

News Release

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Jefferson County School District leader named High School Principal of the Year in Colorado

Englewood, April 12, 2016 – Colleen Owens, the principal at Green Mountain High School in the Jefferson County School District, has been named Colorado's High School Principal of the Year by the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) and a committee of her peers from the Colorado Association of Secondary School Principals (CASSP).

Upon being notified of receiving the honor, Owens said, "This validates that my passion and work to be a positive influence in the lives of students, teachers, parents and our community means something to others. As a leader, I am dedicated to caring about others, providing opportunities for students and staff, and making sure that our community maintains strong bonds with the school. No leader is successful without having a strong support system. I have been fortunate in my career to work and learn from some amazing colleagues, students, and community members."

An alumna herself, Owens' roots are deep and her roles diverse at Green Mountain High School. Once a student, teacher, and assistant principal, Owens has now served in the principal role for five years. During this time, she has sought to eliminate and improve upon many of the issues the school was facing, including a drastically decreasing enrollment of nearly 100 students per year. Now, after helping to establish a firm sense of community and belonging, "RamNation," as the school community is called, has stabilized and reached new levels of achievement. The one-of-a-kind Academy Program the school uses to support learning and prepare students for college and other career opportunities, offers engagement in courses ranging from engineering, health, business, performing arts, global studies, and more.

As one Green Mountain High School student said, "Mrs. Owens has helped design and implement multiple programs that prepare students for the future, and after going through these programs, it

is clear that I am ready for college. Green Mountain High School has given me the opportunity to explore numerous fields while allowing me to go in-depth through advanced placement classes in the subjects that I find intriguing.”

In addition to supporting student success through the Academy model, Owens promotes strong instruction and teacher development through Professional Learning Communities focused on continuous improvement. Beyond her role in leading both students and staff, Owens has worked tirelessly to strengthen the school’s communication. Early in her principalship, she instituted weekly principal reports to better instill a sense of community. Recently, she implemented a strategic communication plan to help inform stakeholders, including parents, students, staff and community members, of the opportunities available for students, as well as to share school news.

School Innovation & Effectiveness Team Achievement Director Eric Everding said, “Colleen is relationship-driven and empowers teachers, students, and parents in their educational and co-curricular experiences. She models shared leadership and connects with members of the school community. Teachers work for Colleen and stay at her school, a testament to the value they feel as professionals.”

The Colorado Association of Secondary School Principals (CASSP Board of Directors), an affiliate of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and a department of Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), selected Owens 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 Owens with her award at an upcoming school event. She and other CASE award winners also will be recognized at an awards ceremony later this month, as well as at the 47th Annual CASE Convention this summer in Breckenridge.

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.