

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Frank Wagner Elementary School Assistant Principal Deborah Henderson is the 2023 Washington State Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year
Monroe School District AP Empowers Staff to Empower Students

OLYMPIA – Deborah Henderson, assistant principal at Frank Wagner Elementary School in the Monroe School District, was named the 2023 Washington State Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year. In addition, she will represent Washington as our state’s winner of the National Association of Elementary School Principals National (NAESP) Outstanding Assistant Principal award. The NAESP recognizes one winner from each state every year.



In her fourth year as assistant principal at Frank Wagner Elementary, Henderson knows that empowering her staff means empowering her students. With a strong vision for both improving instruction and boosting school culture, she came into her role with a goal to increase professional development for staff in core subject areas. This resulted in happier staff and increased student test results.

Henderson worked with the school’s principal, an instructional coach from the district, and trainers from Columbia University to provide a research-based curriculum and job-embedded professional development. This resulted in teachers knowing what to teach and how to teach it.

But she didn’t stop there. In her first year working with Principal Hugo Molina, she supported his vision of moving towards an *all means all* model by revamping the master schedule. Molina writes, “She moved us away from a schedule centered around adult needs and centered the master and daily schedule around student learning.”

Continuing on a path of improving culture and learning, Henderson implemented schoolwide PBIS expectations and strategies that responded to the needs of their student population. Working with a trauma-informed leadership team, they increased staff knowledge and rolled out strategies to all teachers, giving them the support needed to implement them schoolwide consistently. Community satisfaction surveys during COVID showed that her efforts paid off.

“Henderson’s dedication to her staff and vision for her school continue post-pandemic. Her relationships and communication with students, staff, families, and our community as a whole have given us the social capital to be able to move our work forward,” said principal Hugo Molina.

National Outstanding Assistant Principal Program

Each year, NAESP recognizes a new class of National Outstanding Assistant Principals (NOAP). Public school elementary and middle-level assistant principals are nominated by peers in their state, and final selections are made by committees appointed by each of NAESP’s state affiliate offices.

GRADE-LEVEL COMMITTEES

Elementary Grade Level Leadership Committee
Middle Level Grade Level Leadership Committee
High School Grade Level Leadership Committee

NATIONAL COMPONENTS

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)