

Minnesota Administrators for Special Education

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News Release

For Immediate Release: February 22, 2019

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Amy Ernst Receives MASE New Special Education Leader Award

(St. Paul, MN) – The Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) has named Amy Ernst, Director of Special Education of the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools, as the recipient of the 2019 New Special Education Leader Award. Ernst received this award for her commitment 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, March 7-8, 2019, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park.

“Amy exemplifies what this award represents: a willingness to risk, an ability to collaborate, skills in listening and communicating, and a broad understanding of the educational system,” said Nan Records, Retired Director of Special Education and Regional Low Incidence Facilitator at Sourcewell. “She may be new as a director, but for years, Amy has demonstrated passion, commitment, and the skills necessary to impact the quality of education for students with disabilities.”

Ernst has been the Director of Special Education of the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools since 2015. Prior to her position at Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, Ernst served as Special Education Coordinator and then Assistant Director of Special Education at the Sherburne/Northern Wright Special Education Cooperative. She was a Special Education Teacher at Monticello Public Schools and Elk River Area Schools.

Ernst is extremely knowledgeable in her field of special education. Through her varied experiences and desire for continual learning, she brings a wealth of resources to her work. She is a creative problem-solver and a constant solution-seeker, examining best practices for the programming to meet the unique needs of special education students. Ernst's leadership style is one of building strong, positive relationships, yet she is not one to shy away from the tough issues directors face. At the core of all her decisions is doing what's right for the student.

Ernst has the ability to see the systems within the district and create tangible initiatives that will ensure high student achievement. She has bold ideas, takes risks, and empowers people to “jump on board.” Ernst has created a program development cycle for special education within the district. This cycle will provide the district with ongoing data with regard to programming and teaching which helps students achieve at higher levels. Ernst also created a new Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Programming Specialist TOSA position for the district. The position will help special education teachers across the district design and implement stronger programs for our special education students.

“Amy's passion and commitment for all students and especially special education students is evident and observable each and every day,” said Scott Thielman, Superintendent of the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools. “Amy's knowledge and experience is a tremendous asset to the students of the district and the state of Minnesota through her service to MASE and should be used to the fullest extent possible.”

Ernst is strongly and passionately committed to MASE and the organization's mission. She is a member of the MASE Legislative Committee and a facilitator for the MASE New Leaders training sessions. Ernst is also a member of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA).

Ernst received a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Bemidji State University. She earned a master's degree in Special Education and a 6th Year Certificate in Special Education Administration.

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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