



MEDIA RELEASE
Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association
1970 Oakcrest Avenue, Suite 204
Roseville, MN 55113

Contacts: Sarah Olander, PR & Engagement Manager
952.297.8672; sarah@mespa.net
Chreese Jones, principal, Global Arts Plus School
651.293.6606; chreese.jones@spps.org

St. Paul Public Schools Principal, Chreese Jones, Receives Professional Leadership Award

(electronic photo attached to this news release)



Chreese Jones

(Roseville, MN, May 6, 2021) – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Chreese Jones, principal of Global Arts Plus School, St. Paul Public Schools, and President of MESPA’s St. Paul Division, with the 2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award for the St. Paul Division. Principals are responsible for a school’s instructional, school culture, and resource leadership. The award honors principals whose exemplary leadership and sustained efforts have made noteworthy contributions to the operation of effective school learning programs—improving education, their communities, and their profession. She was recognized by colleagues statewide on April 15, 2021 at the MESPYS, the premier elementary principal celebration of the year celebrated via [YouTube livestream](#).

Jones summed up her educational philosophy in a quote: “Relationships, equity, access, and achievement for ALL, without exceptions.”

Jones was nominated by Angelica Van Iperen, principal at Paul & Sheila Wellstone Elementary School in the St. Paul Public Schools District. On behalf of MESPA St. Paul Division principals, Van Iperen

stated: “Chreese has shown outstanding principal leadership in her school's leadership team work, school-wide practices, and equity work. She constantly models learning herself.”

Among her most significant career accomplishments, Jones includes:

- Completing 25 years serving staff, scholars, and their families in St. Paul Public Schools as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal and still loving what she does. She has come full circle as principal at the school where she received her first teaching assignment.
- Collaborating for three years with Innocent Technologies and supporting the full implementation of Innocent Classrooms school-wide at an elementary school in St. Paul.
- Her continuing commitment to Racial Equity work led to consulting, presenting, teaching, and leading professional development at the post-secondary education level.
- Being a principal vocalist/veteran member of the Grammy Award-Winning Sounds of Blackness, a musical ensemble in her second career. She still performs as a solo artist and with local artists at special events.

MESPA members selected 13 of their peers to receive the 2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award. Jon Millerhagen, MESPA Executive Director, congratulated the award winners by saying, “MESPA members who receive the Division Leadership Achievement Award are the strong foundations of their schools, their communities, and our association. They are transformational leaders who care deeply for their students. Our association benefits greatly from their knowledge, enthusiasm, passion, and commitment.”

2021 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award Recipients

- Mary Holmberg, Paynesville Area Schools, Central Division
- Kenny Newby, Forest Lake Area Schools, East Suburban Division
- Jamil Payton, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis Division
- Christopher Forrest, Anoka-Hennepin School District, North Suburban Division
- Darren Sheldon (Ed. D.), Duluth Public Schools, Northeast Division
- Ami C. Aalgaard, Bemidji Area Schools, Northern Division
- Chreese C. Jones, St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul Division
- Bret Domstrand, Lakeville Area Schools, South Suburban Division
- Dr. Cindy Hansen, Pine Island Public Schools, Southeast Division
- Liam Dawson, St. James Public Schools, Southwest Division
- Dr. Heather Hanson, Robbinsdale Area Schools, West Suburban Division
- Trisha Mariotti, Detroit Lakes Public Schools, Western Division
- Dr. Carole Gupton, Retired Principals of MESPA

-- end --

MESPA works to: **Improve** education for Minnesota students through collaboration and advocacy; **Unite** current, past, and future licensed elementary and middle-level principals; **Encourage** and support a cooperative relationship between MESPA and other state/national organizations; and **Advocate** for the professional ethical, economic, and social welfare of its members.

MESPA Mission: The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association strives to be the premier leadership resource for elementary and middle-level principals and a strong leading voice for public education. MESPA is committed to ensuring a high quality education for all children through strengthening and enhancing the principal's role as educational leader in our schools.