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Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy's Dr. Damon Lewis Named Middle School Principal of the Year by Connecticut Association of Schools

Norwalk, Conn. (Feb. 18, 2025) -- The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) has recognized Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy Principal Dr. Damon Lewis as the 2025 Middle School Principal of the Year.

"This award is a testament to your passionate leadership, dedication to student success, ability to inspire and support your staff, and heroic personal investment in your entire school community," Karen Packtor, Deputy Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Schools, wrote in her announcement letter.

Dr. Lewis became principal of Ponus Ridge in July 2015, previously serving as the middle school's assistant principal for four years. A seasoned educational leader with a proven track record at Ponus Ridge, Dr. Lewis has fostered a collaborative environment that drives academic achievement and continuous improvement.

Under his leadership, Ponus Ridge has decreased its chronic absenteeism rate to 8.3% from 23%, earning the school national media recognition. The number of Hispanic and Black students in the Gifted & Talented program has increased as well as the number of female students in Accelerated Math.

For the district, Dr. Lewis has played an instrumental role in the redesign of the Gifted & Talented program, school counseling, middle schools and STEAM schools. He sat on the Safety Task Force Committee, the Superintendent Principal Advisory group and the District Strategic Plan Task Force, and currently serves as the Black Male Administrators Group Facilitator.

Dr. Lewis will now be considered for the National Middle School Principal of the Year Award by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The CAS will honor him and his fellow principals of the year - one at the elementary and one at the high school level - at a recognition dinner in the fall.