

Media Release

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Summit Middle School Principal Joel Rivera named top middle school principal in Colorado

Englewood, April 21, 2015 – Joel Rivera, principal of Summit Middle School in Summit School District, has been selected as the 2015 Colorado Middle Level Principal of the Year. This program recognizes principals who have succeeded in providing outstanding leadership.

Rivera’s leadership style includes focusing on the power of positive relationships with students to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of student success, believing in teacher autonomy through a shared vision, and having a growth mindset when it comes to student learning. Having now served as the principal at Summit Middle School for five years, Rivera has created an environment where there is a clear vision and where staff works under the umbrella of shared leadership and collaborative planning.

“Mr. Rivera has created an inclusive environment at Summit Middle School,” stated a parent and community leader. “He knows and interacts with all students, of every demographic and academic sub-group.” By implementing many types of interventions, extensions and supports into the classroom and school, students are become part of a strong and thriving school community.

“Joel Rivera is a dedicated and passionate leader who believes family engagement is key to student academic achievement,” said Superintendent Heidi Pace. “He has the expectation that every student can and will achieve at high levels and has puts the appropriate supports into place to ensure student success.”

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When asked what this award means to him, Rivera answered, “In the end, any award or recognition Summit Middle School receives, whether as a group or individually, comes from the fact that students are being successful academically, socially and emotionally at SMS. That’s what this job is all about...helping our students reach their highest potential. This recognition validates all the hard work that goes into education and what happens when there is a shared vision from everyone that walks through our doors. So while I am delighted to have my name attached to this award, I truly believe this is a victory for everyone involved at SMS.”

The Colorado Association of Secondary School Principals (CASSP Board of Directors), an affiliate of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and a chapter of Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), selected Rivera based on a rigorous selection process.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals sponsors the Principal of the Year program. This award recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession. Selection criteria include personal excellence, collaborative leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessment and personalization of learning opportunities for students.

CASE and CASSP will formally present Rivera with his award at an upcoming school event. He and other CASE award winners also will be recognized at an awards ceremony later this month, as well as at the 46th Annual CASE Education Leadership Convention this summer in Breckenridge.

As Colorado Middle Level Principal of the Year, Rivera is eligible for National Principal of the Year recognition, which will be announced later this year. He will represent Colorado and be honored along with other state winners in Washington, D.C. in early fall.

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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