



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: June 21, 2011
SUBJECT: MAESP National Distinguished Principal and Assistant Principal of the Year

PURPOSE:

To provide State Board recognition of the individuals selected by the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals to represent them as the National Distinguished Principal and Assistant Principal of the Year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Each year the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP) in collaboration with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) selects a National Distinguished Principal (NDP) who represents Maryland in Washington D.C. at a national NDP awards ceremony. MAESP's 2011 National Distinguished Principal is Mr. Robert Wagner from Solley Elementary School in Anne Arundel County.

MAESP also names an Assistant Principal of the Year. The MAESP 2011 Assistant Principal of the Year is Ms. Lila Walker from Beacon Heights Elementary School in Prince George's County.

Recipient profiles attached.

ACTION:

Public recognition. No other action required.

Attachments

NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPALS PROGRAM

The National Association of Elementary School Principals
in corporate partnership with VALIC

Nominee's Application Form

Name: Mr. Robert L. Wagner

~ Contact Information – Home ~

Home Address: 7113 Waking Dreams Knoll, Columbia, MD 21044, United States
Home Phone/Email: 410-531-7561 rlwagner3@verizon.net

~ Contact Information – School ~

School Name: Solley Elementary School
School Address: 7608 Solley Road, Glen Burnie, MD 21060, United States
School Contact: 410-222-6473 410-222-6467 (fax) rlwagner@aacps.org

~ Professional Information

Professional Experience

Position	Name and Location of School	Dates
Principal	Odenton Elementary, Odenton, MD	1999-2004
Principal	Brock Bridge Elementary, Laurel, MD	1996-1998
Principal	Eastport Elementary, Annapolis, MD	1991-1996
Administrative Trainee	Sunset Elementary, Pasadena, MD	1988-1991
Teacher	Waugh Chapel Elementary, Gambrills, MD	1985-1988
Teacher	Van Bokkelen Elementary, Severn, MD	1977- 1985

Total Number of Years as a Principal: 20 **Total Number of Years in Current School:** 5 ½

Professional Preparation

Plus 30 Credits in Curriculum & Supervision, University of Maryland and Loyola College, 1986
Masters of Education in Educational Management & Supervision, Loyola College, MD, 1984
Bachelors of Science in Elementary & Special Education, University of Maryland, 1977

~ School Information ~

School's Grade Configuration: Elementary School Nominee – Grade Configuration Pre-K to 5

School Enrollment: 675

Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Meals: 31%

Nominee: Robert L. Wagner

~ **THREE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS A PRINCIPAL** ~

- 1) I created a Math Team to address a dip in the math scores on the state assessment. The team meets monthly to discuss three areas of interest: development of differentiated lessons based on analysis of student data, book study review and sharing of observations of visits to other schools. Team members are given disaggregated benchmark data to develop lessons that address weaknesses that are later shared at the monthly meetings. I was able to secure funding from our PDS partner, Loyola University, to purchase the book, Faster Isn't Smarter for a book study. I was able to provide teachers opportunities to observe best practices of math teachers at other schools after requesting funding.
- 2) I started an incentive program *Lunch with the Administrator* to recognize student effort, hard work and desire to excel. Each week for the past nineteen years I have had lunch with small groups of eight to ten students to recognize their achievement. In addition to receiving a certificate, students have the opportunity to play a variety of challenging puzzles with me after finishing their lunch. Relationships are strengthened and a positive school climate has been created. Each year I have lunch with approximately 800 students.
- 3) During the past year I have received 30 hours of training to become a trainer for *Thinking Maps: A Language for Learning*, a major initiative in our district and a goal on our school improvement plan. Working with three teachers in my school, we have provided in-services throughout the year to more than fifty staff members. A monthly gallery walk was incorporated to share best practices among the teachers. I was successful in having a Thinking Maps national consultant spend the day at our school. The consultant taught several lessons and had debriefing sessions with selected staff and me. A videotape was taken of the day's activities and posted on the district website for all schools to view for professional development.

Nominee: Robert L. Wagner

Question 1: How do you balance leadership and management duties to best support student achievement?

