

Minnesota Association of School Administrators
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News Release

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Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak is the 2021 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year

(St. Paul, MN) – The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak, Superintendent of the White Bear Lake Area Schools (WBLAS), the 2021 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year. As the Minnesota honoree, Dr. Kazmierczak is a candidate among other state recipients for National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced during the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) National Conference on Education hosted virtually on February 18-19, 2021. Dr. Kazmierczak was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives from a variety of Minnesota education organizations. Nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates leadership for learning, communication skills, professionalism, and community involvement.

“Dr. Kazmierczak has quickly become a beacon of leadership and inspiration across the state during his time at White Bear Lake,” said MASA Executive Director Dr. Deb Henton. “He has made immediate relationships with his staff and the surrounding community. It is clear under his direction the district is poised to make positive impacts now and into the future. We are proud to have Dr. Kazmierczak represent our administrators as Minnesota’s Superintendent of the Year.”

In 2019, Dr. Kazmierczak and WBLAS began a campaign for a \$326 million bond referendum. The 2019 campaign included videos, print materials, and electronic materials that contributed to the district’s success. The most effective strategy was the in-person meetings held with stakeholders. More than 125 presentations and question-and-answer sessions provided an opportunity for stakeholders to connect with Dr. Kazmierczak and other school leaders authentically. In addition to typical campaign practices, he held additional referendum presentations for the senior living community, which proved important in strengthening rapport with WBLAS’ most senior community members. These meetings led to support for the plan that would not have been achieved had the district not focused on this audience in this non-traditional way.

During the 2018-19 school year, Dr. Kazmierczak led the development of an equity commitment statement and adopted a four-way equity decision making protocol to guide the district's work. The district conducted an equity audit, and in light of the killing of George Floyd and how conversations across the nation have evolved during this past year, the timing of the results of the equity audit positioned Dr. Kazmierczak and the district to develop and implement both meaningful and actionable equity strategies for the district.

An example from the equity audit was the grading disparities among students of color. Grading can be one of the largest areas in which systemic racism and inequities are perpetuated. Dr. Kazmierczak and WBLAS believe grades should be a measure of what a student knows and has mastered in a given course. Grading should not be a behavior punishment and should not be a measure of how well a student can survive stress at home. Under Dr. Kazmierczak’s leadership and in line with the district’s strategic plan and commitment to eliminating systemic racism, the district began tackling grading disparities a year ago when they dramatically changed their grading practices. Leaders in the district know that they will be supported as they have never been before because of the strategic work that has already been done all through the lens of equity.

Dr. Kazmierczak began his career as a high school business education teacher and coach for 12 years. He has served as the Superintendent of Lakeview Public Schools and Assistant Superintendent for Moorhead Area Public Schools. Dr. Kazmierczak was the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations for White Bear Lake Area Schools from 2014-2017. He was named Superintendent of White Bear Lake Area Schools in 2017.

An active member in both MASA and AASA, he served on the MASA Board of Directors for seven years from 2010-2017. Dr. Kazmierczak's MASA involvement also includes membership on the Federal Advocacy and Legislative committees. He recently served as the chair of the Federal Advocacy committee. He is also a member of the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) and the Minnesota Association of School Business Officials (MASBO).

The honoree is active within his community. He is a member of the Rotary Club International, Vadnais Heights Economic Development Corporation, White Bear Lake Area Education Foundation, and the Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Board of Trustees.

In 2012, Dr. Kazmierczak was the recipient of both the MASA Richard Green Scholar Award and the MASA Outstanding Central Office Leader Award. WBLAS received the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators (MAGC) Northern Light Award, the organization's highest honor, for the 2019 Bond Referendum Campaign.

Hailing from Stephen, Minnesota, Dr. Kazmierczak earned a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. He received a master's degree in Educational Administration and a bachelor's degree in Business and Vocational Education from the University of North Dakota.

The Minnesota Superintendent of the Year Award is sponsored by ATS&R, Planners/Architects/Engineers. Visit their web site at www.atsr.com.

For more information on the AASA Superintendent of the Year Program, please visit www.aasa.org.

MASA is a professional organization of Minnesota's school leaders, including superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors of special education, and other central office administrators, as well as state department administrators, college, and university professors, and other educators throughout Minnesota dedicated to educational leadership for students.

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