

Outstanding Assistant Principal

Anna L. Gawel Named Pennsylvania's 2023 Outstanding Assistant Principal



Anna L. Gawel, Assistant Principal at Hershey Elementary School (4th and 5th grades) in the Derry Township School District, has been named **Pennsylvania's Outstanding Assistant Principal by the Pennsylvania Principals Association**. As a state winner in the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) National Outstanding Assistant Principal Program, Mrs. Gawel is eligible for consideration to be named the NAESP National Outstanding Assistant Principal.

Mrs. Gawel has served as assistant principal at Hershey Elementary School since 2014. She has been an educator for 20 years, beginning her career as a first-grade teacher (2003-2013) and then as an instructional coach (2013-2014) also in the Derry Township School District.

Kristin Musselman, Chairperson of the PA Principals Association's Outstanding Assistant Principal Award Selection Committee, said, "It has been an honor to work with Anna Gawel.

She is an administrator who leads with heart. She brings a positive attitude and positive mindset to the teachers and staff members that she works with on a daily basis. Among her colleagues, Anna is described as being a person of high integrity and as an assistant principal who leads with passion. Through our interactions and based on her recent accomplishments, it is clear that Mrs. Gawel is invested in her students, teachers and the school community. It is for these reasons that the PA Principals Association is proud to recommend her for this award."

During her tenure as an assistant principal at Hershey Elementary School, Mrs. Gawel organized and created an online professional development course for differentiated supervision. The course began as a pilot and is focused on district goals and is personalized for the staff members taking the course. It has grown over the past five years to encompass over 50 teachers and staff members at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

The district has provided intensive staff development at the elementary level around the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process for their staff members and administrative team. Mrs. Gawel, along with the elementary administrative team, revised their schedule to allow this collaboration during the school day, which resulted in improved expertise in examining data and utilizing best practices. "Our district has focused on becoming a PLC because we know the value of collaboration in teaching and learning," explained Mrs. Gawel. In addition, Mrs. Gawel was instrumental in the implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Response to Instruction and Intervention (MTSS/RtII) through a WIN (What I Need) model and developed highly functioning teams that are meeting the needs of all learners. She said, "This process has truly embodied the idea of 'team' and why it is so important in education."

Mrs. Gawel shared, "My hope for when people look back at my time in this role is that they will view my most significant contributions to my school as having been my relationships with the students, families and staff in Derry Township School District. I want the school to be a community that fosters belonging, strong community ties, values learning/growth and feels safe and welcoming. At the end of the day, if the people around me can say they felt valued, supported, heard and connected to our school community, I have done my job."

"Our selection committee has once again chosen a distinguished, talented educator to represent assistant principals in Pennsylvania at the elementary/middle level. Anna Gawel exemplifies the qualities we seek for this award while serving the 480 students and 60 staff at Hershey Elementary School: dedication, leadership, professionalism, and a passion for learning for students, staff, the school and the community. I am pleased that Anna will represent the Pennsylvania Principals Association as our 2023 Outstanding Assistant Principal," said Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, Executive Director, PA Principals Association.

Mrs. Gawel resides in Palmyra with her husband and two daughters. "It is the faces of my wonderful daughters that I think about when making decisions and working with students at school. What would I want done for my children? Then that is what we do for all children."

"Mrs. Gawel is an exceptional leader. Her devotion to her students and staff is evident in her personal knowledge of their circumstances, needs and strengths. She has led a phenomenal professional learning experience for teaching staff in the last several years and in doing so has fostered growth in district priority areas that can be seen throughout the elementary staff."

- Stacy L. Winslow, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Derry Township School District