



Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congdon Park Principal Kathi Kusch Marshall Honored with Leadership Award

[Roseville, MN, December 2, 2025] — The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) is proud to announce that Kathi Kusch Marshall, Principal of Congdon Park Elementary School in Duluth, has been named the Division Leadership Award recipient for the Northeast Division.

The Division Leadership Award recognizes leaders in the principalship who have made outstanding contributions to supporting their colleagues and advancing educational leadership in their region. It's an honor that celebrates not only professional excellence but also the power of community-driven leadership—and Kusch Marshall's work embodies both.

"Strong schools begin with strong principals who lift others up," said Michelle Krell, MESPA Executive Director. "Kathi Kusch Marshall's leadership has created a ripple effect of collaboration, innovation, and hope throughout the Northeast Division. Her focus on equity, connection, and the whole child has made a profound impact not just on Congdon Park Elementary, but on the broader educational community."

With 37 years in education, Kusch Marshall has built her career on creating powerful learning in peaceful, inclusive environments. Her path began at Nettleton Math and Science Magnet School, where she taught for eight years before serving as an administrator for eleven. For the past sixteen years, she has led Congdon Park Elementary, cultivating a

school culture centered on high expectations, restorative practices, and deep community partnerships.

"I keep the North Star—student learning—at the center of every decision and initiative," said Kusch Marshall. "Connecting people full circle is what drives my passion as I do my best work and inspire hope when circumstances don't always support healthy learning."

Known affectionately as "The Keeper of the Kids," Kusch Marshall is recognized for her unwavering dedication to student well-being. Under her leadership, Congdon Park has implemented holistic programs such as Safe Routes to School, which promotes physical wellness, and Farm to School, which links healthy eating to learning readiness. She has also expanded arts and enrichment opportunities, introducing drumming and art clubs to inspire creativity and self-expression.

Her belief in collaboration extends beyond her school. Through her involvement with PACSE (Parent Advisory Council for Special Education), she has advocated tirelessly for students with learning differences, ensuring equitable access and bridging the "We" between special and general education. Initiatives like her monthly "Coffee with Kathi" meetings have built transparency and trust by giving families a space to share their voices.

"Kathi's thoughtful leadership and student-centered philosophy exemplify what it means to serve as a leader among leaders," Krell added. "Her legacy reminds us that when principals work together—when they support one another—the entire educational community thrives."

As she reflects on nearly four decades of service, Kusch Marshall's influence continues to shape the heart of Duluth's educational landscape—one connection, one collaboration, and one child at a time.

About MESPA

The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association is the premier leadership resource for elementary and middle-level principals, dedicated to supporting and connecting school leaders. MESPA's mission is to ensure that every child in Minnesota receives a high-quality, inclusive education by empowering principals as the critical leaders of their schools.

For more information, visit mespa.net/Division-Leaders