Every decision a principal makes should be about supporting student learning and achievement (Standard 1). It is a message that must be communicated with staff, parents and students in our daily acts, as we develop school goals, and in the choices we make for professional development. This year I had to rethink how I balance my leadership and management skills to address a weakness in student achievement.

My school experienced a decrease in its math scores on the state assessment. Sharing the student data and brainstorming possible causes of the problem was the impetus in developing a school improvement plan that made math achievement a major focus. Our team developed the professional development schedule and I allocated funds in the budget to support the initiative. Capitalizing on the leadership of the lead math teacher and talent development teacher to be the facilitators at the monthly math team meetings, we developed a comprehensive plan that focused on student achievement in math. I secured funding to purchase recommended books for a book study and substitute coverage to allow team members to observe math teachers at other schools. A culture of learning (Standard 4) was further strengthened by providing time for teachers to plan with the math resource teacher. I provided student data spreadsheets and allocated time for teachers to share the results of their differentiated instruction on student achievement.

As Jim Collins noted in his book *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't*, having a sustained focus and having the right people "on the bus" are critical components in being a successful leader. Building the capacity of teachers was critical in expanding the leadership base of the school. This enabled me to share leadership and management responsibilities in a way that empowered teachers.

Nominee: Robert L. Wagner

Question 2: How have you involved parents and community members in supporting student achievement?

Parent involvement leads to increased student achievement. The challenge as a principal is providing opportunities and incentives to motivate parents and students to attend. Increasing parent involvement at academic events is one of our school improvement goals. Data collected last year (Standard 5) also indicated that English Language Learners (ELL) and Hispanic students and parents were unrepresented in our academic events.

To actively engage the families in my community (Standard 6), we implemented several initiatives. First, we created an incentive that would recognize classes with the highest percentage of parents in attendance at an event by awarding them a large banner for their classroom door. Second, I worked with my ELL teacher to telephone families of non-English students to attend our evening events and scheduled interpreters to attend and provide support to our families. Third, I charged the social studies committee to sponsor a multicultural event that would celebrate the diversity of cultures around the world. Our school had *It's a Small World Celebration*, an event that drew almost 200 parents. The staff providing hands-on activities celebrating cultures around the world and parent volunteers created displays of their culture. Foreign language students from the local high school also provided activities.

School volunteers provide daily support by working with students in the classrooms, computer lab and media center. Each week hundreds of students are recognized as "Chessie Readers" because of volunteers in the media center helping them with their reading. Last year we had over one thousand volunteer hours.

Businesses have supported our efforts by funding an after-school robotics club operated by parent volunteers, supplying incentives for student achievement and providing a \$5000 grant that enabled our students to plant a hundred trees on our school grounds.

Students benefited from volunteer support and understood the multiple opportunities their community offered them.

Nominee: Robert L. Wagner

Question 3: How do you support learners who are struggling, challenge learners who are excelling, and maintain high standards for all?

Everyone agrees that schools must educate and challenge all of their students. "Raising the bar and closing the gap" is a phrase that has been used by Rick DuFour and Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan to promulgate the mission of schools. The concept of professional learning communities (PLC) and the use of differentiated instruction are two key approaches to meeting the needs of all students.

I schedule weekly planning sessions in language arts and math with every grade level team. Teachers work collaboratively to analyze formative assessment before deciding which students might need the concept to be re-taught or extended to deepen their understanding. The special education and English Language Learner teachers are a part of the planning team. During the past several years, our professional development has emphasized the importance of a PLC. Initially, teachers focused mostly on improving lesson plans, but as they grew in their collaboration as a team, formative data was used to make instructional decisions. I provided class spreadsheets of individual student data to ensure efficiency in planning. Later, we started using pre-assessments and exit tickets when examining student work to determine the needs of students.

The work of Carol Ann Tomlinson has been used in our professional development for the past several years. Differentiated instruction has allowed teachers to target the needs of students in reading and math through the use of small group instruction.

