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For Immediate Release

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Danielle Ambrosia Named Pennsylvania's 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year

(ENOLA, PA) **Danielle Ambrosia**, an Assistant Principal at the State College Area High School in the State College Area School District, has been named **Pennsylvania's 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year by the Pennsylvania Principals Association**. As a state winner in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) Assistant Principal of the Year Program, Mrs. Ambrosia is a candidate for the National Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year. She will be recognized for this achievement by both the PA Principals Association and NASSP.

"Our selection committee has once again found a committed, enthusiastic and talented educator to represent Pennsylvania as the 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year at the secondary level. Danielle Ambrosia's genuine commitment to the students, faculty and State College Area High School community exemplifies the desirable traits we look for in a candidate," Dr. Eric C. Eshbach, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Principals Association, said. "Danielle's passion for her students, her school and her fellow administrators highlights the vital role each member of the administrative team plays in creating a thriving school community. I am thrilled that Danielle Ambrosia has been selected to represent the Pennsylvania Principals Association as our 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year."

An educator for 14 years and an administrator for four years, Mrs. Ambrosia joined State College Area High School as an English teacher in 2009. She continued her career at State College Area School District as an equity teacher leader from 2018-2021 and as the varsity head cheer coach from 2010-2018. She has been in her current role as an assistant principal at State High since 2021. In addition, she served as a Penn State Professional Development Associate in the Professional Development School from June 2019 to June 2020.

"As an assistant principal, I have the privilege of working in the spaces where small moments add up to big impact. This award reflects the everyday moments and wins created by our students, staff and families. I am grateful to work alongside them and amplify the work that makes our school what it is. Leadership is not a lone endeavor; I am surrounded by colleagues who are relentless in their dedication to students. This award reflects the collective strength of our school community. Thank you to my incredible family: Tom, Tommy and Deanna, who have always supported my career and goals," said Mrs. Ambrosia.

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Danielle Ambrosia PA's 2026 APOY - Page 2 of 3

As an assistant principal, Mrs. Ambrosia has collaborated closely with their staff and administrative team to strengthen the school culture, with a particular focus on student safety and well-being. A key part of this work has involved supporting the rollout of several school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) celebrations as well as hosting two annual Mental Health Summits — student-designed events created in partnership with community organizations to offer meaningful opportunities for connection and self-reflection. She explained, “These summits feature more than 30 activities, including sports-themed sessions, gratitude boards, Wii games with the principal, mental-health awareness walks on the track, and time spent with therapy dogs.”

According to Mrs. Ambrosia, physical safety remains a top priority at State High. Since 2016–2017, she has been a member of her school’s rapid response team. She continues to work closely with their security team and school resource officer (SRO) to maintain secure entrances and exits and refine emergency preparedness. “In collaboration with my principal and SRO, we launched the Student Safety Ambassador program. This initiative allows interested students to partner with our SRO to share safety information with peers, educate students about drills and emergency procedures and develop leadership skills in public safety and service,” she added.

In addition, Mrs. Ambrosia, along with their staff and administrative team, has been instrumental in developing and implementing structured supports for Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), focusing on student groups experiencing peer conflict, anger management challenges and difficulty with behavioral expectations and ninth-grade interdisciplinary collaboration. “As the ninth-grade team leader, I facilitate weekly interdisciplinary cohort meetings where every student discussion is intentionally focused on the whole child,” she shared. “These are teacher, counselor and administrative collaboration centers, not just on academic progress, but also on social-emotional well-being, peer relationships and family communication.”

Her work with school-wide PBIS celebrations, Mental Health Summits, MTSS supports, ninth-grade interdisciplinary collaboration and safety-focused programs reflects her commitment to nurturing a school culture that prioritizes every student’s emotional and physical well-being.

“This is an exceptional and well-deserved honor that reflects Danielle’s dedication, leadership and unwavering commitment to our students, staff and school community,” said Curtis Johnson, Superintendent of the State College Area School District. “Danielle’s work exemplifies the values we strive to uphold across the district, and her recognition brings pride to our entire school community.”

Mrs. Ambrosia earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (English/Communications), a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction (Reading Specialist) and her School Leadership Certification from The Pennsylvania State University. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership at Drexel University (expected December 2025).

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Danielle Ambrosia Named PA's 2026 APOY - Page 3 of 3

In addition to her membership in the Pennsylvania Principals Association and NASSP, Mrs. Ambrosia is a State College Area School District Equity Advocate and a Penn State University Professional Development School Associate. In addition, she is an active member of her community serving as a member of the Ferguson Township Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization, a Building Anti-Racist White Educators facilitator and a guest speaker on diversity, equity and inclusion at the American Association of University Women. She has presented at the state and national levels on important topics such as developing anti-racist educators and school cultures, transforming academic support systems, reducing discipline disparities through accountability and empowering teachers to use data meaningfully. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends.

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Danielle Ambrosia

About the PA Principals Association: The PA Principals Association membership of approximately 3,300 is composed of elementary, middle level and secondary school principals, assistant principals and other educational leaders and is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

The Mission of the Pennsylvania Principals Association: *To ensure a quality education for every child by comprehensively supporting the educational leaders of our schools.*

The Vision of the Pennsylvania Principals Association: *To be the best service organization of its kind in the United States.*

For more information about the State College Area School District, visit: <https://www.scasd.org/>