



## VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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“Serving Elementary and Middle Level Principals”

### For Immediate Release

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## Virginia’s 2021 NAESP National Outstanding Assistant Principal Diana I. Brown



Virginia Beach, VIRGINIA – March 22, 2021 — Diana Brown, Assistant Principal of Seatack Achievable Dream Academy in Virginia Beach was selected as the recipient of Virginia’s **2021 NAESP National Outstanding Assistant Principal of the Year (NOAP)**. The award is presented each year as a collaborative effort between the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP). The NOAP program promotes educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade (PreK-8) schooling and calls attention to the fundamental importance of the assistant principal in every school. It is through this award that VAESP and NAESP honors assistant principals who are doing a superb job in their positions and have brought about positive change in their respective schools.

Due to current CDC guidance on group size gatherings, Mrs. Brown received notification of her award during a surprise visit to the regularly scheduled virtual staff meeting on March 22, 2021 by VAESP Executive Director, Jim Baldwin. Also joining the meeting were Dr. Linda Hayes, Director of Elementary Schools, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Pervis Blake representing Achievable Dream. Diana was joined during the announcement by her husband, Mr. David Brown. Also present were VAESP Board members from across Virginia including Amy Schott, Federal Relations Coordinator, Andrew Buchheit, NAESP Representative, Alana Balthazar, Member at Large, Zone Directors, Virginia Gills (Central), Amy Larsen (Northern) Patrice Wilson (Central), Deborah Frazier (Eastern) and Assistant Principal Representatives Guillermo Gonzales and Valerie Cason-Williamston. Mrs. Brown was nominated and selected through a statewide search process conducted by VAESP. She holds both a Bachelor of Science degree in English and a Master’s in Education degree from Norfolk State University. She holds her administrative certification and Educational Specialist degree from George Washington University. In Virginia Beach she has previously served as assistant principal at Pembroke Elementary, Instructional Specialist in the Office of Exceptional Children and teacher at Landstown Middle School. This summer, Mrs. Brown will be honored with well-deserved recognition at the Annual VAESP Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia and at the NAESP Pre-K-8 Principals Conference in Chicago, ILL.

The criteria for the National Outstanding Assistant Principal award are set by VAESP and NAESP. It requires that the honoree be an active assistant principal of a school where programs are designed to meet the academic and social needs of all students; demonstrates exceptional leadership in a particular school program; is respected by students, colleagues, parents, and the community at large; and sets high expectations for school staff and students.

Mrs. Brown is actively involved in her school, her division and her community. Hellen Keller said, “It is a terrible thing to see without vision.” Her principal, Vincent Darby, Sr. cites this quote in describing her greatest strength. “Vision has allowed Mrs. Brown to take risk and encourage change within our school and show teachers that change is thrilling.” Christopher Middleton, Senior Director of An Achievable Dream Academies in Virginia Beach notes that she “has led from a place of love and compassion for our students and our families.” She has built a legacy as an advocate for children, teacher and education. Examples include mentoring new administrators, training ESL best practices and civil rights implications of disciplinary actions to name a few. With the onset of school closures, she dedicated her passion to the finding of solutions for issues never seen before by hosting community groups alongside Virginia’s Secretary of Education and chairing a subcommittee on the COVID 19 Educational Taskforce that focused on subgroups of students disproportionately affected by school closures.

Her other accomplishments include serving on the Governor's Latino Advisory Board, recipient of VAESP School Bell Award, and membership in Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Education Association, Virginia Beach Association of Elementary Principals. Mrs. Brown also served as a leader and trainer for Courageous Conversations and Diversity Ambassadors.

Since 1970, The Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals has served as Virginia's professional educational association and now represents over 1,000 of elementary and middle school principals throughout the state. VAESP maintains close ties with the metropolitan Washington-based National Association of Elementary School Principals and its 30,000 members nationwide.

Call James P. Baldwin (VAESP Executive Director) at 804-355-6791 for additional information