Minnesota Association of School Administrators

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Michelle Krell Receives Outstanding Central Office Leader Award

(St. Paul, MN) – The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Michelle Krell, Director of Teaching and Learning of Owatonna Public Schools, the recipient of the 2021 Outstanding Central Office Leader Award. She received this award for exhibiting a willingness to risk, possessing strong communications skills, being a progressive change agent, and having high expectations for herself and others. Krell will be honored for her leadership, concern for students, and active involvement in professional and community affairs at a statewide recognition ceremony during the MASA/MASE Spring Conference held virtually March 11-12, 2021.

“Michelle is a professional educator in every sense of the word. In every step of her career she has found success through determined effort, grit and always putting people first,” said Jeff Elstad, Superintendent of Owatonna Public Schools. “Michelle has completely transformed the teaching and learning department into a data-based, yet people-centered department. She focuses on learning through real listening and finding unique ways to empower staff and students to find their best way forward. She is a true problem solver.”

Krell began serving as the Director of Teaching and Learning for Owatonna Public Schools in 2017. Before her time in Owatonna, she was a Middle and Elementary School Principal at Kasson-Mantorville Public Schools. Krell has been a Principal at Waseca Public Schools and Owatonna Public Schools. She began her career as an elementary school teacher in the Medford and Owatonna Public Schools.

During her time in Owatonna, Krell has been working collaboratively to build and support the design of a Career Pathways program at Owatonna High School to align coursework with fields of study to better inform students and families in making career or college choices. She has facilitated the implementation of a strong literacy and math program and has supported Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for students. Krell has also led the changes to the district's professional development system to better align the needs of the staff with relevant and authentic opportunities to learn new skills.

Krell's additional accomplishments include taking a leadership role in the passage of a $122 million bond referendum to build a new Owatonna High School, recruiting and hiring of a top-notch team in the teaching and learning department, and successfully planning and implementing “Courageous Educators: Racial Equity Training” for more than 120 district staff and administrators.

Krell is an active member of MASA and has held membership in the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). She currently serves on the MASA Executive Development and Nominating committees. Krell has received numerous awards during her career including the 2014 Minnesota’s National Distinguished Principal, 2013-14 Minnesota School of Excellence Award, 2012 MESPA Leadership Award, 2011 National Distinguished Principal Nominee and Top Three Finalist, and a 2006 Blue Ribbon School Award.

Krell earned a master's degree in Education from Saint Mary's University and a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Minnesota State University-Mankato. She holds a Sixth Year Administrative and Superintendent Licensure from Minnesota State University-Mankato.

Each year, MASA recognizes members for their contribution to public education. MASA is a professional organization of Minnesota’s school leaders, including superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors of special education, and other central office administrators, as well as state department administrators, college and university professors, and other educators throughout Minnesota dedicated to educational leadership for students.

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