

CASE - 2026 Award Story

Michael Clow

**Deputy Superintendent - 27J Schools
2026 CASPA Sandra Shreve Award**

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"It's a team game. Any win I can claim is because of the team. I am surrounded by heroes — students, staff, parents — trying to make a difference for our kids, schools, and communities."

— Michael Clow, on what this recognition means

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ON CAREER, BELIEF & LEADERSHIP

When you reflect on your career so far, what moments or experiences most shaped you as a leader?

When I reflect, I often think about the amazing, caring, and thoughtful mentors and models I have encountered all the way through. Those relationships have shaped me into the person I am today.

How do you advocate for students and staff in moments that require difficult decisions?

Check my ego as best I can and keep perspective and feedback coming into my work and into the system.

What leadership value or belief guides your decision-making most consistently?

Belief guides me - belief in my colleagues (leaders, educators and support staff), belief in our mission, belief we can make a difference.

How do you stay grounded and connected to students and staff while managing the demands of leadership?

I hope I am grounded. I am counting on my teammates to help.

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"Challenge partners with purpose — it is a package deal. I am grateful for all of it."

— On the specific challenges faced in this career

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THE PEOPLE WHO ARE HIS INSPIRATION

Share a story that you look to for inspiration in your role.

Colleagues

Meghan Frenzel · Sandy Geer · Kathey Ruybal · Emily Tompkins · Heather Garcia · Veronica Navarro · Lanette Olinske · Jen Hirsch · Krisha Cardenas · Kevin Purfurst · Glenn Morrison · Bethany Ager · and more

Former Students

Jason · Stalissa · Juan · Zhamonte · Abby · Tedric · James · and many more

Their efforts model for me how to carry this work and I serve with them for our mission. These students and colleagues deserve and require my best. Every single day, they are my inspiration.

ON CASE, HOPE & THE FUTURE

How has CASE supported your professional growth or leadership journey?

CASE is an organization that connects smart, experienced leaders across districts to offer perspective and expertise. I have been fortunate to have been connected with so many talented people who offered their experience, counsel, and empathy to me over the years. Thank you to each of them and to CASE! Not only has this supported my professional growth, it's also strengthened my work by learning from others.

Looking forward, what do you think will be the biggest challenge for public education, and how do you think it should be addressed?

Our continued relevance. We can and should work to change the education paradigm that we all support from content and knowledge providers, compliance directors, and accountability holders to thinking facilitators and empowerment creators.

What gives you the most hope about the future of public education in Colorado?

Our amazing students and our heroic educators. Just the other night, I listened to a Brighton High School graduate speak at the National Honor Society induction ceremony. The graduate spoke passionately about service to the community and service to our fellow humans. He perfectly represented what all educators would dream for our students to become.

What advice would you give to assistant principals who are early in their leadership journey?

Be open to perspective and learning.

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"Listen and learn more than you speak, direct, and advise. Being a listening ear will take you farther in your career than being the first to jump on something."

— Advice to aspiring education leaders

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