

ROBERT E. LAVELY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Dr. Scott Zraggen Named Pennsylvania's 2024 Assistant Principal of the Year



Scott M. Zraggen, Ed.D., Assistant Principal of Springfield Township High School in the School District of Springfield Township, has been named Pennsylvania's 2024 Robert E. Lively Assistant Principal of the Year by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. As a state winner in the National Association of Secondary School

Principals' (NASPP) Assistant Principal of the Year Program, Dr. Zraggen is under consideration to be named the National Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year.

According to PA Principals Association Executive Director, Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, "Our selection committee has once again identified a talented, passionate and dedicated educator to represent Pennsylvania as the 2024 Assistant Principal of the Year at the secondary level. The admirable qualities Dr. Zraggen demonstrates in his devoted service to the students, staff and the entire Springfield Township High School community are what we seek in a candidate."

Dr. Zraggen, or Dr. Z, as he is affectionately known within his school community, has worked in the Springfield Township School District for 27 years, serving in his current role as the assistant principal for 6.5 years, overseeing ninth- and 10th-grade students, scheduling and curricular programming at Springfield Township High School. In addition, he served as Science Department Coordinator (1998-2004; 2010-2017) and as a member of the National Honor Society Selection Committee (2001-2017) and the Montgomery County Science Council (2001-2004; 2010-2017). Previously, he taught environmental science (advanced placement and academic), chemistry (honors and academic), physical science and biology (honors, academic and level one). He taught for nine years in California, beginning his career in education as a science teacher at West High School (1987-1990) and continuing at Vacaville High School (1990-1996). His experience as an animal handler/show performer at a theme park made him appreciate the role of educators in society.

Dr. Zraggen's outstanding leadership and dedication have been demonstrated countless times through his commitment to his students, his school and his school community. During his leadership of the Science Department, new courses were successfully created, and the course sequence was changed. One of the courses, environmental science, was chosen by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a model class for all students in the state. He also collaborated with teachers from other departments to design and implement an innovative, interdisciplinary, team

approach to teaching students who felt disenfranchised from school. During his tenure as assistant principal at Springfield Township High School, he has played a pivotal role in shaping the school's culture to prioritize the well-being and safety of every student and staff member, facilitating a conducive environment for productive learning and interaction. According to Dr. Zraggen, "One of the key aspects of this transformation has been my rapport with the students. I've worked tirelessly to establish a positive relationship with all students. This has led to the creation of a culture of trust and openness where students feel comfortable seeking help and guidance."

In addition, Dr. Zraggen spearheaded the co-development and implementation of the "Lunch and Learn" Program which has promoted a culture of knowledge, sharing, skill development and relationship-building between students and staff.

During this 60-minute period, students are able to meet with teachers for coursework assistance. By bringing various stakeholders together during lunch time, the school promotes an atmosphere of community and collaboration that goes beyond traditional classroom settings. "My daily cafeteria presence during "Lunch and Learn" allows me to actively engage with students while ensuring a secure, respectful space for social interaction," he explained.

Dr. Zraggen has also championed and modeled co-teaching and differentiated instructional practices, project-based learning and encouraged students to enroll in internships, work study programs and dual enrollment courses to help satisfy their Senior Experience Program credit. He has also played an essential role in developing a sensible school dress code which focuses on promoting self-expression while maintaining a respectful, inclusive atmosphere. Dr. Zraggen believes that every person should be treated with dignity, respect and fairness, and with that in mind, he has implemented anti-bias training, restorative justice practices and clear disciplinary policies to foster an environment where equitable treatment is non-negotiable. In addition, he, and his school, empower student voice through project-based learning, student panel discussions and peer mentoring.

During his education career, Dr. Zraggen has received numerous accolades including the Spirit of Springfield Award (2017); the Dr. Norman Miller Scholarship for Educational Leadership (Awarded by Arcadia University's School of Education, 2015); the Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction (2013); the University of Chicago's Outstanding Educator Award (2011); Excellence in High School Chemistry Teaching

and recognition as an Influential Teacher (Awarded by the University Director of the Pennsylvania Governor’s School for the Sciences, 2002). Before coming to Pennsylvania, he was selected as the Outstanding Teacher of the Year by both the faculties of Vacaville High School (1996) and West High School (1990).

Pierre LaRocco, who nominated Dr. Zraggen for this award, and who also serves as an Assistant Principal at Springfield Township High School, shared, “Through diligent efforts, Scott demonstrates an unwavering commitment to fostering an exceptional school culture and a high-level educational environment. His role as a commendable team player serves as an inspiration to all those with whom he collaborates.”

Dr. Zraggen received a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science from the University of California (Davis) and a Master of Science in Environmental Science Education and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, both from Arcadia University.

He resides in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, with his wife of 28 years, Marty. They share twin sons, Nick and Derek (26), and

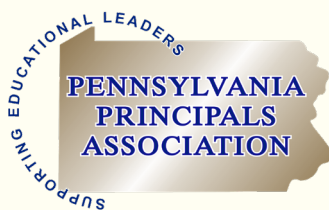
two dogs. Dr. Zraggen has lived in California, Alabama, Iowa, Michigan, New Jersey, Georgia and Pennsylvania, and has managed to visit all but three states (Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota) during his lifetime. In his down time, he enjoys traveling, trail/road biking, reading and collecting stamps. ■

“Dr. Scott Zraggen is a thoughtful, dedicated school leader. As a long-standing member of the Springfield Township High School community, he is skilled at balancing the demands and complexity of the role of assistant principal. He is supportive of all students, responsive to staff and committed to engaging with families.”

Dr. MaryJo Yannacone
Superintendent
School District of Springfield
Township

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