Minnesota Association of School Administrators

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Beth Giese Receiving Memorial Award

(St. Paul, Minn.) – Beth Giese, Superintendent for Cannon Falls Schools, has been named the Kay E. Jacobs Memorial Award recipient by the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA). The award recognizes excellent leadership and involvement provided to MASA and other educational organizations by an administrator with ten or less years of administrative experience. Ms. Giese will be honored for her leadership, concern for students and active involvement in professional and community affairs at a statewide recognition ceremony to be held at the MASA/MASE Spring Conference, March 12-13, 2015, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park.

In a letter of support for Ms. Giese's nomination, Caledonia Public Schools Superintendent Ben Barton wrote, "Beth exemplifies all of the qualities associated with the Kay E. Jacobs award. She is responsible, flexible, dependable, an effective communicator, and an excellent leader. I feel I can speak for my colleagues across southeast Minnesota in saying that Beth deserves to be honored for her contributions as a superintendent and leader."

Ms. Giese has worked for Cannon Falls Schools since 2001, serving the district as superintendent since 2011. Under Ms. Giese's leadership, the district's overall test scores have improved, achieving above state-standard math and reading scores. She feels one of her recent career accomplishments has been navigating district-wide operational and financial solidity and growth through economic uncertainty. "I've often stepped in when no one else wanted to. I'm in the trenches to spot opportunities for improvement and have always lead the team by example," wrote Ms. Giese in her application.

As an advocate for professional learning, Ms. Giese is an active member in many educational organizations. She supports MASA's newest members as a mentor and also serves as the Region 1 chair. In addition to MASA, Ms. Giese is active in Schools for Equity in Education (SEE), the Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA), and many Cannon Falls community organizations.

Ms. Giese holds two master's degrees, one in K-12 school administration and one curriculum and instruction from Saint Mary's University. She also has dual bachelor's degrees from the University of Nebraska in elementary education and special education. Ms. Giese's educational background is complemented by a 12-year military background, where she was named the 1994 Soldier of the Year.

The Memorial Award was established in 1983 in honor of Kay E. Jacobs, an outstanding young administrator of many achievements who died in a car accident in 1979. At the time of her death, Ms. Jacobs was the assistant superintendent for the Mahtomedi Schools and had just been nominated, through a national screening process, for membership in the 38th Annual Superintendents' Work Conference at Teachers' College, Columbia University. This was a distinct honor, because only forty-five outstanding chief school officers from school systems throughout the United States had been invited to participate. The Memorial Award recognizes women administrators who have demonstrated the attributes of leadership and involvement early in their careers as Kay Jacobs did.

Each year, MASA recognizes members for their contribution to public education. MASA is a professional organization of Minnesota's school leaders whose members include over 900 public education and non-public superintendents, directors of special education, curriculum and technology leaders, other central office administrators, service providers, business partners and retirees.

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