

News Release

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Leshler Middle School Principal Tom Dodd named Middle School Principal of the Year in Colorado

Englewood, April 18, 2016 – Tom Dodd, principal of Leshler Middle School, an International Baccalaureate World School in the Poudre School District, has been selected as the 2016 Colorado Middle Level Principal of the Year by the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) and a committee of his peers from the Colorado Association of Secondary School Principals (CASSP).

Upon being notified of receiving the honor, Dodd said, “I see this recognition as a validation of the hard work of our faculty and staff over the last 11 years to improve learning experiences and outcomes for our kids. We’re all about excellence and equity, and we’re truly humbled by this honor!”

Dodd has served as a school administrator for 16 years, with 11 of those years as the principal of Leshler Middle School. Dodd promotes high expectations with high support, and actively demonstrates an upbeat, engaged leadership style. During his tenure at Leshler, he has worked to ensure a personalized learning environment for students and a collaborative workplace for staff. He established a Professional Learning Community grounded in collaborative culture and interdisciplinary teams that updated procedures and practices, prioritized sustainability, improved communication with parents and among staff, and formulated a plan to modernize the school facility. Among those improvements was a focus on technology, which included a one-to-one laptop initiative for students and installing Smartboards and document cameras in every classroom.

“Tom is a servant leader, and he truly focuses on the growth and well-being of those in our community,” Wylie Cate, lead counselor at Leshler Middle School said. “He takes the time to get to know and understand the people on his staff, and he truly wants to understand who they are and what they can best bring to our school.”

With students as his focus, Dodd promotes student engagement by cheering on his students at everything from sporting events to spelling bees, encourages students to work hard and plug into co and extracurricular activities, visits classrooms, and fosters teacher leadership through open and honest two-way communication so staff can bring forward creative ideas in support of inspired teaching and learning.

Leshler Middle School is one of the most diverse secondary schools in the Poudre School District. Of 768 students currently enrolled, approximately 45 percent are eligible for free/reduced-price meals, 25 percent are classified as English Language Learners, and 25 percent have been identified as Gifted and Talented. In order to meet the needs of this student population, Dodd and his team of 70 staff members implemented a Spanish/English Dual Language Program to deliver instruction bilingually in math, science, social studies and language arts, and a building-wide Gifted and Talented Enrichment Model with a Summer Institute. As a result, Leshler has experienced a number of successes under his leadership, including increased enrollment from 500 to 768 students with the corresponding need for waitlists for eight consecutive years, and recognition as a CAMLE School to Watch, (2014-17), USDE Green Ribbon School (2014), and NASSP/MetLife Breakthrough School (2012).

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 Dodd 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 Dodd 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 47th Annual CASE Convention this summer in Breckenridge.

As Colorado Middle Level Principal of the Year, Dodd 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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Colorado Association
of Superintendents and
Senior Administrators

CASSP

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School Principals

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