



NEWS

from the Peoria Unified School District

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OAKWOOD PRINCIPAL TO BE HONORED BY NAESP IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

PEORIA, Ariz. – Oakwood Elementary principal Paul Bower has been named the 2009 National Distinguished Principal (NDP) by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in cooperation with the United States Department of Education. He will travel to Washington D.C. on Thursday, Oct. 22 and Friday, Oct. 23 for a celebration that includes special tours and activities as well as networking opportunities with other honorees and dignitaries. The two-day celebration culminates in a formal awards banquet.

Bower has worked in the Peoria Unified School District (PUSD) for 24 years. He was a math/science teacher at Desert Valley and Desert Harbor elementary schools before he traded his calculator for a front office position as the assistant principal at Oasis Elementary. He was promoted to the Oakwood principalship in 2000.

He was nominated by his supervisor, K-12 Administrator Steve Savoy, in conjunction with his peers and members of his community for this prestigious award. The selection for the national award was made by the NAESP local affiliate, the Arizona School Administrators (ASA). Bower's name was forwarded to compete in the national competition.

"Paul is supportive of teachers and allows individual direction and decision-making for those who are capable; yet he is able to stay close to those who need more coverage and support in their daily assignments," said Savoy. "Mr. Bower is an able leader who teachers depend on in crisis. He is always available to listen, encourage and inspire."

The NDP program promotes educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade schools and calls attention to the fundamental importance of the school principal. It honors principals who have exhibited extraordinary leadership, commitment to their students and staff, service to their communities, and contributions to the profession, including their professional associations.

"A wise man once said, 'Run to win,'" said Bower. "Excellence is important to Oakwood Elementary and me."

Bower considers the greatest accomplishment of his nine year principalship to be the student-centered culture of excellence he has built. With its focus on achievement, the suburban K-8 school of 756 students regularly exceeds scores on district, county, and statewide academic assessments. Oakwood has distinguished itself as an "Excelling School" and has received the coveted A+ designation by the Arizona Educational Foundation. The school also leads PUSD in Science Olympiad rankings, food can drives and champion athletic teams.

Continuous learning for all—and in all areas—is important to Bower. He ensures that Oakwood staff members sustain their participation in wide-ranging professional development

activities. Stressing the importance of mentoring, Bower takes pride in seeing five former Oakwood staff members now pursuing school leadership positions. His school also can boast about successfully mentoring at-risk students.

Demonstrating strong community support, Oakwood counts more than 200 active, trained volunteers on campus. Oakwood's partnership with Ironwood High School has enabled a Future Teachers of America program to engage high school students in Oakwood's classrooms.

Bower received a Bachelor of Science in elementary education from Messiah College in Pennsylvania and a Master's of Science in education from Northern Arizona University.



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