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TOP STORY

Monadnock school board to be honored with statewide award

By Molly Bolan Sentinel Staff

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Monadnock Superintendent Lisa Witte

File photo by Hannah Schroeder / Sentinel Staff

A statewide nonprofit is recognizing the Monadnock Regional School Board with the annual School Board of Excellence award.

The N.H. School Boards Association bestows the award to school boards that demonstrate leadership, teamwork and effectiveness, according to a news release Wednesday from the school district.

“The board has done tremendous work in a variety of areas to build trust in the community and earn stakeholder buy-in for key district needs,” Superintendent Lisa Witte — who nominated the board for the award — said in the release. “Our entire community should be proud of the effort the board has done in recent years to further deepen its commitment to meeting students’ needs and supporting the district’s work to attain its goals.”



Seven or eight school boards applied for the award this year, according to Barrett Christina, executive director of the Concord-based NHSBA. He said the applications were reviewed by himself and his staff, as well as a couple of the organization’s officers.

The Monadnock Regional School District covers Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Richmond, Roxbury, Swanzey and Troy, and its board consists of 13 members, with one or more representatives from each town.

In addition to teamwork and leadership, the judges considered whether a school board was implementing best practices and if those practices could be replicated by other boards, according to Christina. He added that the association tries to not set too many parameters for what boards focus on in their applications, as every board faces different challenges and opportunities.



The practices highlighted in the Monadnock board's application were in line with many of the NHSBA's values, Christina said, including focus on policy work and fiscal planning.

In recent years, the board has revamped its approach to updating and maintaining its policy manual, according to the board's application. The board was also recognized for its capital improvement program, which addresses the varying needs of the district's facilities, the release notes.

Christina said the board's sense of fiscal responsibility and long-term planning were a highlight of Monadnock's application.

He added that the board also stood out for its self-evaluations to help identify its strengths and where it can make improvements.

According to the district's release, these evaluations, in 2020 and 2021, involved gathering data to ultimately identify how to improve the administration, clarify the district's goals and boost meeting productivity.

In June, the board will be formally recognized at the N.H. Excellence in Education Awards celebration — informally known as the "ED"ies — in Manchester.

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