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TOP STORY

Fitzwilliam educator named NH Elementary Principal of the Year

By Jack Rooney Sentinel Staff
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Lori Stevens
Courtesy

FITZWILLIAM — For the second straight year, the Monadnock Regional School District can claim the state’s best elementary school principal.

The N.H. Association of School Principals (NHASP) has named Lori Stevens, the principal of Emerson Elementary School in Fitzwilliam, its Elementary Principal of the Year, the organization’s executive director, Bridey Bellemare, wrote in a letter to the school community Friday.

Last year, Melissa “Missy” Suarez, the principal at Mount Caesar Elementary School in Swanzey Center, took home the same honor.


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Stevens earned the recognition this year, Bellemare wrote, because members of the NHASP's selection committee found she "truly embodies care in all aspects of her role."

"She puts students first and supports staff to be the best they can be for the Emerson Elementary School community," Bellemare wrote. "She has a clear focus on students and staff in terms of happiness, wellness, and social-emotional health. She clearly follows the mantra that happy people work harder and she goes above and beyond to make sure that her staff and school community know how much she cares about them."

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Stevens, 38, has worked in the Monadnock district — which covers Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Richmond, Roxbury, Troy and Swanzey — for 16 years, she said. The Troy resident taught for 10 years at Emerson before becoming an interventionist and then assistant principal for both Troy and Emerson elementary schools for one year. She has been the principal at Emerson for the past five years.

“I absolutely love my job and am so thankful that I get to go to Emerson every day and work with the students and staff,” Stevens said in an email Sunday. “I can’t wait to continue this journey with Emerson and the Monadnock School District.”

Stevens’ transition from teacher into administrator was not always easy, Monadnock Superintendent Lisa Witte said in Bellemare’s letter, but she has worked hard to earn the trust of the school community, especially by seeking feedback from staff and families.

“There is such a significant level of respect (for her) because of the hard work she has done in her building,” Witte wrote. “At times, she can make unpopular decisions, when necessary, because people always trust she will do what is best for kids.”

Stevens will be recognized as N.H. Elementary Principal of the Year at the N.H. Excellence in Education Awards ceremony in June, according to Bellemare. She also will be invited to Washington, D.C., in October to be recognized by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

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