FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chisago Lakes Principal, Warren Retzlaff, Receives Professional Leadership Award

(St. Paul, MN, March 31, 2009) – The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) recognized Warren Retzlaff, principal of Lakeside Elementary, Chisago Lakes School District (ISD #2144), with the 2009 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award. Principals are responsible for a school’s instructional, school culture, and resource leadership. The award honors principals whose exemplary leadership and sustained efforts have made noteworthy contributions to the operation of effective school learning programs -- improving education, their communities, and their profession.

In nominating Retzlaff, Joe Thimm (principal, Chisago Lakes) said: “Warren is well-respected by his peers and has served as a mentor to many new principals. He is always ready to help when a need arises. He is always there if you need a question answered or advice about a problem you may have. Warren is not one to seek recognition but instead just does his job and makes sure he works hard for every student. His motto should be “Kids First,” because this is not only followed, but at Lakeside it’s practiced. Warren deserves this honor but he would be the first to say you don’t honor someone for doing their job.”

In his principalship, Retzlaff follows the philosophy of John Wooden: “Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”

“The most significant accomplishment of my 37 year career,” says Retzlaff, “has been the privilege of providing educational leadership to well over 6,000 students. I also am proud of hiring and working
with so many wonderful educators, and of Lakeside Elementary School achieving a Five Star rating on the MCA report card.”

Past honors and recognition received by Retzlaff include: MESPA division president, Negotiations Committee representative; Leadership in Educational Excellence award, Resource Training and Solutions; Outstanding Achievement in Pursuit of Excellence in Education, State of MN award presented by Gov. Perpich; Outstanding Humanitarian Effort award, raising relief funds for students affected by Hurricane Katrina; State Champion and five-time Regional Champion, Minnesota Odyssey of the Mind.

MESPA members selected 12 of their peers to receive the 2009 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award; Retzlaff was nominated by his Central division colleagues. “Great principals lead great schools. These men and women are leaders in our profession and truly represent the very best in Minnesota public schools. As leaders, we focus on the potential and possibilities to ignite hope within our schools,” said P. Fred Storti, MESPA executive director.

**2009 MESPA Division Leadership Achievement Award Recipients**

- **Tim Bell**, Five Hawks Elementary School in Prior Lake, Prior Lake-Savage School District
- **Gary Chesner**, Northport Elementary School in Brooklyn Center, Robbinsdale School District
- **David Craft**, Greenvale Park Elementary School in Northfield, Northfield School District
- **Suraya Driscoll**, South Point Elementary School in East Grand Forks, East Grand Forks School District
- **Stephen Gorde**, Rutherford Elementary in Stillwater, Stillwater School District
- **Russell Lofthus**, Adrian Elementary School in Adrian, Adrian School District
- **Dennis Nelson**, Hermantown Elementary School in Hermantown, Hermantown School District
- **Lillie Pang**, Longfellow Community School in Minneapolis, Minneapolis School District
- **Warren Retzlaff**, Lakeside Elementary School in Chisago City, Chisago Lakes School District
- **Deborah Shepard**, Rum River Elementary School in Andover, Anoka-Hennepin School District

MESPA is the professional association of Minnesota’s elementary and middle level principals. With the vision to “be the premiere resource for preparing today’s principals for tomorrow and a strong
leading voice for public education” and a statewide membership over 950 principals, MESPA has represented Minnesota’s principals since 1950. MESPA is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and its 29,500 members nationwide.

**MESPA Mission Statement**
The Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association is dedicated to promoting and improving education for children and youth, strengthening the role as educational leader for elementary and middle level principals, and collaborating with partners in education to assist in achieving these goals.