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TO: Members of the State Board of Education  
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*  
DATE: September 21, 2009  
SUBJECT: Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals' Principals and Assistant Principal of the Year.

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**PURPOSE:**

To provide an opportunity for the State Board of Education to recognize and congratulate those individuals selected as the Principal or Assistant Principal of the Year by the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Each year, the MASSP selects a principal of the year for the middle school level and also the high school level. In addition to these selections, MASSP also selects from among its members an Assistant Principal of the Year. For 2009, MASSP selected William Ryan of River Hill High School in Howard County as the High School Principal of the Year; Dr. Shawn Joseph of Roberto Clemente Middle School in Montgomery County as the Middle School Principal of the Year; and, Melissa Shindel of Patuxent Valley Middle School in Howard County as the Assistant Principal of the Year. Ms. Shindel also had the honor of being selected National Assistant Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Profiles of the three school administrators are attached.

**ACTION:**

Public recognition. No other action required.

3 Attachments



Melissa Shindel, Assistant Principal at Patuxent Valley Middle School in Howard County is the 2008-2009 Maryland Assistant Principal of the Year. Melissa is a graduate of the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education and a Master of Arts in Education, Policy, and Leadership. She has been an English teacher, director of an early learning academy, instructional specialist, and assistant principal in two Maryland counties.

As an assistant principal Melissa has implemented programs to teach parents and others about what children are learning, how they are learning it, and how to support this effort at home. She has planned, organized and executed learning fairs, question and answer sessions, MSA parent nights, Saturday and after-school parent instructional workshops, and data utilization meetings.

Our new assistant principal of the year is a published author in *Principal Leadership* with two articles entitled "Lessons Learned, Wisdom Earned" and "Inverting the Achievement Pyramid." She has also presented at local, regional, and national conferences on various topics during her professional career.

In working with her staff Melissa created a program called "MSA Monday" which is embedded professional development for every teacher in the school during their planning time to familiarize and teach them about the MSA. She has also taken a leadership role in the school's testing plan, planning and presenting at parent training and workshops, and organizing student improvement workshops where students were able to sign up for seminars in which they were taught in small groups on various topics. Patuxent Valley Middle School is a Professional Development School and she was the liaison between the University of Maryland and the school. She created opportunities for the staff to take courses in action research, classroom management, and on becoming a mentor teacher using the Teach-Coach-Reflect model.

Melissa believes, especially at the middle school level, it is critical to facilitate the growth of the "whole child". With that she initiated the development and maintenance of co-curricular programs that complement the curriculum, while trying to foster all students' academic success. Working to elevate the student voice, she has implemented her county's first National Junior Honor Society and revitalized the Student Government Association.

One of her administrative directors, David Bruzga wrote that, "Melissa has consistently impressed me as she has exemplified a highly collaborative leadership style, excellence in instructional leadership, and personalization of the school environment. Her outstanding communication skills, attention to detail, organizational ability, and judgment have enabled her to become an effective educational leader with great potential for higher levels of responsibility.

Another Howard County administrator, Dan Michaels, wrote that, "Melissa has enhanced the instructional and behavioral support programs at her school by effectively involving parents and staff. She an effective communicator that clearly articulates a vision and leads participants in focused action. She has effectively reconciled instructional and interpersonal issues that ultimately enhanced the learning climate for students".

Her principal at Patuxent Valley Middle School, Robert Motley related that, "She has earned my respect and the respect of staff, students and parents. She has done this through her honest, genuine, and engaging personality. She is a person of integrity who takes pride in keeping her word. She knows the importance of following through on commitments she makes to people. Melissa works hard and models the high expectations she sets for others."

Finally her PTA President, Andrea Zahlis, wrote that, "Her strength lies not only in her intelligence and efficiency, but in her energy and kindness, she has been able to develop a great rapport with so many of the students, and they truly respect her. Whether in the office, monitoring the halls or supervising the cafeteria, she treats people with courtesy and warmth".

MASSP is proud to have Melissa to represent us as the Maryland AP of the Year and as the NASSP National Assistant Principal of the Year

Mr. William Ryan, principal of River Hill High School in Clarksville, MD is the 2009 Maryland High School Principal of the Year. Over an eighteen year administrative career, Bill has served as assistant principal of Charles Carroll Middle School, principal of Eisenhower Middle School and principal of High Point High School in Prince George's County before moving to River Hill High School in Howard County.

Mr. Ryan is a graduate of Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and Bowie State University. Currently he is an adjunct professor at McDaniel College. In addition to his MASSP and NASSP membership, he is a member of the National Federation of State High School Administrators and ASCD. He is a member of the River Hill Village Board and has been a soccer, basketball and baseball coach in the Multi-County Youth Sports program.

River Hill High School serves 1344 students and has gained recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, inclusion on Newsweek's Top 100 High Schools, named the best school in Maryland by Business Week and was recently named a Maryland School of Character.

