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For Immediate Release

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Utah State Board of Education Celebrates 2026 UASSP Principals and Assistant Principals of the Year

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals (UASSP) are proud to announce the selection of the 2026 Secondary School Principals and Assistant Principals of the Year. These four exemplary leaders have been recognized for their unwavering dedication to student achievement, innovative school leadership, and their profound impact on the communities they serve.

“Great schools are built on the foundation of visionary leadership,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Molly Hart. “These awardees represent the very best of Utah’s education system. Their ability to foster environments where both teachers and students thrive is a testament to their skill, passion, and commitment to excellence. We are honored to celebrate their achievements and the lasting legacies they are building in our schools.”

Mike Martini, High School Principal of the Year | West Field High School, Weber School District

Principal Mike Martini has dedicated over a decade to secondary education, most recently leading the successful 2023 opening of West Field High School. For Principal Martini, the role is deeply personal; he grew up farming the very land where the school now stands, fueling a unique commitment to establishing enduring traditions and a student-centered culture. With a diverse background ranging from teaching Health and Driver Education to coaching and serving as principal at Roy High and Kaysville Junior High, Principal Martini is widely respected for his relationship-driven leadership. His focus remains on building robust systems that support high-level learning and ensure every student at West Field has the opportunity to thrive.

Jeff Ericksen, Middle Level Principal of the Year | North Sanpete Middle School, North Sanpete School District

With nearly 28 years of service in the North Sanpete School District, Jeff Ericksen views education as a “people business” dedicated to transforming lives. Over his six-year tenure as Principal of North Sanpete Middle School, he has prioritized a culture of belonging, balancing firm accountability with a warm, engaging atmosphere. Principal Ericksen’s extensive career includes 14 years in the classroom and two decades as a tennis coach, alongside roles as an advisor for student government and first-generation college-bound programs. Driven by the philosophy of being truly present in every interaction, he has cultivated a safe, unified environment where students and staff feel empowered to achieve their highest potential.

Erin Stumo, High School Assistant Principal of the Year | Syracuse High School, Davis School District

Erin Stumo began her educational journey in Minnesota before finding her professional home in the Davis School District a decade ago. At Syracuse High School, she leverages a rich background in English instruction and project-based learning to implement innovative strategies that keep students engaged and excited about their futures. Assistant Principal Stumo is a firm believer that every student can succeed, and she works tirelessly to ensure they graduate with a wide range of opportunities. Beyond her administrative duties, she is a fixture at extracurricular events, supporting her students with the same passion she brings to her roles as an instructional coach and community leader.

Melissa Swenson, Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year | Willowcreek Middle School, Alpine School District

Melissa Swenson brings 15 years of social studies teaching experience and a strong background in psychology to her six-year tenure as Assistant Principal at Willowcreek Middle School. Her leadership focuses on increasing academic access for diverse learners through targeted remediation and promoting social-emotional wellness for both students and staff. A veteran educator who has served as a swim coach, student council advisor, and travel advisor, Assistant Principal Swenson thrives on collaborative leadership. She remains dedicated to the idea that schools are strongest when educators learn together, creating the necessary conditions for every member of the school community to succeed.

The Utah State Board of Education extends its warmest congratulations to these four distinguished administrators. They will be formally honored at a future meeting of the State Board of Education. Their leadership continues to inspire excellence across the state of Utah.