

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Englewood Schools Superintendent Brian Ewert named 2015 Colorado Superintendent of the Year

Englewood, October 22, 2014 – Brian Ewert, the superintendent of Englewood Schools, was selected as the Colorado Superintendent of the Year and will represent Colorado in the 2015 American Association of School Administrators National Superintendent of the Year program. The selection was made by a committee consisting primarily of education leaders who received this recognition in prior years.

“We are honored to have Brian as our Superintendent of the Year and to have his efforts recognized in this way,” CASE Executive Director Bruce Caughey said. “Englewood Schools, including the students, families and educators, has greatly benefitted through Brian’s outstanding leadership over the past four years and we are delighted to highlight the amazing work underway by Colorado education leaders.”

Upon receiving the news, Ewert exclaimed, “I feel honored and privileged to be named the 2015 Colorado Superintendent of the Year. I am humbled to be among past recipients of this award whom I admire for their leadership and advocacy in public education. My success is not my own and I would be remiss not to acknowledge the many professionals that surround me with a shared vision of Englewood Schools, working tirelessly each day to bring systemic, positive change including instructional and programmatic improvements to the students and community of Englewood.”

Since joining Englewood Schools in May of 2010, Ewert has established a stability the district has not experienced in over a decade. During the ten years prior to Ewert’s arrival, Englewood experienced eight different superintendents resulting in a sense of isolation at schools and a lack of focus on a cohesive vision. Ewert began by adopting a common instructional model, setting clear expectations and building community support. “A Relentless Focus on Learning” became the district’s tagline and instruction and leadership development was put in place to support just that.

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Under his leadership, Englewood has witnessed some of the highest growth in student performance in the Denver metro area. In fact, the district's accreditation ranking increased two levels thus far under Ewert's tenure. Englewood Board Member Duane Tucker stated in Ewert's application, "Over the last four years, under Mr. Ewert's leadership, Englewood Schools has undergone a tremendous transformation." Karen Brofft, superintendent of Lewis-Palmer School District and a former Englewood Schools colleague, added, "Brian ushered in a new era, redesigning the district office to bring greater focus to student achievement and rebuilding both systems and culture throughout the district."

In addition to the inward district focus, there has been an outward focus toward the community. Community involvement is a key criterion in the selection of the Superintendent of the Year and this is an area in which Ewert has excelled. From the establishment of Challenge Day – a day dedicated to connecting and building bridges between adults and students – to quarterly Town Hall meetings, Ewert's extensive community engagement model built the trust and transparency required to allow Englewood to pass a bond and budget election in the fall of 2011. Continuous two-way communication tools have strengthened the district and created a culture and foundation where "A Relentless Focus on Learning" benefits all students.

Ewert also demonstrated creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in Englewood Schools. Given that 60% of low-income families have no books in the home and access to books is one of the leading predictors of success in school, Ewert led an effort to integrate learning technology to offset this challenge in a district where 63% of students qualify for free/reduced lunches. Englewood became one of the first districts to launch a 1:1 iPad program allowing students to overcome a learning hurdle where they could access a digital library of over 4,000 books. "To assume students who are behind academically will 'catch-up' with their peers with generally the same resources and time as their peers is flawed thinking," states Ewert. "In Englewood, we continue to explore opportunities to be creative with time and resources to provide additional high quality instruction and engaging, rigorous, and relevant units of study." Currently, Englewood Middle School has expanded their student contact by 1 hour and 45 minutes each day and Bishop Elementary has expanded their day by 30 minutes each day. Other schools will expand their student day in 2015/16.

Ewert explains his vision for superintendents as, "First and foremost, a superintendent must be THE defender of public education and an advocate for all students, regardless of race, language, disability, or socioeconomic status. Superintendents have a moral imperative to provide the vision of learning for all of a community's children as this is the lynch pin of our democracy. Within the community, the superintendent is the lead learner and change agent, and must consistently demonstrate leadership through transparent and open communication, continually listening to and honoring all stakeholders, and inspiring others to become a part of a greater vision for the future."

Since 1988, the National Superintendent of the Year program has recognized and honored superintendents for the contributions they make every day advocating for public education, our nation's children and our country's future. Ewert will represent Colorado well as a superintendent making a positive impact on public education and the lives of their students and families.

The Colorado Association of School Executives (www.co-case.org) is the preeminent professional association for public school administrators in Colorado. The organization's mission is to empower Colorado education leaders through advocacy, professional learning and networking to deliver on the promise of public education.

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