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Media Release

Butterfield Trail Middle School Named 2017 Vision in Action Winner: The Whole Child Award *Van Buren School Honored at National Conference in California*

VAN BUREN, AR (March 27, 2017) Butterfield Trail Middle School in Van Buren has been named the recipient of ASCD's 2017 Vision in Action: The Whole Child Award. The prestigious honor was announced at [ASCD Empower17](#): The Conference for Every Educator, in Anaheim, California, on Saturday, March 25.

Principal Karen Endel accepted the award on behalf of the school from ASCD Executive Director and CEO Deborah S. Delisle at the conference. ASCD is a mission-driven nonprofit dedicated to advancing student achievement by supporting educators who support the whole child.

"By promoting the development of the whole child throughout their culture, Butterfield Trail Middle School has changed the conversation about education," said Delisle. "In doing so, the Butterfield Trail team is setting an example for schools across the country on how to meet the needs of every student."

Vision in Action: The ASCD Whole Child Award recognizes schools that have moved beyond a vision for educating the whole child to actions that result in learners who are knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically active, artistically engaged, prepared for economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling. ASCD honored Butterfield Trail Middle School with this award for exceeding that vision.

"We have a great team and great families, and we believe in the whole child," explained Endel. "With everything happening [nationally] in education, having that core of being healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged has been helpful in navigating whatever comes our way."

In fall 2016, Butterfield Trail administered a whole child survey tool to ensure all tenets were being met, but their journey began even earlier. The middle school, which serves 663 students in grades 6-8, started by incorporating the ASCD Whole Child approach into the school's vision:

Every child experiences a healthy, safe, engaging, supportive, and challenging learning environment at Butterfield Trail Middle School. Our whole child focus empowers every student to develop lifelong learning habits for success—NOW and for their future.

Relationships are at the forefront of school culture and core beliefs, according to Endel. "It will be even more critical to have our core work focused on meeting the needs of the whole child as we move forward," she explained. "We've got to remember why we're here, and we're here for the whole child. Building relationships comes first, and we can't lose sight of that."

Distributed leadership makes educators, administrators, and other staff accountable for every student. That culture begins with the promise of a safe, secure, and caring environment. As a result, attendance has steadily held at 95 percent for the last two years, while discipline infractions decreased by five

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percent to 19.1 percent during the same timeframe. Teachers and staff work to implement measures that ensure the safety of students on their way to and from school and throughout the school day. The school not only protects students while on school property but also monitors technology use, safeguarding students' digital footprint.

Parents of Butterfield Trail Middle School students are highly engaged in the well-being of their children. The school flipped the traditional parent-teacher conference to a model where students take the lead. Held twice a year, student-led family conferences have more than doubled participation to 89 percent in just a few short years.

Teacher-led leadership teams share assessment best practices and professional development tools to create student-centered learning experiences. The school provides 6th grade students with 35 minutes of daily enrichment time for additional learning, while 7th and 8th grade students receive 40 minutes a day of targeted learning time. Students keep tabs on their own learning using weekly grade and behavior monitoring made possible with one-to-one technology access for each child. This allows students to reflect on and adjust their weekly goals, demonstrating continuous improvement and taking ownership of academic progress, a method that is working. Last year, 86 percent of students showed an improvement in math growth using an online enrichment supplement. Students also showed measurable improvements in reading and science on the ACT Aspire interim assessments.

At Butterfield Trail Middle School, students who feel safe, supported, and welcomed are students who are engaged. Butterfield Trail promotes experiential learning with Expeditionary Learning Units, an immersive, interdisciplinary approach that integrates standards, curricula, and a local civic issue into instruction. Students participate in two expeditions per school year that challenge them to become "leaders of their own learning." In another type of blended learning option, 7th and 8th grade students manage the technology help desk, providing a needed service for the school while applying real world skills. Regardless of the learning channel, student voice is essential to the school's success.

Staff and educators at Butterfield Trail are dedicated to enhancing the quality of student life through programs that support student health. Within just a few years, the addition of a Grab-and-Go offering to the breakfast program has increased the number of students participating by 27 percent. Growing produce in the school's sustainable garden incorporates science and nutrition into instruction while promoting long-term health education. The school also promotes healthy lifestyle choices by focusing on such things as nutrition, self-defense, and safe dating awareness.

Butterfield Trail's Students, Teachers, and Relationships (STAR) advisory groups bring together students and teachers to foster social and emotional learning. Each student meets with STAR teachers, who build community and support students in setting goals, monitoring progress, and solving problems. Students can even earn redeemable "STAR bucks" for displaying positive behavior.

Butterfield Trail's efforts extend beyond the school day, as well. The Power Hour afterschool program provides academic support, peer tutoring, and a place to do homework along with snacks and transportation home. This is all part of the school's culture of promoting the whole child.

Schools throughout North America applied for the 2017 Vision in Action: The ASCD Whole Child Award. Five faculty members from the winning school were special guests at [ASCD Empower17](#), where they received their award at the Opening General Session, participated in a live recording of the ASCD Whole Child Podcast and were interviewed on ASCD Facebook Live. The school will also be featured in upcoming ASCD publications.

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“This is a huge accomplishment for everyone at Butterfield Trail Middle School and I’m extremely proud of the work that is being done there,” said VBSD Superintendent Dr. Harold Jeffcoat. “Beyond the awards and recognition, the power is in the young lives that are being impacted by their efforts. This is another example of the great things happening in the Van Buren School District and it’s a high compliment to the entire community.”

ASCD offers a variety of resources to schools supporting the whole child approach to education. For more information, visit www.ascd.org/wholechild.

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