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TOP STORY

## MRSD's Witte named NH's Superintendent of the Year

By Molly Bolan Sentinel Staff

Dec 13, 2021



Monadnock Superintendent Lisa Witte at a school board meeting in January 2019.

Sentinel file photo by Meg McIntyre

Monadnock Regional School District Superintendent Lisa Witte has been named the state's Superintendent of the Year for 2022, according to a news release from the N.H. School Administrators Association.

The nonprofit, in coordination with the American Association of School Administrators, announced Witte as the winner at its monthly meeting on Friday, according to Alyssa LaFoe, executive assistant of the New Hampshire organization.

Carl Ladd, executive director of the N.H. School Administrators Association, said the award is well-deserved.



“Lisa is an outstanding representative of the many school superintendents in our state who work every day in support of public education,” he said in a news release Monday. “She is an innovative and caring leader and is a strong advocate for students and their families.”

Witte, of Peterborough, was initially nominated by fellow superintendent Winfried Feneberg of the New London-based Kearsarge Regional School District.

“When I got his nomination, I was absolutely floored,” Witte said Monday afternoon.

Witte has been superintendent of the Monadnock Regional School District — which includes Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Richmond, Roxbury, Swanzey and Troy — since 2015, and currently serves on the executive board for the statewide school administrators association.

Previously, she was director of curriculum, instruction and assessment for the Hillsboro-Deering School District.

After being nominated in August, Witte completed an application, answering questions regarding leadership for learning, communication, professionalism and community involvement, she said.

Doing so gave her the opportunity to consider all the district has done during her tenure.

“It was really nice to look back at seven years I’ve been here and ... reflect on the things that we’ve done.”


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Some of those efforts are ongoing, such as developing and following the district’s strategic plan, a process in which Witte said she has actively tried to include community members.

Other initiatives invite a more personal touch, such as the #celebrateMRSD campaign Witte implemented in 2017. Monadnock district students and staff can fill out a Google Form, detailing why they think someone deserves recognition, and that person will receive a certificate to honor them. The effort is meant to bring more positivity to the district’s day-to-day operations, and hundreds of certificates have been issued. Every time someone submits the Google Form, Witte also receives a copy of the nomination.

“Sometimes it’s nice to flip through them and see what people are being recognized for,” she said, adding that people could be honored for anything, such as leadership skills or a positive attitude.

In addition to answering essay questions, Witte also needed letters of recommendation from her peers, LaFoe said. Applications were reviewed by a six-person committee of previous winners, Ladd told the Sentinel Tuesday.

As Superintendent of the Year, Witte will be recognized in February at the American Association of School Administrators National Conference in Nashville, Tenn., as well as at the N.H. School Administrators Association Annual Conference in June, LaFoe said.

“It’s an honor,” Witte said. “I’m so excited to represent our district and our state.”

Ronna Cadarette, superintendent of Groveton-based School Administrative Unit 50, also nominated Witte for the award, Witte said. Cadarette noted Witte's involvement with public policy support and change, and her efforts to ensure a safe return to school during the pandemic.

"Lisa is a consummate advocate for students and excellence in learning," Cadarette said in the news release. "... The actions she takes model pure courage and strength to forge forward with a vision for change and hope in New Hampshire Schools that go far beyond just words."

Beyond the district offices, Witte also finds ways to engage with the community, according to the news release. She volunteered at the state-run COVID-19 vaccination clinic in Keene and is currently a volunteer firefighter with Peterborough Fire and Rescue. (She also recently completed the national registry certification required to work as an EMT and will soon be serving the department in that capacity as well, she said.)

But while it's nice to be recognized, Witte said the award also illustrates the district's hard work as a whole.

"It's not me; it's us," she said. "It's always a team effort."

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