

National Distinguished Principal of the Year for Colorado

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Crawford Elementary School leader named National Distinguished Principal of the Year for Colorado

Englewood, February 23, 2015 – Jennifer Passchier, Principal of Crawford Elementary School in Aurora Public Schools, has been named the 2015 National Distinguished Principal of the Year for Colorado by the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), and will represent Colorado in the national award program.

An educator for more than 16 years and in Aurora Public Schools for all but her first year, Passchier has served as a principal for the past seven years. Upon starting at Crawford Elementary School two years ago, Passchier made the strategic decision to focus on a standards-based teaching learning cycle and writing across all content areas. She attributes this decision as the reason why Crawford achieved the highest overall proficiency increase of all elementary schools in Aurora based on 2014 TCAP (Colorado’s state assessment) scores.

Passchier also attributes the positive, trusting and collaborative culture in the building as a factor to the school’s success. The building climate survey results improved significantly under her leadership. Teacher turnover decreased four-fold resulting in a strong community of educator professionals committed to the vision and sustaining the work. As the school leader at Crawford, Passchier ensures the work is focused and the right supports are in place. Her efforts impressed the selection committee, which named Passchier the 2015 National Distinguished Principal for Colorado.

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Superintendent of Aurora Public Schools (APS) Rico Munn said, “Principal Passchier will be humble and defer to the great work of her students and staff, but we also want to recognize her incredible work. She is an incredible asset to the families at Crawford Elementary, Aurora Public Schools and the greater community.”

Jocelyn Stephens, Passchier’s supervisor and APS P-20 Learning Community Director, states, “I count it a gift to have a leader like Ms. Passchier in our learning community; she models how the work of a principal can be relevant to the true needs of a school community in a passionate, authentic and strategic way.”

Another APS Director Kathleen Shiverdecker wrote of Passchier, “The school today, because of Jenny and the highly-functional team she has developed, is a healthy, productive, supportive, engaging, growth-minded community of learners that proves through performance and shines with possibility.”

Upon being notified of this honor, Passchier stated, “It is a great honor and a humbling experience to be recognized in this way.” She adds, as Superintendent Munn anticipated, “In addition, this honor is a reflection of the hard work that our students and teachers have taken on this past year through our work together.”

Crawford Elementary School has a diverse student population of 755 students and is heavily impacted by poverty. Twenty percent of its students are refugees. Passchier has addressed some of the challenges of meeting students’ basic needs by creating community partnerships and family supports, such as classes for families to educate them on how to support reading at home.

Passchier was selected for this honor by her peers through a rigorous and competitive process facilitated by the Colorado Association of Elementary School Principals (CAESP), a department of CASE and affiliate of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The National Distinguished Principal of the Year program is sponsored by NAESP, in corporate partnership with VALIC.

“As studies indicate, principal leadership is second only to strong instruction when it comes to impacting student achievement,” stated CASE Executive Director Bruce Caughey. “CASE is proud to honor Jenny Passchier and to recognize the leadership she has demonstrated at Crawford Elementary School and throughout her education career.”

The award honors principals who have exhibited extraordinary leadership, commitment to their students and staff, service to their communities, and contributions to the overall profession, including their professional association. It is important that the dedication and enthusiasm of principals who guide children’s earliest educational experiences be acknowledged to both reward their accomplishments and allow their work to serve as models of excellence for others to follow.

CASE and CAESP will formally present Passchier with her award at an upcoming school event on April 2. She and other CASE award winners also will be recognized at an awards ceremony this spring, as well as at the 46th Annual CASE Education Leadership Convention this summer in Breckenridge.

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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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