

To: Members of the Clark-Wilkins Elementary School Community
From: Bridey Bellemare, Executive Director, New Hampshire Association of School Principals
Re: A Special Award for your Assistant Principal and your Community
Date: December 11, 2020



It is my distinct pleasure to announce that your Assistant Principal, Mrs. Kathleen Murphy, has been selected, by our organization, as New Hampshire's Assistant Principal of the Year for 2020-21.

Members of the selection committee cited, "through a tireless work ethic, positive spirit, and the ability to connect with all stakeholders within her school community, Mrs. Murphy has demonstrated that she is adept at fostering a positive school culture. She is not afraid of hard-work, is grounded in relationship-building and works to ensure that all educators feel valued and are empowered to make a positive contribution across all learning environments. Mrs. Murphy possesses a deep understanding of curriculum, best instructional practice and how they translate to effective teaching...she has proven herself to be a highly creative and innovative educator who views problems as challenges. It was clearly evident that the entire school community holds her in high regard and values her opinions."

Additionally, several educators, from Clark-Wilkins, who spoke on Mrs. Murphy's behalf during the interview process stated: "Kathleen is a rock star! A marvel...a kind human being of supreme intelligence. She holds us accountable, while encouraging us to stretch our thinking...we appreciate that she listens to us...her knowledge of best practices really make you want to get behind her initiatives. She is absolutely brilliant, but still able to view things from the lens of a classroom teacher." One educator was even quoted as having said, "I would follow Kathleen into any initiative. I trust her that much. She is a dynamic and brilliant educator who shows leadership through deeds-not words...she empowers everyone to be their best and is willing to learn and grow herself...she takes constructive criticism to heart...she is grounded in relationship-building and consistently models what it means to be a life-long learner herself."

Students and parents also had the opportunity to participate in the interview panel. One parent commented that "Mrs. Murphy just makes kids known...and it fills their little hearts and builds their self-esteem and makes their day." One student shared that "Mrs. Murphy is kind and she makes everyone at our school feel welcome...she makes sure every kid is happy and having a nice day."

Murphy's principal, Anna Parrill shared that Kathleen was instrumental in the design and implementation of Clark-Wilkins' learning POD model. "We were tasked by the Superintendent, this past July, to come up with a plan that allowed students in-person learning opportunities, but with minimal numbers of students in each classroom and limited movement...for safety purposes.

Kathleen helped to birth the idea of the POD model, started designing schedules and developing a framework (45 students, 2 regular education and 1 special education teacher) to support this substantial shift in our school. She ran Google classroom trainings, gathered and distributed purposeful teacher resources and supports started from here. She even took on some case management responsibilities to make it all happen. Definitely not an easy feat for a school with 700 students.”

Amherst Superintendent, Adam Steel shared that “Kathleen is an innovative and forward-thinking leader...her idea for the POD model was brilliant. It met all of the tenets of the Opening of School Task Force Committee. She most certainly has a bright future in our profession.”

Mrs. Murphy is currently working towards an EdD in Learning, Leadership, and Community at Plymouth State University. The focus of her research will be on the development of educational leaders at the elementary level as it relates to the changing child. She also works as a reviewer and writer for EdReports, an independent nonprofit that reviews instructional materials to support districts in adopting and utilizing the highest quality instructional materials with students. Kathleen has also worked as an adjunct faculty member at St. Anselm’s College teaching methods courses to pre-service educators.

Historically, our NH Assistant Principal of the Year, would be invited to attend the National Association of School Principals’ Conference to be held July 2021. Here they would have the opportunity to engage with school leaders from across the country, gain unique recognition before a national audience, and benefit from complete access to premier professional learning offerings.

Before going to the July conference, recipients of this award would also be recognized at the NH EDies Awards ceremony and at NHASP’s Annual Leadership Academy, in June 2021.

However, due to the pandemic, we are not yet certain if these events will still be offered. It is for this reason we ask that, as a community, you please find a creative way of both celebrating and recognizing Kathleen for her outstanding accomplishments. NHASP will do the same.

Congratulations, Kathleen! We are proud to have you representing the best of school leadership in the state of New Hampshire.

Sincerely,



Bridey Bellemare,
Executive Director