



NASSP Names Georgia School Leader as 2020 National Principal of the Year

Collins Hill High School's Kerensa Wing honored during National Principals Month

Contact:

Bob Farrace, director of communications, NASSP, 703-860-7252, farraceb@nassp.org
Sloan Roach, executive director of communication and media relations,
Gwinnett County Public Schools, 678-301-6021,
sloan_roach@gwinnett.k12.ga.us

Reston, VA—Kerensa Wing, principal at Collins Hill High School in Suwanee, GA, has been named the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) 2020 National Principal of the Year. The announcement took place at a surprise ceremony at her school, held as part of the 2019 celebration of National Principals Month. Joining Mrs. Wing's family and staff and students from her school in congratulating her were members of the Gwinnett County Board of Education, CEO/Superintendent J. Alvin Wilbanks, leaders from the Georgia Department of Education, Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, elected officials, representatives of county and state government, district leaders, other GCPS principals, business and community leaders, as well as representatives from NASSP and Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals.

"We are proud to honor Kerensa Wing, who has served as a model for compassionate school leadership, as the NASSP 2020 Principal of the Year," stated JoAnn Bartoletti, executive director of NASSP. "Kerensa has made a profound and deliberate impact on her students, teachers, and administrators by creating an environment responsive to her school and community's specific needs, while also allowing for innovation and entrepreneurship to ensure academic success and well-being."

Wing knows that the way to ensure continued success and well-being is by being a present, involved figure in the lives of her staff and students. This commitment to relationship development sets the tone for her entire principalship.

Wing believes that every student deserves a great teacher and has made a concerted effort to hire teachers who are content experts and student-focused in their approach. She believes that the classroom teacher has an enormous impact on student growth and views her job of hiring, retaining, and training the best teachers as the most efficient path toward equity for students. She implemented a professional learning community structure among her team, incorporating scheduling changes to accommodate common planning and collaboration time using research-based practices for students. As a result, student performance on state assessments rose between 3 percent and 13 percent in proficient and distinguished levels on all tests. From the beginning, Wing took it upon herself to ensure that she not only hired and retained quality teachers as part of her team, but that those teachers were reflective of the student

population. She doubled the number of Hispanic and African-American teachers in the school as well as hosted cultural competency training with her staff. According to Wing, she sees this as the most direct path toward equity for her students, and the teachers are able to build strong connections to foster improved well-being.

Wing has also reformed the Collins Hill High School advisement period of the school day, where students get a dedicated 27 minutes with a teacher who is responsible for connecting with and advocating for every student in their group. Instead of focusing on making scheduling the top priority, she worked with staff to ensure advisement periods provided a safe, connected environment for students and teachers alike.

Wing's effect on her school community isn't limited to personal connection; she also focuses on advancing curriculum offerings as the educational landscape evolves. Near the start of her principalship at Collins Hill High School in 2014, a group of teachers came to Wing to ask about starting a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) program. Wing harnessed the opportunity to incorporate innovation into the curriculum and assisted teachers with training and planning time to create an academically integrated program that incorporates project-based learning. In developing the program, the teachers and students worked together to establish a vision and mission, and Wing provided resources and structures to encourage their innovation and creativity.

Wing earned a bachelor's degree in history and secondary education from Oglethorpe University in Georgia. She later earned a master's degree in secondary social studies from Georgia State University and an Education Specialist degree in leadership and supervision from Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee. She also received a certificate from the Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University in Massachusetts and is a graduate of Gwinnett County Public Schools' Quality-Plus Leader Academy-- Aspiring Principal Program.

"When you talk about servant leadership, Kerensa Wing immediately comes to mind. No matter the job, Mrs. Wing is up to the task," stated J. Alvin Wilbanks, CEO and superintendent of Gwinnett County Public Schools. "As superintendent, I have asked her to lead two high schools—Lanier and Collins Hill—and she has done so exceptionally well. For her, the role of principal is not just a job, it is a true calling. She is a strong instructional leader whose care and concern for her students, her staff members, and her school community is evident in all that she does. That spirit, along with her humble and hardworking demeanor, is a key to her success and I am sure it was noted by those who selected her to be this year's National Principal of the Year. The simple truth is that Mrs. Wing makes us all better—her students, her school, and our district—and I am proud to call her one of our own."

"School administrators in Georgia are extremely proud of Kerensa Wing's accomplishments at Collins Hill High School," said Melton Callahan, executive director of Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals (GASSP), who identified Wing as the 2019 Georgia Principal of the Year. "The entire GASSP family is pleased in recognizing her as an outstanding school principal who personifies excellence in providing quality leadership to her school communities. She represents the qualities of a great principal and will represent GASSP and NASSP well!"

For more information on the POY program, please visit www.nassp.org/poy.

###

About the POY program

The NASSP Principal of the Year (POY) program recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession. Each year, NASSP honors State Principals of the Year from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools, and the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity. Out of these exceptional school leaders, three are selected as finalists and one is ultimately selected for the National Principal of the Year award. The 2020 finalists include Joey Jones of Obert Frost Middle School in Silver Spring, MD; and Lindsa McIntyre of Jeremiah Burke School in Boston, MA.

For more information on the POY program, please visit www.nassp.org/poy.

About NASSP

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is the leading organization of and voice for principals and other school leaders across the United States. NASSP seeks to transform education through school leadership, recognizing that the fulfillment of each student's potential relies on great leaders in every school committed to the success of each student. Reflecting its long-standing commitment to student leadership development, NASSP administers the [National Honor Society](#), [National Junior Honor Society](#), [National Elementary Honor Society](#), and [National Student Council](#).