

TWO LOCAL SCHOOLS HAVE PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR

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By RICK GREEN, LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Principal David Levesque of Pleasant Street School has been named Elementary School Principal of the Year, and Aaron Pope of Belmont Middle School has been named Middle School Principal of the Year.

The New Hampshire Association of School Principals bestows the yearly honors.

Teachers nominate their principal for the honor. They must get four letters of recommendation, one from the school district superintendent, one from a school board member and two from teachers.

The principal then interviews with a committee from the association. Representatives from the association then do a site visit and meet with students, faculty, community members, parents and others. They also do a follow-up interview with the principal.

Pleasant Street School was previously named the state's 2017 Elementary School of Excellence. Levesque said Friday it's all about the teachers.

"It's not about me, it's what the teachers do here," he said. "The teachers have worked incredibly hard and any success I get is because of the work they do.

"They come together and we try to do things. They put their heart and soul into it and the beneficiaries are the kids."

"I'm very excited and pleased to get the award, but to have your staff nominate you is incredibly humbling for me."

He said educators are constantly being asked to do more with less resources. He and the faculty don't let that get them down.

"Our motto is, 'We got this.' When problems arise, we'll figure it out. 'We got it.'"

Pope also said he was humbled by the award.

"It certainly is great to be appreciated for the work that we are doing," he said. "It's a tribute to a team effort. We are working hard for the best interests of the kids."

He said the school has worked on improving curriculum, creating high standards and creating opportunities for students to receive personalized instruction and to be able to work at their own pace.

"The culture is good, and once that happens, students and staff are comfortable taking risks and presenting students with different ways of learning things," he said.

Students of middle school age can present challenges.

"For those of us who work in middle schools, we love it for the challenge," Pope said.

“The kids are going through a lot of things. The social, emotional piece is huge. It can be particularly challenging, but also very rewarding when kids rise to the challenge.”



Dave Levesque, of Pleasant Street School in Laconia, was named the Elementary Principal of the Year for 2018. He is shown here leading Sen. Maggie Hassan on a tour of the school. (Adam Drapcho/Laconia Daily Sun)



Middle School Principal of the Year Aaron Pope has been at Belmont Middle School for 11 years. (Adam Drapcho/Laconia Daily Sun)