

MEDIA RELEASE



Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Roosevelt Elementary School Validated as 2021-2022 Minnesota School of Excellence

(Roseville, MN – September 1, 2021) – Roosevelt Elementary School has been validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence (SOE) by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This prestigious honor was awarded to Roosevelt 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.”

Roosevelt Elementary School is in the Detroit Lakes Public School District and serves 600 students. Roosevelt's current mission is to nurture and develop the full potential of all learners in an environment where lifelong learning is valued, excellence is expected and improvement is continuous.

Diana Hedstrom, SOE Committee Chairperson for Roosevelt Elementary commented on the rigor of the School of Excellence process, “It takes hard work, time, and a continuous commitment to look at all six national standards, thoroughly assess where our strengths are and identify areas of growth. It was additionally challenging to complete during the pandemic. However, we chose the SOE process because we felt it was important to finish what we started in the 2019-20 school year. Our building, led by our Site Team, wanted to continue to make improvements that aligned with students' needs, improve our parent and community engagement and focus on a clear vision for our future.”

During the SOE process, Roosevelt confirmed the work they have done to establish a trauma-informed school culture has been well received. Their self-study revealed that 100% of school staff believe that school resources are being allocated based on the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of their students. After extensive training, a core group of Roosevelt teachers now works to inform the building and district about the benefits of using a trauma-informed approach to provide a safe, caring, healthy, and compassionate environment for their school community.

Trisha Mariotti, principal at Roosevelt Elementary, reflected on how the staff plan to use the results of their SOE evaluation to continue improving their school culture. "The staff at Roosevelt work diligently every year to build relationships and a true sense of belonging with our students—they know how powerful a supportive and understanding school environment can be. Further, as part of the SOE process, we began conversations around how we could identify biases and adjust accordingly to provide better support for our student population. Training and discussions around equity, diversity and cultural competency will be a priority."

When asked about the outcome of the SOE process, Mariotti said, "We were able to look at ways to include all staff in discussions and trainings and will continue to try to better ourselves as a school community. Future areas of focus will be continuing to explore ways to expand our community engagement as well as use our District's newly developed Strategic Plan to align our school with the District's vision, mission, and guiding principles."

Three schools achieved recognition as 2021-2022 Minnesota Schools of Excellence:

- *Byron Primary School*, Byron Public School District, Principal: Dr. Amanda Durnen
- *Discovery Elementary*, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Public Schools, Principal: Dr. Mathew Nelson
- *Roosevelt Elementary*, Detroit Lakes Public Schools, Principal Trisha Mariotti, and Assistant Principal Karilee Traurig

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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, 218 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.