I meet twice a month with the intervention committee to monitor the data and discuss the progress of individual students that are receiving intervention with a special program. Changes are made based on the performance of students. The talent development teacher works closely with each team to provide strategies to teachers and direct instruction to teachers needing enrichment. Lastly, we monitor our progress at monthly school improvement team meetings.

Nominee: Robert L. Wagner

Question 4: How do you cultivate, monitor, and advance a positive climate in your building?

A positive climate begins with the principal and is intertwined with the culture of a school. The principal, in consensus with the staff, creates a shared vision that reflects the values of the staff and community (Standard 2).

The second year at my present school, I met with staff and other stakeholders in the community to determine the vision, mission, and value statements that reflected our beliefs about children, the school, and the community. These statements act as a compass in the decisions we make.

I am the cheerleader of the school's climate as reflected by my words and actions each day. Greeting students and parents as they enter the building, providing feedback to a teacher after a formal observation, or comforting a child after an incident are three examples of the many opportunities I have each day to cultivate a positive climate. Visibility is essential and my daily walk-throughs are an excellent way of modeling expectations and providing recognition, through notes and comments, the many positive things I see. Daily monitoring of instruction and attending meetings are excellent ways to provide feedback.

Shared leadership and opportunities to grow professionally are factors that foster a climate and culture of continuous learning (Standard 5). I encourage teachers to become facilitators at curriculum meetings. One teacher is leading a book study for math teachers, while three other teachers coordinated a successful multicultural event for parents and students. Grade level teams showcase their work at faculty meetings. This year I secured funds to have ten teachers observe math teachers at other schools and was able to send six teachers to a reading conference.

Most important of all, I take time to celebrate the many good deeds of my staff with awards, letters of appreciation, lunches, and words of appreciation.

**Educator, Norfolk Public Schools
Young Park Elementary School**

1989-1994

Planned and implemented daily lesson plans for second graders using the standards of learning that were set forth by the Norfolk Quality Schools Initiative; also served as grade level chairperson.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Grade Level Chairperson kindergarten and second grades, 1992-1999, Norfolk Public Schools
- NEA/Education Association of Norfolk – Building Representative, 1992- 1999.
- Cooperating Teacher for Student Teaching Programs – Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University, 1992-1999.
- Mentor Teacher – Norfolk Public Schools, 1995-1999.
- Social Studies Contact Teacher/Kid's Vote Representative – Norfolk Public Schools, 1997-1998.
- Social Studies Contact Teacher – DCPS, 1999-2002.
- Contact Teacher, DCPS-League of Women Voters Campaign/Making Our Vote Count, 2000.
- Grade Level Chairperson, second grade – DCPS, 1999- 2000.
- Grade Level Chairperson, third grade – DCPS, 2000-2001.
- Teacher Trainer, Harcourt Brace Publishers – Social Studies Series, DCPS, 1999-2000.
- Human Resources School Liaison, DCPS, 2000-2002
- DC Teaching Fellows Advisor, DCPS, Summer 2001
- Washington Teacher's Union –Building Representative, 2001-2002
- Summer School Program Monitor, DCPS, Summer 2002
- DC Teaching Fellows Selector/Interviewer, 2002-2004.
- PGCEA – Building Representative, 2004-2006
- Job-Alike Mentor Teacher – Prince Georges County Public Schools, SY 2004-2005
- Site Coordinator A+ Focus/After-School Math & Reading Tutorial Program, PGCPSS, 2004-2006
- Site Coordinator HSA++ Saturday Retreat, PGCPSS, 2005
- Site Coordinator K/1 Summer School Program, PGCPSS, 2005
- Field Coordinator, HSA Saturday School FOCUS Programs, PGCPSS, 2006
- Assistant Director, Summer Playground, Maryland Park and Planning (MNCPP), 2008 – 2009
- ESOL Summer School Coordinator, PGCPSS, Summer 2010
- MAESP(Md. Assoc. of Elem. School Principals) – Assistant Principal of the Year, 2010

CERTIFICATIONS

- Advanced Professional Certificate (State of Maryland)
- Early Childhood; N – Gr. 3 (Md.) PK – Gr. 4 (Va.)
- Administrator I & II (State of Maryland)

REFERENCES

Available Upon Request