

Minnesota Administrators for Special Education

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News Release

For Immediate Release: February 24, 2023

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Dr. Sarah Mittelstadt Receives MASE Special Education Administrator of the Year Award

(St. Paul, MN) – The Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) has named Dr. Sarah Mittelstadt, Executive Director of Southern Plains Education Cooperative, the 2023 Special Education Administrator of the Year. Dr. Mittelstadt has received this award for her dedication to students with disabilities and their families, and her active involvement in professional and community affairs. She will be honored at a statewide recognition ceremony during the MASA/MASE Spring Conference held March 9-10, 2023.

“Sarah has made significant contributions to the field of special education. She generously shares her knowledge, experience, and time to mentor and support fellow special education leaders and displays a passion for improving programming for students with disabilities,” Jamie Nord, Executive Director of St. Croix River Education District and MASE President, in her letter of support. “Sarah has set an example of how to give back and serve others in the field through her dedicated professional organization involvement. She is highly regarded by her MASE colleagues and other educational leaders across the state for her leadership and service.”

Dr. Mittelstadt has nearly two decades of experience as a Special Education Administrator. She has served as the Executive Director of Southern Plains Education Cooperative since 2011. She previously was the Supervisor of Special Education for the Southwest West Central Service Cooperative. Dr. Mittelstadt began her educational career as a Special Education Lead Teacher and Speech and Language Pathologist at Renville County West School District, formerly Belview, Danube, Renville, and Sacred Heart.

Under Dr. Mittelstadt’s leadership, Southern Plains Education Cooperative leads five member districts in managerial guidance, cooperative staffing, and consulting of 140 staff members to meet the educational needs of more than 800 special education students. She has demonstrated exceptional skill and creative problem-solving in the recruiting, onboarding, and training of new special educators in the face of significant staffing shortages. In addition, Dr. Mittelstadt recently facilitated the design, financing, and renovation to create an \$11M facilities project to accommodate alternative educational services for member districts. The project was completed \$750,000 under budget.

As an active member of MASE, Dr. Mittelstadt has an extensive history of leadership within the association, including Area Representative, President Elect, President, and currently Past-President of the MASE Board of Directors. She has served as Federal Advocacy Chair, co-chair of the Legislative and Business Partnership Committees, and as member of the Nominating,

Membership, Fundraising, Strategic Planning, and Professional Development Committees. Dr. Mittelstadt is the chair of the MASE SLICE of Collaboration committee coordinating bi-monthly meetings of the membership to foster professional growth and learning along with association members with approximately 100 members joining each session.

Dr. Mittelstadt's other professional involvement include the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), P.E.O. Chapter Y, Leadership Martin County, Board Member of Second Chances, Minnesota Medicaid School Leadership Group, Governor's Appointee to the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), and as a Board Member of Willmar Shelter House.

Dr. Mittelstadt holds a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership, Sixth Year Degree in Educational Administration, and a master's and bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders from St. Cloud State University. She holds licensure in the following areas: Pre K-12 Speech Language Pathologist, K-12 Principal, District Superintendent, and Director of Special Education.

MASE is a professional association organized to promote programs and services to improve the education of children with disabilities, to foster high quality programs of professional development, and to study problems relating to serving children with disabilities and improving the leadership of administrators for special education. MASE members are administrators for special education in public or private schools, cooperative regional, state and other education administrative units, college and university professors of special education teacher or administrator preparation programs, and administrators, coordinators or consultants for the Minnesota Department of Education.

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Photo: Dr. Sarah Mittelstadt

