Minnesota Association of School Administrators

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PRESS RELEASE

Electronic versions of this press release and Superintendent Lewandowski's photograph are available. Please email Aimee Ranallo at MASA (aranallo@mnasa.org) to request copies.

Superintendent Sandra Lewandowski

Sandra Lewandowski is the 2015 MN Superintendent of the Year

(St. Paul, Minn.) —The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Superintendent Sandra Lewandowski, Superintendent for Intermediate District 287, the 2015 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year.

"I could not be more thrilled to be the recipient of the 2015 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year Award," said Lewandowski. "It is an affirmation of the success of our students, staff and school board. I am immensely grateful for a job where I can work with passionate public school leaders as they adapt and innovate for the future."

As the Minnesota honoree, Superintendent Lewandowski is a candidate among other state winners for National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced during the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) convention on February 26-27, 2015 in San Diego, CA.

Superintendent of the Year nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates:

- Leadership for learning—creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication skills—strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism—constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community involvement—active participation in local community activities and understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

Superintendent Lewandowski was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives from a variety of Minnesota education organizations. "Ms. Lewandowski is a strong advocate for the students that she serves. Her constant focus is making decisions based on what is best for her students," said MASA Executive Director Dr. Gary Amoroso. "Sandy is an outstanding role model for all education leaders in Minnesota."

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Superintendent Lewandowski has been with Intermediate District 287 since 1979, serving as superintendent since 2005. Located in Plymouth, MN, Intermediate District 287 provides more than 120 programs and services for career, technical, gifted, and special education, as well as online learning options, to 12 Twin Cities' member school districts. Intermediate District 287 is one of only three intermediate districts in Minnesota, currently employing over 800 staff and serving almost 10,000 students.

Superintendent Lewandowski's Board Chair Ann Bremer nominated her for the award. In her letter of nomination Bremer wrote, "Sandy has taken the district from the verge of dissolution to prominence. By focusing on the needs of our students and our staff, and providing for their safety, Sandy has vastly improved the whole district's culture and offerings." Bremer closed her letter with, "No one in our state has been more committed to serving all students. Sandy has given selflessly of her talents to serve the public and produced so many meaningful and long-lasting results."

Under Lewandowski's leadership, the Intermediate District 287 has been systematically emphasizing reading improvement using data-driven strategy, resulting in a district-wide "Culture of Literacy." Lewandowski was the first superintendent in Minnesota to institute a formal district-wide Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program, as well as the first Gateway to College program. Lewandowski's professional development program, "A Better Way," will teach 70 regional school leaders how to implement positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), social emotional learning (SEL), alternatives to suspension, and culturally-responsive programming.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune recently named Intermediate District 287 a 2014 Top 100 Workplace in Minnesota, coming in at #29. "At Intermediate District 287, we have created a culture of high performers among principals, teachers and staff. That culture, in turn, promotes success for our students. Everyone in our district has much cause to celebrate," said Lewandowski.

Superintendent Lewandowski received her school superintendent licensure, education specialist degree, and bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota. Before becoming superintendent for Intermediate District 287, she served in a variety of positions for the District including strategic planning facilitator, executive director of student support services, and assistant superintendent. Lewandowski is the recipient of the Minnesota School Public Relations Association (MinnSPRA) Leadership in Communications Award; two Hubert Humphrey for Local Government Innovation Awards, a Crystal Star Award for Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention and Prevention; a Hennepin County Wellness by Design Award; and the TIES Technology Leadership Award.

For more information on the AASA Superintendent of the Year Program, please visit: http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=3404

MASA is a professional organization whose mission is to establish the statewide agenda for children, serve as the preeminent voice for public education, and empower members through quality services and support. MASA members are school superintendents, directors of special education, other central office school administrators, regional administrators, and higher education administrators and professors from throughout Minnesota.
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ATS&R We are grateful to ATS&R Planners/Architects/Engineers for their sponsorship of the Minnesota Superintendent of the Year program.