

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mia Williams of Seattle Public Schools Named 2016 Middle Level Principal of the Year

Aki Kurose Principal growing achievement and relationships

OLYMPIA — Aki Kurose Middle School Principal Mia Williams was named this year's Washington State Middle Level Principal of the Year by a panel of principals representing the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals, a component of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). She was one of 17 nominees from across the state.



Williams has been principal at Aki Kurose since 2008, overseeing a growth in the student population from about 420 students with low test scores and high absence rates to a population of more than 700 students whose test scores are rising and absence rate has been cut in half. In fact, Mia was invited to the White House this past December for her work on absenteeism as part of President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

Aki Kurose's growth rate is consistently among the highest in Seattle Public Schools due to the hands on nature of Williams' leadership. This past summer, Williams conducted dozens of interviews with students to find out what about school matters most to them and discovered that relationships won by a landslide. She was able to use that data to focus the staff on building deeper relationships and connecting with kids.

"I am excited for the school community as a whole, because, as I tell everybody, you can't get anywhere without everybody playing a role," Williams said. "I wanted to represent the heavy lifting of the students, families and staff who have really wrapped their arms around the school."

In addition to the great work Williams has done inside her building, she and her staff have strengthened the partnership and alignment of academic plans and social/emotional supports with each feeder elementary and high school. It is that kind of work that has helped make her an integral part of the community and makes the system stronger as a whole.

"Mia's passion for the work she does, shows every day, through her dedication and powerful leadership," said Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Larry Nyland. "This can be seen as soon as you walk through the doors at Aki Kurose, where she and her staff continue to create a culture where students are empowered and given opportunities to learn and grow to reach their full potential."

National Distinguished Principal of the Year Program

Williams now becomes eligible for the NASSP National Principal of the Year award. The program, sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, annually recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals. From the state winners, six finalists will compete for the award in Washington, D.C., later this year. For more information, visit www.nassp.org.

STATE COMPONENTS

Elementary School Principals of Washington (ESPAW)
Association of Washington Middle Level Principals (AWMLP)
Washington Association of Secondary School Principals (WASSP)

NATIONAL AFFILIATES

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)