

To: Members of the Kearsarge Regional Middle School Community
From: Bridey Bellemare, Executive Director, New Hampshire Association of School Principals
Re: A Special Award for your Principal and your Community
Date: April 19, 2021



It is my distinct pleasure to announce that your Principal, Mr. Stephen Paterson, has been selected, by our organization, as New Hampshire's Middle School Principal of the Year for 2021-22.

After having met with six guest panels from Mr. Paterson's school community, members of the selection committee cited, "While hearing from the students, parents, staff members, colleagues and superintendent of the Kearsarge Regional School District, it is very clear that Steve Paterson is highly respected and beloved. Each group spoke about his ability to create an environment where people want to learn, collaborate and grow. Students' social/emotional and academic growth are his priorities. As an example, Steve instituted an advisory program as a way for students and staff members to connect with one another. Steve is a learner alongside his staff, and challenges them to take risks and grow in their craft. In his decision-making, Steve does not only consider his own school, but rather uses a macro lens in determining what would be best for all students K-12. He has been instrumental in developing Competency Based Education for the Kearsarge Regional School District as a whole."

Members of the parent panel shared that, "Mr. Paterson asserts authority and yet is approachable at the same time...he knows every student and stays connected with each student. He possesses strong values, is transparent (in his communication style) and knows how to implement change effectively, but softly. He is available to talk with you about anything at any time."

Students who were interviewed said, "Mr. Paterson creates a safe environment in our school. He makes students feel welcome and a part of something. He keeps us involved and informed...we're not excluded from knowing what's going on. He understands the balance of being the boss and a friend...and always has a positive attitude to start the day."

The staff at KRMS shared that Mr. Paterson "focuses on the person first...the social-emotional piece. He shows empathy and challenges you to be the best teacher you can be. He reminds us that our focus is on building good human beings and members of society." One teacher said, "He sets goals *with* you, not *for* you. He pushes me to go further."

Members of the district leadership team shared that Stephen is deserving of this award because, "He has a dynamic personality, is student-centered and prioritizes equitable access to academics and extra-curricular activities for all students. He doesn't just think of himself, or his own school...he thinks about how his decisions impact the district as a whole. He works very closely with the elementary level and high school leadership, which has resulted in their ability to implement vertical competencies...largely because of his student-centered focus and his relationship-building with colleagues."

When asked why Stephen was deserving of this prestigious award Superintendent Winfried Feneberg said, "Because he exemplifies what the award stands for...he transformed his school and in the process transformed the district. He has greatly impacted teacher and student lives. Stephen is innovative in the way in which he has changed and worked on culture and climate in his school and in the district. He has worked closely with the high school to help lead unified teacher collaboration efforts to develop and implement vertical expectations for competencies that align with the district's Strategic Plan."

As this year's NH Middle School Principal of the Year (POY), Stephen will be recognized in front of his peers and family members during a modified ceremony hosted by the NH EDies this June. Additionally, this May, NHASP will be hosting a private formal dinner event for all of this year's POY award recipients. Stephen will be recognized for his outstanding accomplishment among this cohort of leaders. It is our hope that your community will also find a special way to recognize Stephen for this exceptional achievement.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridey Bellemare". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bridey" being more prominent than the last name "Bellemare".

Bridey Bellemare,
Executive Director