

Robert E. Lavelly Assistant Principal of the Year

Sandra L. Means Selected as 2023 Robert E. Lavelly Assistant Principal of the Year



Sandra L. Means, Assistant Principal at McDowell High School in the Millcreek Township School District, has been selected as the **2023 Robert E. Lavelly Assistant Principal of the Year** by the Pennsylvania Principals Association in conjunction with the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) National Assistant Principal of the Year program. Mrs. Means is also eligible for consideration to be named the National Assistant Principal of the Year.

Mrs. Means has worked in the Millcreek Township School District (MTSD) for 30 years, serving in her current role as the assistant principal at McDowell High School for five years. Previously, she taught eighth-grade English Language Arts for over 20 years. In addition, she taught high school English and Gifted Education.

According to PA Principals Association Executive Director, Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, "Our selection committee has once again identified a talented, enthusiastic and committed educator to represent Pennsylvania as the 2023 Assistant Principal of the Year at the secondary level. The admirable qualities Mrs. Means demonstrates in her dedicated service to the students, staff and the entire McDowell High School community are what we look for in a candidate. I am delighted that Sandra will represent the Pennsylvania Principals Association as our 2023 Assistant Principal of the Year."

Mrs. Means' outstanding leadership and dedication have been demonstrated countless times through her commitment to create and coordinate high-quality learning opportunities at McDowell. Some of these services and programs include the Honors College and Distinctive Scholar Program, the expansion of the Advanced Placement (AP) classes and the implementation of character-building student programs. These opportunities were significant in the creation of a positive, engaged school culture at McDowell High School.

In addition, Mrs. Means spearheaded the development and implementation of the AP Capstone program at McDowell. "My goal with implementing this program was to provide students with the opportunity to develop college-level-and-beyond research skills. In addition, expanding AP course offerings and the AP Capstone program provided learning opportunities for a diverse group of students as they explored their academic interests and passions," she shared. Because of her initiative, McDowell students now have more AP class options than any other school in the tri-state area and are college- and career-ready when they graduate.

Mrs. Means is also responsible for the creation of the Student Advisory Council at McDowell. "Student voice is essential to creating a positive, caring and innovative school culture," she said. As facilitator and organizer of the Millcreek Township School District Summer Leadership Academy 2022, she created a five-day professional development program for the district's administrators and supervisors. "The academy provided opportunities to engage in professional, collegial conversations, share best practices and stretch our thinking as we aimed to build a professional community dedicated to life-long learning, continuous improvement and best practices," she explained.

"I am thankful and truly honored to receive this award of recognition; this is an award that I could not have won on my own. Thank you to my colleagues and high school administrative team who collaborate with me and challenge me to be the best leader I can be. I am especially blessed to work with an innovative and resolute staff who strive to provide unique learning experiences for our students and support my leadership initiatives throughout the school year," said Mrs. Means.

Mrs. Means earned a Bachelor of Science in English education, a master's degree in educational psychology, her secondary principal certificate and Superintendent's Letter of Eligibility from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. She received a gifted endorsement from Neumann University.

"It is my honor to work alongside Sandy Means daily. She is a true champion for our students and staff, and McDowell is lucky to have her. Sandy comes to work every day with a mission to help students be successful in school and life, and I can't think of anyone more deserving of the Assistant Principal of the Year award," said Brian Fuller, Principal at McDowell High School and West I Regional Representative on the PA Principals Association Board of Directors.

When she is not busy with her many activities as an educator and administrator, Mrs. Means enjoys spending time with her husband, two adult children, family and friends in addition to playing golf, running, reading and attending sporting events.

"Sandy Means represents the qualities of exemplary school leadership. Her unwavering dedication to improving teacher practice, inspiring excellent student outcomes and being a thought partner to her peers are a few reasons that she deserves this honor."

~ **Dr. Ian A. Roberts**
Superintendent
Millcreek Township School District