementary’s pre-kindergarten program is a particular point of pride for her. “I worked with our early learning team to implement our first ever kindergarten readiness measure allowing us to track the impact of our increased programming,” Sexton-Oliver wrote. “After just two years we have seen the level of kindergarten readiness increase by nearly 20%.”

“Tracy is visionary,” Jim Borgschatz, Principal of Bluff View Elementary, said of Sexton-Oliver. “Tracy has a strong desire to influence other teachers and students in a positive way and is a strong advocate of student-centered learning. Her enthusiasm for the learning and teaching of subject matter is very apparent and motivates everyone that she comes in contact with at Bluff View Elementary.”

Among Sexton-Oliver’s accomplishments as an assistant principal are creating a Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS) structure for her school. By establishing the structure, “teachers became better able to focus on providing high quality instruction that meets students’ needs in engaging and meaningful ways and students are experiencing more success and gaining confidence.”

According to Bluff View Elementary 3rd grade teacher Danielle Hegge, another of Sexton-Oliver’s greatest accomplishments is the leadership she provides to the school’s Professional Learning Communities. “I currently work closely with Mrs. Oliver as the leader of our PLC Leadership team,” Hegge wrote. “Mrs. Oliver believed in me and encouraged me to take on this role when I didn’t believe in myself. She has made me feel confident in my role and taught me that leading by example really does work. She has high expectations of herself as our Assistant Principal and that is contagious with her staff. Leading by example is one of Mrs. Oliver’s strongest suits. She sets the bar high and makes you as a teacher want to be the best leader you can be whether that’s in the classroom or with your colleagues.”

MESPA President-Elect Eric Skanson, principal of Cold Spring Elementary, chaired the MN National

Outstanding Assistant Principal selection committee. "We had a number of very strong applications this year, but Tracy's really stood out," Skanson said. "The glowing recommendations from her colleagues and supervisors, her long history of innovation and concrete accomplishments, and her obvious passion for learning and enriching the educational lives of the students she serves make her the perfect person to be named Minnesota's National Outstanding Assistant Principal. If anything, this honor seems long overdue. I can't wait to see what else Tracy does in her career."

Sexton-Oliver received her bachelor's degree from Winona State University; she received her master's degree in Education, Teaching, and Learning and her K-12 Principal License from St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

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MESPA 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. 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 NAESP Foundation advances excellence, innovation, and equity in schools by endowing leadership and learning for principals for the benefit of all children.