In his essay on collaborative leadership, Mr. Ryan stated, "Since my first day as a principal 16 years ago, I have embraced collaborative leadership. This deep seated commitment has shaped my leadership style and has evolved from years of working with an exceptional mentor, intensive training in Effective Schools Reform, a commitment to the guiding principles of the Comer Process for School Improvement and the embracing of the design principles of Breaking Ranks II. " He continued, "The administration, teachers, and staff use Deming's PDSA Cycle to collaboratively hone a comprehensive program that meets the educational needs and interests of a diverse student body while demonstrating a keen sensitivity to the rich cultural diversity among students."

In another essay, Mr. Ryan wrote that, Our AP committee use AP potential to encourage more students to take rigorous courses and our newly formed SAT Teacher Cohort looks at ways students can be supported in their classes as well as in differentiated after school and summer programs supported by our PTSA. This meticulous process has led to our student successes in multiple areas."

The director of secondary administration commented that, Principal Ryan has structured his leadership teams into professional leadership communities focused on brain research and brain friendly instruction, methods of differentiated instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and the effective use of instructional technology to meet the needs of varied learners. All members of the leadership team are working to develop competency as coaches to more effectively lead and mentor colleagues."

One of his assistant principals noted that, Whether it's a school improvement team meeting, a coffee with the principal session for parents, a planning period meeting with staff, or a leadership summit for students, Bill ensures that he shares with and receives information from all of the groups who can improve student instruction. The result is a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all of the school's stakeholders, a vision that has led to success at the local, state and national level."

One of Mr. Ryan's department chairs stated, Bill involves parents as leaders in the school- as technology repairmen, web masters, mentors, PTSA, Boosters, school improvement team members, and community liaisons to build a climate of nurturing and support for engaged learning in the school. School partnerships with local educational institutions have provided students with summer internships, drug free after prom activities, computer labs, and a myriad of other instructional advantages."

Dr. Shawn Joseph, principal of Roberto Clemente Middle School in Germantown, MD is the 2009 Maryland Middle Level Principal of the Year. Dr. Joseph is a graduate of Lincoln University, Johns Hopkins University and has recently earned his doctorate from George Washington University. Shawn has been an English teacher, reading specialist, team leader, student support specialist, assistant principal and principal in Montgomery County.

He has presented at Maryland Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development conference, National Council of Staff Developers, and the International Conference of People of Color. In addition, he serves as an adjunct professor at George Washington and McDaniel College.

Roberto Clemente Middle School is ethnically diverse with 33% white, 27% African-American, 20% Asian, 18% Hispanic and 2% other. Thirty percent of the students are on free and reduced lunch, twelve percent receive special education services and ten percent are ESL students.

In his collaborative leadership essay, Dr. Joseph noted that Clemente has increased the number of students in Algebra or higher in grade eight from 45% in 2004 to 87.7% in 2008. They focused on achievement and equity as 98% of Asians were in Algebra or higher, 94% of the white students, 83% of Hispanics and 76% of African-American students. Increasing MSA scores has also increased significantly, most notably in mathematics.

Dr. Joseph and his staff reorganized how they used their day to create additional time together as an instructional council to learn, reflect, and share best practices. The council has discussed Leadership and Self-Deception by the Annenberg Institute, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership by John Maxwell, Breaking Ranks in the Middle, Schools that Learn by Peter Senge, and the Three Minute Walkthrough by Carolyn Downey.

Over the course of the last four years, the staff at Clemente has instituted a daily student advisory period for thirty minutes each day. This time is used to give students an opportunity to be re-taught content they have not yet mastered. Informal and formal walkthrough procedures have been instituted to provide effective feedback to teachers and to ensure that feedback is systematic.

At Clemente, it is all about PRIDE- Personal responsibility; Respectful Interactions, Intelligence is Effort Based, Diversity is celebrated, Ensuring a safe learning environment. Dr. Joseph meets with each of his students at least once per month to discuss an aspect of PRIDE and what it means to the students academically.

His community superintendent said of Dr. Joseph, "In his extraordinary communication style, through his Monday message, and multiple venues, Dr. Joseph opens his heart as he inspires his staff and community to higher heights and brings them face-to-face with critical issues that must be addressed to enhance opportunities for students."

A staff member from his seventh grade team said, "Dr. Joseph empowered a team of teachers, including myself, to research and develop a systematic response when students are not learning. This enables a staff of eighty to have a common response when any of our 1185 students are not learning. Dr. Joseph has facilitated the process and shown us that change does not occur over night, rather occurs over time."

A former student wrote, "Dr. Joseph is a charismatic leader. His energy propelled me to thrive at Roberto Clemente. Even though my fantastic teachers may have succored me to be a flourishing student, Dr. Joseph was the engineer that modified the machine to operate at maximum capacity. His efforts have generated the ultimate product; successful students."